

Last week, my friends, we spoke about the secret of Christian experience. A secret that Christ revealed as He was about to leave this world. The secret of Pentecost. We reminded you that when our Lord said "I will pray the Father and He shall send you another Comforter" that He was promising the coming of someone just like Himself to be alongside to help in every emergency of life, in every situation that confronts us, that we might never be left alone. He said "I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you." The meaning of Pentecost, ~~my friends~~, is that God has come down to earth and is still here alongside every believer and within every believer and will abide till the earth is no more, till there is a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. [We spoke last week about the meaning of this word "Comforter". The Greek word ~~Parakletos~~ means "One called alongside to help." We pointed out that Pentecost was the Bethlehem of the third member of the Godhead. That as verily as Christ was on earth from the time of His birth till His ascension, so God through the Spirit, has come down to earth at Pentecost, never to leave it. And the Christian now need never feel alone, never lonely, never inadequate, never a failure, never an orphan. As the atmosphere takes the rays of the sun and makes them warm and healing for those of us on earth, so the Holy Spirit takes the glories of Christ and brings them to our hearts and minds. That as a telescope makes the distant stars near, so the Spirit makes the distant Christ shine within our experience. We are not to look to ourselves for the problems of life. We are to look to our Helper Who is always alongside us to help, always within us, always sufficient.

One writer has written beautifully about the significance of the Pentecostal Gift. I'm reading from THE DESIRE OF AGES, p.668. "Before offering Himself as the sacrificial Victim, Christ sought for the most essential and complete Gift to bestow upon His followers, a gift that would bring within their reach the boundless resources of grace. In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had

"provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all Gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent. Without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the third person of the Godhead Who would come with no modified energy but in the fullness of Divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the Divine nature."

Good news indeed, ~~my friends~~, that all the fruitage of the cross of Christ becomes ours through the indwelling influence of the third Member of the Godhead. It's a blessing that brings every other blessing in its train. I think of the young boy who was told that he could have one wish and whatever it was, it would be granted and his wish was "That my every desire might be fulfilled." In other words, he wished that all his wishes would be granted. Well, that's the way it is here, my friends. To have the Holy Spirit is to have all good things. In Matthew 7:11 Jesus says "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts to your children how much more will your Heavenly Father give all good things to them that love Him?" And in Luke 11:13 we read the same words with one exception. There we read "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" So do note it, my friends, that to have the Holy Spirit is to have all good things.

I want to illustrate that this morning. Let me read to you from an Old Testament story that will help make it clear. I'm reading from 11 Kings 4:1: "Now the wife of one of the sons of the prophets cried to Elisha 'Your servant, my husband, is dead. You know your servant feared the Lord. But the creditor

'Has come to take my two children to be his slaves.' Elisha said to her 'What will I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?' She said "Your maidservant has nothing in the house except a jar of oil." Then he said 'Go outside. Borrow vessels of all your neighbours, empty vessels, and not too few. Then go in and shut the door upon yourselves and your sons and pour into all these vessels and when one is full, set it aside.' So she went from him and shut the door upon herself and her sons, and as she poured, they brought the vessels to her. When the vessels were full, she said to her son 'Bring me another vessel.' He said to her 'There is not another.' Then the oil stopped flowing. She came and told the man of God and he said 'Go sell the oil and pay your debts and you and your sons can live on the rest.'

Well, here's a story of widowhood, want and woe. God seems to like hard places. Perhaps we grow best in the storms of life, ~~my friends~~, in the deserts, in the wilderness, rather than on the plain ^{where} ~~when~~ all is easy. So here is the great need. What did she have as a resource? Elijah asked her "What have you got in the house?" She said "Nothing except a jar of oil." Now oil in Scripture, ~~my friends~~, is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. While the blood points to the shedding of the sacrificial offering by Jesus, oil is a symbol of the Spirit. And every Christian has the Spirit. "Except ye have the Spirit of Christ, ye are none of His," we are told in Romans 8. It's not true, my friends, that there are some Christians with the Spirit and some without. It may be true that the Spirit has more of some Christians than He has of others, but it's not true that only some Christians have the Spirit. The word "Christian" means "an anointed one", and the moment you believe, that moment you receive the Holy Spirit. He's received, not on the basis of your achievement, but on the basis of Christ's achievement. ⁹ The later chapters of the book of Exodus we are told about twenty times that Moses did everything as he was commanded, perfectly as God commanded, and then the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, our Moses, our Lawgiver, our Deliverer - He has done all things as God commanded and the Pentecostal fire has fallen and the Holy Spirit has come, for Pentecost was the Bethlehem of the third Member of the Godhead. He's here on earth, He's tabernacling in the flesh, our flesh, the flesh of every believer in the church of God. God has come to earth to stay, in the presence of the Holy Spirit. So every Christian has this resource and when the troubles of life come, we're not alone.

Well, what were the conditions to solve her problem? She had to have faith to believe and faith to obey. She gathered the vessels and she began to pour out, and in the pouring out the oil was multiplied. Isn't that the way God often operates? When the servants at Cana poured out the water, it became wine. When the man in the synagogue attempted to stretch out his hand, it was healed. When the Capernaum nobleman in obedience began to make his way home from Cana, his son was healed. When the lepers turned and went to the priest, they were healed en route, ~~on the way~~. And so, as we operate by faith, trusting in God and His promises and His Spirit, our needs are met. As the woman poured out, the oil was multiplied ~~and filled~~. [And did you notice that the only limit was the limit of her faith. The oil would have been pouring still had she gathered enough vessels. Every vessel she gathered was filled. She needed empties, ~~my friends~~, and we have to bring our confession of emptiness to God, to admit that only He can provide what is needed. Let us never be self-sufficient. Our faith is the only limitation. And did you note the last verse? The man of God said to her "sell the oil and pay your debts and you and your sons can live on the rest." That oil that was over after the debts were paid was the equivalent of everything else she would ever need. Good news indeed, to know that we are not alone, that the Holy Spirit has come, that all who believe are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, and that He is the equivalent of all good things.

Do you remember the story of Hagar? It is told in Genesis 21:14 onwards: "So Abraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and gave

"it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder along with the child and sent her away. And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. When the water in the skin was gone she cast the child under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down against him a good way off, about the distance of a bow shot. She said 'Let me not see the death of the child.' And as she sat over against him the child lifted up his voice and wept and God heard the voice of the lad and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her 'What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad and hold him fast with your hand. I will make him a great nation.' Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water and she went and filled the skin with water and gave the lad a drink. And God was with the lad and he grew up."

Think of this story. A servant maid expelled into the wilderness. Her resources apparently gone, dying of thirst, her loved child dying, weeping. But ~~my friends~~, what was the real problem? The problem was she couldn't see the fountain. It was there. She and her child were perishing with thirst unnecessarily. The fountain was there. There was no need that an angel should create a fountain. He needed only to open Hagar's eyes and let her see it, and think of it. ~~My friends~~, You and I often come to the end of our tether. We don't have a very long rope of patience or goodness or strength. The place of no resources is a frequent place to many, but it's a blessed place if we will look to God. If we open our eyes, my friends, and see with faith, we'll find that God has provided all that we need. The fountain is there.

Let's take another story. I'm going to read to you from Exodus 15. Here's the story of Israel after they had come out of the land of bondage from Egypt. When Moses led Israel onward from the Red Sea and they went into the wilderness of Shur and they went three days into the wilderness and found no water. When they came to Marah they could not drink the water at Marah because it was bitter. Therefore it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses

"saying 'What shall we drink?' And he cried to the Lord and the Lord showed him a tree and he threw it into the water and the water became sweet." [My friends, there's no way of dodging pain in this life. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward and as we go on our pilgrimage we often come to bitter waters but here we're told how they can become sweet. The branch ^{on the} represents the Branch, Christ. That's one of His titles as found in Zechariah and Isaiah. He's the Branch of the Lord and glorious. And notice this branch ~~my friends~~, when thrown into the water, ^{makes it} it became sweet. [However bitter our experiences, if we'll bring Christ into them, the Christ of the cross and the cross of Christ, this Branch of the Godhead Who was "cut off" for our sakes; if we'll bring Him into our experience, the waters of bitterness will become waters of sweetness. Notice the branch was there all the time. God didn't have to create a branch, it was there. God had only to open his eyes to it, ~~my friends~~. May I repeat what we've said? What was the matter with Hagar in her bitter sorrow? Nothing but this. She could not see the fountain that lay so near. There was no need the angel should create it. He needed only to open Hagar's eyes. There was no need that God should make a spring of sweetness at Mara's waters. All that was needed was to show Moses the branch of healing that was already there. He plunged it into the waters and the ~~people~~ were healed.

Let's take another example. I'm going to read to you from 11 Kings ^{chapter 6} the story of how the prophet was surrounded by armies. You will remember the prophet had a servant, not as old and mature in faith as Elisha. The story says that when the servant of the prophet beheld the armies surrounding the city, he cried out "Alas, alas." He was overwhelmed with fear, with anxiety. And what did the prophet do? The prophet said "Open the young man's eyes, Lord, open the young man's eyes." And the record here in 11 Kings says that his eyes were opened and the young man saw round about the mountains outside the city the angels of God. They were all there. The armies of heaven were so much greater than the armies of the human enemies of the prophet. Let me read you the actual verses

in 11 Kings 6: "The mind of the king of Syria was greatly troubled. He called his servants 'Will you not show me who of us is for the king of Israel?' And one of the servants said 'None, my lord but its Elisha the prophet in Israel. He tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedchamber.' He said 'Go and see where he is that I may send and seize him.' It was told him 'Behold he is in Dothan.' So he sent there horses and chariots and a great army and they came by night and surrounded the city. But when the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold an army with horses and chariots was round about the city. And the servant said 'Alas, my master, what will we do?' And he said 'Fear not. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.' Then Elisha prayed and said 'Oh Lord, I pray thee open his eyes that he may see.' So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man and he saw and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

~~my friends~~ [[] There was no need for an army of angels to come to the help of Elisha, they were already there. All that was needed was that the eyes of his servant might be opened to see the heavenly army that surrounded and defended them. Why is it, ~~my friends~~, that you and I are so easily discouraged so easily defeated, so easily upset, so easily come to the end of our rope, so easily filled with fears. I'll tell you why, ~~my friends~~. We do not open the eyes of faith, and faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. [[] Do you want to possess your possessions? Ephesians 1:3 says that God has blessed us with "all spiritual blessings in Christ." Do you remember in the book of Joshua the Israelites were told that every place that the sole of their feet trod upon God had already given to them? The footstep of faith took possession.

[[] But faith ^{needs} ~~is~~ to be fed, my friends. And it is fed by the Word of God. In Colossians and Ephesians we have many parallel verses. They were written by the same man in the same place at the same time. And in one of these passages Eph. 5:18, we are told to be filled with the Word and then it gives us the

results: that we'll rejoice with singing and that we'll give thanks always for all things, that we'll speak to each other in Christian fellowship and we'll submit to one another. Now in Col. 3 it points to the same experience but instead of saying "being filled with the Spirit" it says "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, giving thanks always for all things" and so on. Do you notice in one place it says "~~Let you~~ Be filled with the Spirit" and in the other it says "Be filled with the Word." ~~My friends,~~ You will be aware of as much of the Holy Spirit's power as you are aware of the Word of God in its truth. In other words, if you want to increase faith and have your eyes opened to see the Branch, to see the Fountain, to see the protecting armies, you must feed your soul with the Word of God. The Word and the Spirit always go together. In Genesis 1:2 you read in the early verses "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Then you read "And God said...And God said.." - ten times - the Word of God. The Word and the Spirit go together, my friends. Without the Word of God, the Spirit is dumb. Without the Spirit, the Word is dead. [There are two things God has joined together - dust on the Bible and drought in the heart. If you want to have opened eyes for the Fountain of life, for the Branch of healing, for the protecting armies of God, you must feed your soul with the Word of God. And don't just read it, ~~my friends~~. It's to be studied. Compare Scripture with Scripture. Look for Jesus. Look for yourself. Every righteous character of Scripture tells us something about Jesus and every sinner tells us something about ourselves. All the promises are for us. All the warnings are for us. ~~My friends~~, Read and believe. See the love of God in His Word and you too will be filled with the Spirit.

The special part of the New Testament that discusses the Holy Spirit (apart from John 14 to 16 to which we have already referred) is Romans ~~and~~ 8. In Romans 7 we find that when the Holy Spirit comes to the soul He reveals to us our true condition. We see sin where we did not see sin before. We are tempted at times to be discouraged, the revelation is so terrible, of what our nature's

really like. We are brought into a passionate and subjective account here in Romans 7 of conflict with sin. It's a story of discovery. The more a person enters upon the realities of Christian experience, the more he learns about his own depravity. It's a naive Christian that thinks that he's better and better in every way. He should be, in his behaviour, but his insights will show him the depths of sin in his own life that he had never seen before. That's in Romans 7.

In chapter 8 we have the Holy Spirit mentioned about twenty times and here we see the answer. Not the answer to the discovery but the answer to the discouragement that could come through our discovery of our sinfulness. We read in the first verse "There's no condemnation to them that are in Christ" for the law of the Spirit sets us free from the law of sin and death. The 4th verse tells us that the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. ~~My friends,~~ While no Christian is perfect, while there is no Christian without sin, while there is no Christian without failure, because we all take our eyes at times from the Lord, yet the dominant factor of Christian experience is that the goodness and truth and the purity of Jesus should be revealed in the life. Then we're told that those who live according to the Spirit, set their minds on the things of the Spirit. There's the secret, ~~my friends,~~ of a Spirit-filled life. Set your mind on the things of the Spirit. You can't watch TV all the time, ~~my friends,~~ and have your mind filled with the Spirit. There are good things on TV as there are good things in the newspapers. But there's much that is not good, that the Christian cannot contemplate. He is to set his mind on the things of the Spirit. Whatsoever things are true and good, of virtue and good report, think on these things. To set the mind on the flesh is death, says Romans 8:6 but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. Where do you set your mind, my friends? What are you thinking about all day long? Are you rejoicing in what Jesus has done, is doing and is willing to do? Read this 8th chapter of Romans. It tells how the Spirit dwells within us, as the beginning of the glorification that's to be ours.

at the second coming of Christ. It says He helps our infirmities, He intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words and God hears the prayers of the Spirit as though they were our prayers. We don't know how to pray, ~~my friends~~. But as we pray, the Holy Spirit takes our groans, our sighs and transmutes them into beautiful prayers for God to hear and answer.

And then we read that for those who thus know the Spirit, in everything God works for good for those that love Him. "What shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? He Who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, will He not also give us all things with Him? Who will bring anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God Who justifies. In all things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers nor height nor depth, not anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

My friends, that love of Christ's, that love of God, becomes ours as we believe the Word about Christ in Scripture; as we believe that Word and become filled with it, we become simultaneously filled with the Spirit of God. And to have the Spirit of God is to have God Himself. Its to be no longer alone, to be no longer inadequate, to be no longer a failure. A sinner still by nature, yes. But accepted in the Beloved. Not now under the control of sin or Satan because these we see were defeated by the cross of Christ. We become God's children. God's warriors. The brethren and sisters of Christ. We have everlasting life. God grant it for you this day, my brother, my sister. Amen.