

Sabbath School Lesson #5 – Spirit-Empowered Witnessing – 25-31 July 2020

Christ would have us filled with His own Spirit so that we may witness. “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31). If we are to be witnesses and do so with the power that heaven bestows, it is vital we be filled by the right Spirit, as Ellen White says, “It is not safe to catch the spirit from another. We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ” {Lt66-1894 (April 10, 1894) par. 18}.

Unless we correctly understand the identity of the holy Spirit, we are bound to be filled by Satan supposing him to be the holy Spirit. All our witnessing, wonderful as it might be, if not by the true holy Spirit, it is built on sand and worthless. As Seventh-day Adventists, by our beliefs, we are all accustomed to considering the holy Spirit as *the* Comforter, forgetting that He is only “*another* Comforter” (John 14:16). Jesus Christ is a Comforter, and the holy Spirit is a Comforter simply because the Spirit is the very Spirit of Jesus Christ. Sorrow filled the hearts of the disciples when Jesus told them that He was going away from them. They had been used to going to Him in all their troubles, and He had always helped and comforted them. So He said to them, “I will not leave you comfortless” (John 14:18). Jesus promised to come again; but in the meantime, until His second coming, He sends His very own Spirit.

Lest we receive a spirit of Satan when we pray, “Father, give us Thy Spirit,” we must know the revealed biblical identity of the holy Spirit. The disciple “whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23), and to whom Jesus revealed deepest things, warns: “believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1). For Christians seeking to be “sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13), it is vital to understand that holy Spirit of God.

Of spirits, there is only “one Spirit” (Ephesians 4:4) that is holy; that one Spirit is “the Spirit of your Father” (Matthew 10:20); God is everywhere by and in that one Spirit, as the psalmist tells us that God’s own Spirit is His presence, “Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?” (Psalm 139:7); that one Spirit is an integral part of God just as the spirit of man is an integral part of man, for we are told, “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:11); that one Spirit is which God gave to His Son, Christ, “for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him” (John 3:34); hence that one Spirit is shared by the Father and His Son as their Spirit, that is why Paul interchanges this by saying, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Romans 8:9); that one Spirit the Father gives us as the Spirit of His Son, “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Galatians 4:6); it is that one Spirit, as an integral inner part of Christ, that He breathed out to His disciples, “And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost” (John 20:22); that one Spirit of Christ, as an integral part of Christ, when in us, is Christ Himself, for “Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Corinthians 3:17); and as the Father and Son share that one Spirit, when that one Spirit is in us, Father and Son are in us, for Christ said: “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23).

Christ said, “If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:15-17). Jesus said very plainly that He would send *another* Comforter to comfort His people after His departure. To understand this, we apply the rule: “precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little” (Isaiah 28:10). Consider another usage of the word *another*. “And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. ... And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day” (1 Samuel 10:6, 9). Saul became *another* man; yet bodily he was still the same. His experience made him *another*.

Christ explains: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:18). Christ said that He would come to His disciples as *another* Comforter. The Bible tells us who the Comforter is. The Greek word *parakletos*, translated "Comforter," is used five times in the Bible (John 14:16; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 John 2:1). Four times it is translated "Comforter" and the other time translated "Advocate." The Bible clearly states who the Comforter is: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate [*parakletos* = Comforter] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

Christ our Lord is that very Comforter who comes to us who the Bible refers to as the holy Spirit (John 14:26). Who is the holy Spirit? The Bible answers: "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17). The Lord is that Spirit, yet who is the Lord? The Bible answers: "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him" (1 Corinthians 8:6). So, Jesus Christ is the Lord, the Lord is that Spirit, and therefore Christ is that Spirit that God sends to us as "the Spirit of His Son" (Galatians 4:6) as our Comforter – and the only *parakletos* mentioned in Scripture is Jesus Christ Himself.

The indwelling of the holy Spirit is the indwelling of Christ Himself. "Because I live, you shall live also" (John 14:19). "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20); "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Ephesians 3:17); "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Corinthians 13:5); "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Romans 8:10).

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). Mind or Spirit, that was in Christ – the holy Spirit of His Father: "For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him" (John 3:34). Let that holy Mind of Christ be your mind. "Lord is that Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:17) and is able to comfort us in all our temptations because He was tempted just like us: "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour [or help] them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:18). It is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Because Jesus has suffered being tempted, and comes to us in a different way than He ever did before, He can truly be called, "another Comforter." Jesus said, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you" (John 14:18).

The holy Spirit was to come and convict the world of sin. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). "Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts 3:26). It is Jesus, after His resurrection, who comes to us to turn us from sin. The Comforter is not a mysterious Individual of the gods. I would rather have Jesus Christ who was tempted and overcame than the mysterious one who has never been tempted! "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit" (1 Corinthians 15:45). In other words, "the last Adam [Jesus Christ] was made [after His resurrection] a quickening Spirit." After resurrection, Christ comes in His Spirit (Galatians 4:6). Christ once came in the flesh, He still come in the flesh, even in our flesh, for He is "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8), and hence His life in us must be the same that it was years ago in Judea and Galilee.

Those who are sanctified by the truth and follow Christ by faith in the holiest, receive the Spirit of God; we are told: "Those who rose up with Jesus would send up their faith to Him in the holiest, and pray, 'My Father, give us Thy Spirit.' Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In That breath was light, power, and much love, joy, and peace" {EW 55.1}.

Those who are not sanctified by the truth, rejecting "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3), and have separated Christ from His Spirit making His Spirit into a mysterious god, receive a spirit of Satan; we are told: "I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne; they did not know that Jesus had left it. Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God. I saw them look up to the throne, and pray, 'Father, give us Thy Spirit.' Satan would then breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace" {EW 56.1}.