

Normal Christian Life Ch 8

by Watchman Nee

The gift of the Holy Spirit is received on the basis of the exaltation of the Lord Jesus, through repentance and baptism, and by faith in the word of God.

Duration: 28:00

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:33, Acts 2:36, Romans 6:23, Romans 8:11, Philippians 2:9-11, 1 John 5:14-15

Topics: "Repentance And Baptism", "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of repentance and baptism as conditions for receiving forgiveness of sins. Repentance is described as a change of mind, where one's perspective on sin and the world is transformed. Baptism is seen as the second condition for forgiveness. The sermon also highlights the role of the Holy Spirit in the Christian experience, emphasizing that the Spirit is given by God as a gift and is essential for true conversion. The preacher references verses from Romans to support these teachings and also shares the personal experiences of Charles Finney and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in his life.

Transcript

We have spoken of the eternal purpose of God as the motive and explanation of all his dealings with us. Now, before we return to our study of the phases of Christian experience as set forth in Romans, we must digress yet again in order to consider something which lies at the heart of all our experience as the vitalizing power of effective life and service. I refer to the personal presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit of God.

And here, too, let us take as our starting point two verses from Romans, one from each of our sections. The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us. And if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

God does not give his gifts at random nor dispense them in any arbitrary fashion. They're given freely to all, but they are given on a definite basis. God has truly blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

But if those blessings which are ours in Christ are to become ours in experience, we must know on what ground we can appropriate them. In considering the gift of the Holy Spirit, it is helpful to think of this in two aspects, as the Spirit outpoured and the Spirit indwelling. And our purpose now is to understand on what

basis this twofold gift of the Holy Spirit becomes ours.

I have no doubt that we are right in distinguishing thus between the outward and the inward manifestations of his working. And that as we go on, we shall find the distinction helpful. Moreover, when we compare them, we cannot but come to a conclusion that the inward activity of the Holy Spirit is the more precious.

But to say this is not for one moment to imply that his outward activity is not also precious, for God only gives good gifts to his children. Unfortunately, we are apt to esteem our privileges lightly because of their sheer abundance. The Old Testament saints, who were not as favored as we are, could appreciate more readily than we do the preciousness of this gift of the outpoured Spirit.

In their day, it was a gift given only to the select few, chiefly to priests, judges, kings, and prophets. Whereas now, it is the portion of every child of God. Think, we, who are mere non-entities, can have the same Spirit resting upon us as rested upon Moses, the friend of God, upon David, the beloved king, and upon Elijah, the mighty prophet.

By receiving the gift of the outpoured Holy Spirit, we join the ranks of God's chosen servants of the Old Testament dispensation. Once we see the value of this gift of God and realize, too, our deep need of it, we should immediately ask, how can I receive the Holy Spirit in this way to equip me with spiritual gifts and to empower me for service? Upon what basis has the Spirit been given? Let us turn first to Acts, chapter two, verses 32 to 36. This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we are all witnesses.

Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. For David ascended not into the heavens, but he saith himself, the Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus, whom ye crucified.

In verse 33, Peter states that the Lord Jesus was exalted at the right hand of God. What was the result? He received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, and what followed? Pentecost. The result of his exaltation was this, which ye see and hear.

What then was the basis upon which the Spirit was first given to the Lord Jesus to be poured out upon his people? It was his exaltation to heaven. This passage makes it absolutely clear that the Holy Spirit was poured out because the Lord Jesus was exalted. The outpouring of the Spirit has no relation to your merits or mine, but only to the merits of the Lord Jesus.

The question of what we are does not come into consideration at all here, but only what he is. He is glorified, therefore the Spirit is poured out. Because the Lord Jesus died on the cross, I have received forgiveness of sins.

Because the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, I have received new life. Because the Lord Jesus has been exalted to the right hand of the Father, I have received the outpoured Spirit. All is because of him.

Nothing is because of me. Remission of sins is not based on human merit, but on the Lord's crucifixion. Regeneration is not based on human merit, but on the Lord's resurrection.

And the endowment with the Holy Spirit is not based on human merit, but on the Lord's exaltation. The Holy Spirit has not been poured out on you or me to prove how great we are, but to prove the greatness of

the Son of God. Now look at verse 36.

There is a word here which demands our careful attention, the word therefore. How is this word generally used? Not to introduce a statement, but to follow a statement that has already been made. Its use always implies that something has been mentioned before.

Now what has preceded this particular therefore? With what is it connected? It cannot reasonably be connected with either verse 34 or verse 35, but it quite obviously relates back to verse 33. Peter has just referred to the outpouring of the Spirit upon the disciples, which ye see and hear. And he says, let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God hath made him, both Lord and Christ, this Jesus, whom ye crucified.

Peter says in effect to his audience, the outpouring of the Spirit, which you have witnessed with your own eyes and ears, proves that Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, is now both Lord and Christ. The Holy Spirit was poured out on earth to prove what had taken place in heaven, the exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth to the right hand of God. The purpose of Pentecost is to prove the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

How do we know that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified by wicked men nearly 2,000 years ago, did not just die a martyr's death, but is at the Father's right hand in glory? How can we know for a surety that he is Lord of lords and King of kings? We can know it beyond dispute because he has poured out his Spirit upon us. Hallelujah! Jesus is Lord, Jesus is Christ. Jesus of Nazareth is both Lord and Christ.

The exaltation of the Lord Jesus is the basis on which the Spirit has been given. Is it possible then that the Lord has been glorified and you have not received the Spirit? The principle on which we receive the endowment of the Holy Spirit is the very same as that on which we receive forgiveness of sins. The Lord has been crucified, therefore our sins have been forgiven.

The Lord has been glorified, therefore the Spirit has been poured out upon us. Is it possible that the Son of God shed his blood and that your sins, dear child of God, have not been forgiven? Never. Then is it possible that the Son of God has been glorified and you have not received the Spirit? Never.

Some of you may say, I agree with all this, but I have no experience of it. Am I to sit down smugly and say I have everything when I know perfectly well I have nothing? No, we must never rest content with objective facts alone. We need subjective experience also.

But that experience will only come as we rest upon divine facts. God's facts are the basis of our experience. If we lack the experience, we must ask God for a revelation of the eternal fact of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the gift of the exalted Lord to his church.

Once we see that, the effort will cease and prayer will give place to praise. It was a revelation of what the Lord had done for the world that brought to an end our efforts to secure forgiveness of sins. And it is a revelation of what the Lord has done for his church that will bring to an end our efforts to secure the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

We work because we have not seen the work of Christ. But when once we have seen that, faith will spring up in our hearts and as we believe, experience will follow. In the same way, you can pray and wait for years and years, never experience the Spirit's power.

But when you cease to plead with the Lord to pour out his Spirit upon you, and when instead you trustfully praise him that the Spirit has been poured out because the Lord Jesus has been glorified, you will find that your problem is solved. Praise God. No single child of his need agonize nor even wait for the Spirit to be given.

Jesus is not going to be made Lord, he is Lord. Therefore, I am not going to receive the Spirit, I have received the Spirit. It is all a question of the faith which comes by revelation.

When our eyes are open to see the Spirit has already been poured out because Jesus has already been glorified, then prayer turns to praise in our hearts. All spiritual blessings are given on a definite basis. God's gifts are freely given, but there are conditions which must be fulfilled on our part before the reception of them is possible.

There is a passage in God's Word which makes the conditions of the outpoured Spirit perfectly clear. Repent ye and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins. And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost for to you is the promise and to your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him.

Four things are mentioned in this passage, repentance, baptism, forgiveness, and the Holy Spirit. The first two are conditions, the second two are gifts. What are the conditions to be fulfilled if we are to have forgiveness of sins? According to the Word, they are two, repentance and baptism.

The first condition is repentance, which means a change of mind. Formerly, I thought sin a pleasant thing, but now I have changed my mind about it. Formerly, I thought the world an attractive place, but now I know better.

Formerly, I regarded it a miserable business to be a Christian, but now I think differently. Once I thought certain things delightful, now I think them vile. Once I thought other things utterly worthless, now I think them most precious.

That is a change of mind and that is repentance. No life can be truly changed apart from such a change of mind. The second condition is baptism.

Baptism is an outward expression of an inward faith. When in my heart, I truly believe that I have died with Christ, have been buried and have risen with him, then I ask for baptism. I thereby declare publicly what I believe privately.

Baptism is faith in action. Here then are two divinely appointed conditions of forgiveness, repentance and faith publicly expressed. Have you repented? Have you testified publicly to your union with your Lord? Then have you received remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost? You say you've only received the first gift, not the second.

But my friend, God offered you two things if you fulfilled two conditions. Why have you only taken one? What are you doing about the second? If you have fulfilled the conditions, you are entitled to two gifts, not just one. You have already taken the one.

Why not just come and take the other now? Say to the Lord, Lord, I have complied with the conditions for receiving remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost, but I have foolishly only taken the former. Now I have come back to take the gift of the Holy Ghost and I praise thee for it. What happened to R.A. Torrey

when the Holy Spirit came upon him after he had been a minister for years? Let him tell it in his own words.

I recall the exact spot where I was kneeling in prayer in my study. It was a very quiet moment, one of the most quiet moments I ever knew. Then God simply said to me, not in any audible voice, but in my heart, it's yours, now go and preach.

He had already said it to me in his word in 1 John 5, verses 14 and 15. But I did not then know my Bible as I know it now. And God had pity on my ignorance and said it directly to my soul.

I went and preached and I have been a new minister from that day to this. Sometime after this experience, I do not recall just how long after, while sitting in my room one day, suddenly I found myself shouting. I was not brought up to shout and I'm not of a shouting temperament, but I shouted like the loudest shouting Methodist.

Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God and I couldn't stop. But that was not when I was baptized with the Holy Spirit. I was baptized with the Holy Spirit when I took Him by simple faith in the word of God.

And how did D.L. Moody feel and act when the Spirit came upon him? I was crying all the time that God would fill me with His Spirit. Well, one day in the city of New York, oh, what a day, I cannot describe it, I seldom refer to it. It's almost too sacred an experience to name.

Paul had an experience of which he never spoke for 14 years. I can only say that God revealed Himself to me and I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand. I went preaching again.

The sermons were not different. I did not present any new truths and yet hundreds were converted. I would not now be placed back where I was before that blessed experience if you should give me all the world, would be as the small dust of the balance.

And what was the experience of the great Charles Finney when the power of the Holy Ghost came upon him? I received a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost without any expectation of it, without ever having the thought in my mind that there was any such thing for me, without any recollection that I'd ever heard the thing mentioned by any person in the world. The Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through me, body and soul. No words can express the wonderful love that was shed abroad in my heart.

I wept aloud with joy and love. When the Holy Spirit is poured out upon God's people, their experiences will differ widely. Some will receive new vision.

Others will know a new liberty in soul winning. Others will proclaim the word of God with power. And yet others will be filled with heavenly joy or overflowing praise.

Let us praise the Lord for every new experience that relates to the exaltation of Christ. Amen. There is nothing stereotyped about God's dealings with his children.

Therefore we must not by our prejudices and preconceptions make a watertight compartment for the working of his spirit, either in our own lives or in the lives of others. This applies equally to those who require some particular manifestation, such as speaking with tongues, as evidence that the spirit has

come upon them. And to those who deny that any manifestation is given at all.

We must leave God free to work as he wills and to give what evidence he pleases of the work he does. He is Lord and it is not for us to legislate for him. Let us rejoice that Jesus is on the throne.

And let us praise him that since he has been glorified, the spirit has been poured out upon us all. We move on now to the second aspect of the gift of the Holy Spirit, which as we shall see in our next chapter is more particularly the subject of Romans 8. It is that which we have spoken of as the spirit indwelling. If so be that the spirit of God dwelleth in you, if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, as with the spirit outpoured, so with the spirit indwelling.

If we are to know and experience that which is ours in fact, our first need is of divine revelation. When we see Christ as Lord objectively, that is as exalted to the throne in heaven, then we shall experience the power of the spirit upon us. When we see Christ as Lord subjectively, that is as effective ruler within our lives, then we shall know the power of the spirit within us.

A revelation of the indwelling spirit was the remedy Paul offered the Corinthian Christians for their unspirituality. It's important to note that the Christians in Corinth had become preoccupied with the visible signs of the Holy Spirit's outpouring, who were making much of tongues and miracles while at the same time their lives were full of contradictions and were a reproach to the Lord's name. They had quite evidently received the Holy Spirit and yet they remained spiritually immature.

And the remedy God offered them for this is the remedy he offers his church today for the same complaint. In his letter to them, Paul wrote, Know ye not that ye are a temple of God and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? For others, he prayed for enlightenment of heart, that ye may know. A knowledge of divine facts was the need of Christians then and it is no less the need of Christians today.

We need the opening of the eyes of our understanding that we may know that God himself through the Holy Spirit has taken up his abode in our hearts. God is present in the person of the spirit and Christ is present in the person of the spirit too. Thus, if the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts, we have the Father and the Son dwelling within.

That is no mere theory or a doctrine but a blessed reality. We may perhaps have realized that the spirit is actually within our heart but have we realized that he is a person? Have we understood that to have the spirit within us is to have the living God within? Revelation is the first step to holiness and consecration is the second. A day must come in our lives as definite as the day of our first conversion.

When we give up all right to ourselves and submit to the absolute lordship of Jesus Christ, there may be a practical issue raised by God to test the reality of our consecration. Whether that be so or not, there must be a day when without reservation we surrender everything to him. Ourselves, our families, our possessions, our business and our time.

All we are and have becomes his to be held henceforth entirely at his disposal. From that day we are no longer our own masters but only stewards. Not until the lordship of Jesus Christ is a settled thing in our hearts can the spirit really operate effectively in us.

He cannot direct our lives effectually until all control of them is committed to him. If we do not give him absolute authority in our lives, he can be present but he cannot be powerful. The power of the spirit is stayed.

Are you living for the lord or for yourself? Perhaps that is too general a question. So let me be more specific. Is there anything God is asking of you that you are withholding from him? Is there any point of contention between you and him? Not till every controversy is settled and the holy spirit is given full sway can he reproduce the life of Christ in the heart of any believer.

Our absolute surrender of ourselves to the lord generally hinges upon some one particular thing and God is after that one thing. He must have it. He must have our all.

I was greatly impressed by something a great national leader wrote in his autobiography. I want nothing for myself, I want everything for my country. If a man can be willing that his country should have everything and he himself nothing, cannot we say to our God, Lord, I want nothing for myself, I want all for thee.

I will what thou willest and I want to have nothing outside thy will. Not until we take the place of a servant can he take place as lord. He is not calling us to devote ourselves to his cause.

He is asking us to yield ourselves to his will. Are you willing for anything he wills? A forgiven sinner is quite different from an ordinary sinner and a consecrated Christian is quite different from an ordinary Christian. May the Lord bring us to a definite issue regarding the question of his lordship.

If we do yield wholly to him and claim the power of the indwelling spirit, we need wait for no special feelings or supernatural manifestations, but can simply look up and praise him that something has already happened. We can confidently thank him that the glory of God has already filled his temple. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have from God?

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/3/SID3556.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/watchman-nee/normal-christian-life-ch-8/>

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