

Witness of the Spirit - Part 2

by Paris Reidhead

The sermon emphasizes the importance of genuine fellowship with God, distinguishing it from social or intellectual connections, and highlights the role of the witness of the Spirit in our lives.

Duration: 19:22

Scripture: John 1:12, John 14:17, Romans 8:15-16, 2 Corinthians 1:22, Galatians 4:6, Ephesians 2:18, Hebrews 10:22, 1 John 3:24, 1 John 5:10

Topics: "Witness Of The Spirit", "The Witness of the Spirit", "Fellowship With God"

Description

Paris Reidhead emphasizes the necessity of genuine fellowship with God, contrasting it with the superficiality of modern evangelism. He challenges listeners to reflect on their personal relationship with God, urging them to seek true communion rather than mere discussions about Him. Reidhead shares the poignant story of David Brainerd, who expressed deep concern for the souls of those he preached to, highlighting the importance of ensuring that faith is genuine and not based on false assumptions. He concludes with a call for believers to recognize the Spirit's witness in their hearts, affirming their identity as children of God and encouraging them to live out their faith authentically.

Transcript

Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Do you understand it? Do you see it? Do you realize what the Spirit of God is trying to say to us? We're living in a day and a time when evangelism has become so shallow and so shoddy, when walking and speaking and writing and muttering words that we're coached to give is interpreted as being grounds for assuming that we're forgiven. We've got to come back to reality.

My soul demands reality, sang one of the songwriters. We've got to come back to the place where people meet God. I ask you, if a person in a church or in church life has never had fellowship with God, how can they realize that fellowship with God has been interrupted or broken? They can't.

Most people, who I've been told and read from the pen of Dr. Tozer, most people in Christian activity today do not have fellowship with God. They are satisfied and content just to have fellowship with other people about God. I ask you, do you have fellowship with God? Or are you among that number content to have fellowship and only to have fellowship with other people about God? There was a day, there was a time in our land when there was great care and great concern and great burden over this issue.

I had the good fortune years ago to acquire for my use, not for my library, one of the original copies of the diary of David Brainerd that had been written by President Edwards, the father-in-law of David Brainerd. Edwards had taken the journal of that young man, his son-in-law, who had died of tuberculosis at a very early age, and had put it into this very large, extensive journal or biography. The later editions of the book have not included what I'm about to share with you.

In this particular entry, David Brainerd was working with the Indians in the western part of the state of New Jersey. And he told how on Sunday morning he had preached in one village to a group of Indians. And to his delight, this was in the Sunday night entry into the journal, it was in this form, this morning as I spoke at such and such a place, with God has man interrupted or broken.

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And to his delight, this was in the Sunday night entry into the journal, it was in this form, this morning as I spoke at such and such a place, I rejoiced that there were, and as I recall, seven people who testified to faith in Christ. Then he said, and I went in the afternoon to such and such a village, and there I had so many in attendance and spoke, and there were three that testified to faith in Christ. And that evening in the home in yet another village, I opened the word, and there were two who testified to faith in Christ.

He said that I do rejoice at this fruit after these months of labor. But the next night, his entry was as follows. I did not sleep after I awakened in the middle of the night, for it was as though God was speaking to me, saying, Are you sure that those who testified to peace were not mistaking the comforts given to my children as applying to them while they are still dead in their sins? Are you a faithful servant? And so, Brainerd said, throughout the hours of the day, as I continued to cough and to spit blood, I went to that first village and gathered the seven, and spoke again to them, and said, Alas, my worst fears were realized, for four of the seven had wrongfully assumed that the comforts to the children of God applied to them when they had not yet passed from death to life.

And of the other three, there were two, and of the other two, one. And then he made this note, Oh, to think how close I came. I know not the day when my brief candle of my life may be snuffed out.

Had it been last night, I can imagine that those that had made false claim upon the grace of God without having repented, might rise up in the lake of fire and point me out at the side of my Lord, and curse me as an unskillful and deceitful servant who had lied to them about the most important subject in all the world, their never dying souls. He said, I have pled with God that I may go back over all the areas where I have

preached in the recent months to examine all who have made profession of faith to see that they have good hope in the Lamb that was slain. Such care, such concern, such consideration, such burden, such understanding.

Why has it been deleted from our day and time? Why has the word lost its grip upon the minds and hearts of those who love it, I am sure, as much as did Brainerd or as much as did Wesley? Why are we content with less than everything that the Spirit of God has taught us about this most important of all subjects? What have we read here in this word? Hereby we know that He abideth in us by the Spirit which He hath given us. Hereby we know that we dwell in Him and He in us because He hath given us of His Spirit. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.

The very part of you that knows who you are and where you are and what you are knows the reality of your commitment to please God in everything. The very part of you that knows you are here and not elsewhere knows whether or not your purpose is to please God, that you love Him with your whole heart and mind and soul and strength. And it is that same part of you that knows that the Spirit of God is speaking to your heart now and assuring you that you can call Almighty God, Abba Father.

How important it is. In this connection last year, I told of the young woman who worked with InterVarsity in New York City when I and my wife had the privilege of serving the Lord there. I was at an alumni summer conference from InterVarsity up in Michigan.

And when I had spoken much to this theme, this young lady said, can I speak? And she came before fellow alumni who had been with her in school of her age group. And she said, I want to just share with what Paris has been telling you. I grew up, said she, in an atheist home or at least agnostics.

The only time I ever went to church was for a funeral or a wedding. My parents had no respect whatever for God or for the Bible. And that's how I'd been reared.

I went to Douglas College, the women's branch of the University of New Jersey at Rutgers. She said there after a few weeks, I noticed a young woman whose face was so radiant, who was in all of her personality so attractive. I asked the dean of women's students who she was and asked if when her roommate left I could be assigned as her roommate.

And that was done because the dean was a friend of my mother's. She said I hadn't been a roommate to that young woman until I learned she had been a child of God, been born of God. And the radiance of her life and testimony won me.

And I made profession of faith in Christ. She said I went to the Bible study. I went to the prayer meeting.

But friends on the faculty of my father and my mother learned of this and began to argue with me, seek me out, call me to their home for evenings, telling me that I was making a great mistake, wasting my life. I had far too good a mind to squander it as an evangelical, as a Christian. And finally they prevailed.

And I told my Bible study group and prayer group that it was all a mistake, it was all hypnosis, it was all religious fanaticism. And I was giving it all up. I wanted to be their friend, but I did not want them to be ever bothered about their prayer meetings or their Bible study anymore.

And she said I went along, but I couldn't forget what I'd been in. One day in the library I was reading and I came across what is called the agnostic's prayer. Oh God, if there be a God, save my soul if I have a soul.

And I thought well that's reasonable. I guess I'll do that. So she said see I wrote it down on a piece of paper.

I took it to the room. I knew my roommate was away in a Bible study and prayer group. And I went in, I locked the door.

And I got ready to pray and I was coaching myself. Oh God, if there be a God, save my soul if I have a soul. And so she said I went over to the bed and I started to kneel.

And then I just said I closed my eyes and I knew that I and a lot of people folded their hands. So she said see I knelt, I closed my eyes, I folded my hand. I was mentally repeating oh God, if there be a God, save my soul if I have a soul.

And then she said I opened my lips and I said dear heavenly Father. She said it dawned on me. I got up, I opened the door, I ran down the hall where I knew they were in Bible study.

I went in, I was laughing, I was crying. I threw my arms around them and I said it's real. It's real.

I am a child of God. Why? Because He sent forth the Spirit of His Spirit into our hearts crying. Dear heavenly Father, the witness of the Spirit, shall we pray.

Father of Jesus, oh Thou whose loved us with an everlasting love. The cords of loving kindness have drawn us through all of the rebellion of our hearts, the wickedness of our lives, the deceitfulness of our minds. To that place where the purpose of our hearts is to please Thee, where we've enthroned Jesus Christ, Thy Son, His Sovereign and Savior.

To everyone here today to whom Thou hast spoken in that sweet tones of love. Who can call Almighty God Father. Father, might there come such joy, such peace.

Should there be those among us, Father, named to live and have less than life. Might they know that. And might all of us in turn become faithful witnesses to our day and time and generation.

Never usurping the sovereign prerogatives of God the Holy Ghost. We'll labor together with God and not replacing those things that only Thou canst do. Breathe upon us breath of God and let the students of this school and the members of this church and all who live and love and worship here have a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ here and around the world that will bring eternal glory and honor and praise to the Lamb that was slain.

In whose name we ask it. Amen. Our thanks to Pastor Reedhead.

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