

The Enlarging Blessing

by J. Wilbur Chapman

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of receiving the Holy Spirit for a deeper, more powerful Christian life and ministry.

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Luke 11:13, John 14:16, Acts 1:8, Acts 19:2, Romans 8:9, Galatians 3:14, Ephesians 5:18, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Christian Living"

Description

J. Wilbur Chapman preaches about the importance of not stopping at salvation through Jesus Christ but continuing to explore and enjoy the blessings of the Christian life, particularly the deep peace, power, and abiding presence of the Holy Ghost. He emphasizes the need for a personal encounter with the Holy Spirit, highlighting the transformation and power that come from fully surrendering to Him. Chapman shares a powerful story of a woman who, after receiving the Son of God as her Savior and opening every door of her being to the Holy Ghost, became a missionary and evangelist, impacting many lives. He encourages believers to long for the Holy Spirit's filling, make a full surrender, and receive Him by faith to experience His power and blessings.

Transcript

Many people have supposed that when once they had accepted the offers of mercy through Jesus Christ that that was the Christian life. I once occupied this position myself, I now believe that it was but stepping over the threshold and that all the chambers of the king's palace from this point on await our exploration and enjoyment. There is an ever increasing, enlarging blessing which we may have by simply receiving it. This is not at all a question of regeneration. It is a question of the life more abundant; of deep abiding peace and of power with God and men. It touches not so much the Father nor the Son; it brings you face to face with the third person of the blessed Trinity, the Holy Ghost. There is no question which could be better put to us than the one Paul asked of the Corinthian church members, as he met them in Ephesus. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed." There may be life without the answer -- there certainly cannot be power. There is a woeful amount of ignorance concerning the Holy Ghost. We do not seem to be impressed with His personality. We not infrequently use an impersonal pronoun in our petitions and remarks in referring to Him, when the fact is he shares with God the Father and the Son, the honor and power of the Godhead. The successful Christian everywhere is the one who honors Him and makes room for His entrance and control over their entire being.

What a change there would be in our Christian living and in our Christian experience, did we but have a definite testimony concerning this one question. One of my friends in New York city, has given up a high social position and all selfish interests that she may work among the fallen women of the metropolis. She has opened the "Door of Hope" for every one who would apply for admission. One evening, leaving her home, she took a pink rose, saying she would give it to the vilest woman she would meet in her wanderings. In a Mulberry street dive, she found her subject; a young girl with face bruised and bleeding, eyes blood-shot, clad in rags and surrounded by a band of New York's worst characters; the vilest profanity was proceeding out of her mouth. My friend pushed her way through the crowd and put the pink rose in her hand with the request that if she ever needed a friend she would call upon her. The girl received the gift with a sneer. My friend passed on about her work, but with a prayer that God might touch her heart. Some days afterwards she found her sitting in the entry of the "Door of Hope" looking even more wretched than when her eyes first beheld her. Her first thought was to send her away, thinking that she was too low to be saved. Her second thought was, what would the Master do if he were here in my stead; and then with a great rush of love because she beheld a soul for whom Christ died, she stooped and took her sin stained face in her hands and kissed her twice. The touch of love broke the girl's heart. She fell upon her knees in the entry and then and there gave herself to God. She became transformed, almost transfigured. She went up and down the streets of New York City into the lowest haunts of sin, herself a missionary and evangelist to her fallen sisters. Wherever she went she carried the light of heaven. Whenever she spoke it was with the power of God. A few months later she lay in her coffin at the "Door of Hope." Hundreds flocked to look at the face which was like an angel's and went away to thank God that she had not lived in vain. With a record of only a short Christian experience, my friend writes me that more than a hundred souls had been converted to Jesus Christ through her ministry. This change was all wrought because first of all she received the Son of God as her personal Saviour, and then that she threw open every door of her nature for the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. The change was great but not greater than would be witnessed in the life of any child of God who would make an unconditional surrender to the spirit of God bidding him at any cost, at any sacrifice, to come in and abide with him.

It is very encouraging to know that we do not need to pray for the spirit of God as if He were afar off. In one sense the hymn is wrong where we say "come Holy Spirit heavenly dove" for he is here and is but waiting to completely fill us. There is a beautiful figure in the Old Testament which some one has used with great blessing. In the days of the flood Noah opened the window of the ark and the little dove flew forth and finding no place to rest the sole of its foot it came back again to the outstretched hand. The second time he opened the window the dove flew forth and finding an olive branch bore it back to the hand of Noah. The third time he opened the window of the ark, the dove flew hither and thither and finding a resting place for the sole of its foot, it came back no more forever. The dove is always a figure representing the Holy Spirit. He came first in the Old Testament touching Abraham and Moses and Isaiah and others, but does not seem to abide permanently; he came again when Jesus Christ was crucified and plucking the olive branch from the cross, he made his way back to God saying, "peace hath been made in the death of the Son." He came the third time at Pentecost with a rushing sound as of a mighty wind filling all the place where the people sat, resting upon them with cloven tongues like as of fire and he has never gone back since the day of Pentecost. He is here, waiting to fill us if we but fulfill the conditions.

For many years in my Christian experience I was somewhat troubled by the fact that I could not tell just the day or the hour in which I was converted. It has ceased to trouble me now, and first, because I should know I were living in this world, even if I did not know my birthday. And secondly, because there is something far better than knowing just the time you were converted and that is, a definite experience

concerning the receiving fully of the Holy Ghost. It is a very serious question in my mind whether any one can have a full experience of power, until first of all, they have had definite experience concerning the receiving of the Holy Ghost. Have you had this?

There are some things which might be suggested which may make the way plainer for us all. There must be a deep longing for his coming, even as we longed for salvation through Jesus Christ. When we are satisfied with nothing else, when we long for nothing more, I believe He will come in and fill us and the result will be power. Some times we find people longing for such an experience in order that they may have peace or blessedness. Not infrequently ministers cry out for Him that they may have more power in preaching. I am convinced that He will never fill us so long as these are the first thoughts. Bid Him come in that he may have power over yourself first, and you are on the way to enlarging blessings. Let Him come in that he may drive out everything contrary to the will of God and you will find yourself very shortly in a full possession of His power. There is another suggestion which must not be over-looked, namely, there must be a full surrender. He can never fill the heart that is only partially given up. Every door of the nature, every impulse of the will, every affection of the heart must be surrendered to Him. Then we may expect Him.

Rev. F. B. Meyer has made two helpful suggestions just here. If you cannot at once reach this position, then come before Him and say, "Lord I am willing to be made willing about everything," and "if you cannot give up everything for God then say 'I will let thee take everything.'" Then another suggestion is this, we must receive him by faith. The foundation for it is in Galatians 3:14, "That you might receive the promise of the spirit through faith." I am convinced that if one fulfills the conditions, he has a perfect right to stand before God claiming the promise of the Holy Spirit, with a faith which may be utterly devoid of emotion, just as one has the right to claim the free gift of salvation when he has surrendered his will unto God.

Why have we not received the Holy Ghost? It may be because we have disobeyed some clear command. Mr. Meyer well says "if one has broken one of God's commands, or has been a disobedient child, he can never be filled with the power of God, neither can he claim His blessings, until he goes back to the place where he made the mistake and makes it right with his God."

It may be because we have not confessed our sins The trouble with us is not so much that we sin, but rather than when we sin, we do not immediately confess it before God The abiding of an unforgiven sin in the heart of the Christian will absolutely prevent the infilling of the Holy Ghost. It may be because we have too little communion with God in his word. When one of my friends was presiding at a great convention in the City of Wash-ington a number of years ago, in the midst of the deliberations a number of Indian chiefs who had been conferring with the President came into the convention. They looked about with interest. At last an old chief through an interpreter rose and spoke. He said, "what is the secret of all this happiness? Our men do not look like yours; their faces are sad; their hearts heavy. Our women are not like yours. Our children are growing up in ignorance. Our homes are miserable. Tell us if you can, what the medicine is which we must take." Then General O. O. Howard, with his empty coat sleeve, his arm being left on the battle field, sprang forward, and, lifting up the Bible in one hand, cried out "Mr. Speaker tell him that this is the good medicine." And it is quite true, it is the medicine which will cure the world's sickness; it is the medicine which will fill you with a new life, purging your heart from all that is evil, making your heart free from all that is sinful, making your heart throb with new impulses emotions and desires. Your trouble may be here.

Not long ago, a woman died in London. A few years ago she was utterly unknown, but at her funeral a great concourse of people passed through the great church to look upon her face. There were

representatives of royalty; lords and ladies, people of high degree. Then the poorer people came. Finally there came one woman carrying a little babe on one arm and holding another child by the hand. She reached the casket, put the baby down and was just bending over to kiss the glass that covered the sweet face when the guard exclaimed, "move on, move on." Stopping for a moment and looking at him, she lifted up her hand and shouted out until every one in the church heard her. "I will not move on. This woman saved my boy and I have a right to look." It was Mrs. Booth who was resting in her coffin. One of the grandest women of all God's family; she had been transformed by the Holy Ghost and thus became a winner of souls. So may we all be.

Out in the hill country of Scotland a shepherd counted his flock and found that three sheep were missing. Going to the kennel where the shepherd dog was resting with her young, he pointed to the wilderness and said "three sheep are missing, go." The dog looked for a moment at her young and then at her master, and was lost in the night. She was gone an hour, then came back bruised by the thorns and beaten by the wolves but she had the two sheep that were lost. The shepherd counted his flock once more; finding one still missing. He stood again at the kennel door while the mother was resting with her little ones. Pointing to the wilderness once more, he said "go." With a look of mute despair first at her little ones, then into his face, she rose up and was lost in the darkness. Two hours passed and then three, then she came back bruised, bleeding, almost dying, but she had the one sheep that was lost. The shepherd picked it up, wrapped it in his shepherd's plaid and turned away to his fold, while the dog staggering back to her young, reached the kennel door and fell dead.

When I read it, I said, Oh, that a dumb beast of the field with no thought of God, no hope of eternity, no prospects of hearing the Master say "well done, well done," should be so faithful to its master's command, while we sit with folded arms as our Master, with his pierced palm is pointing to the wilderness saying, "the thousands, are lost, go, go." If we were but filled with the Spirit of

God we would heed His cry. "Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?"

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