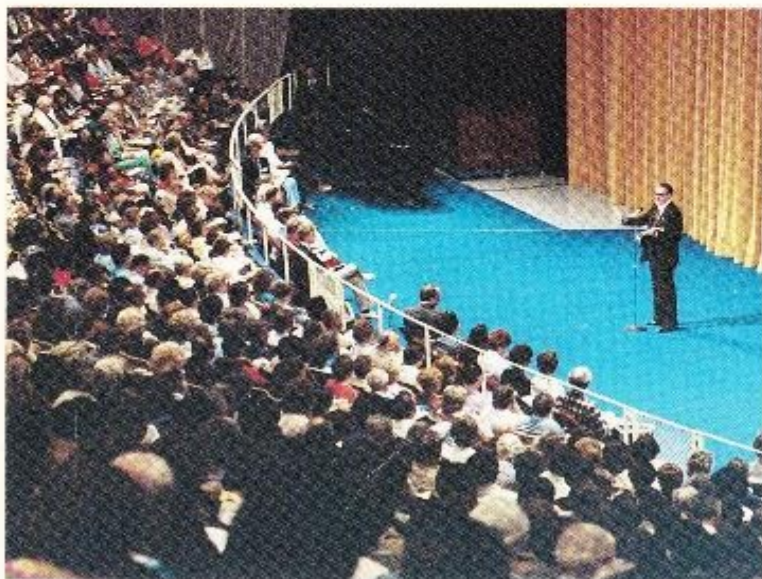
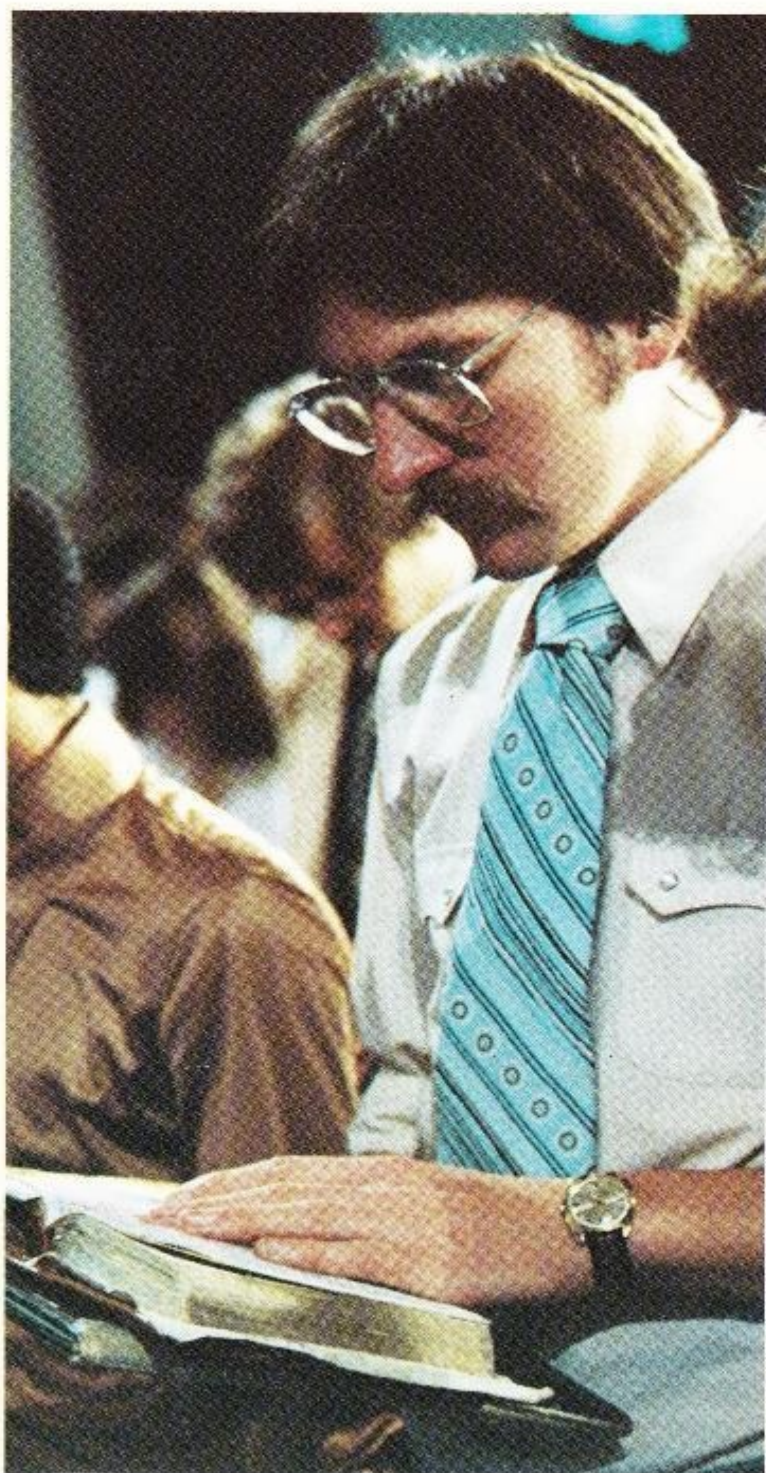


The Holy Spirit In The Now III

by Oral Roberts



The Holy Spirit in the Now 3

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Chapter 1, A Celebration Of Life: Hello, God! Hello, Man!

Suggested Scripture reading for this lesson: Genesis 1-3

WHAT ARE YOU? What kind of being are you? How did you come into existence? What is the thing that distinguishes you from all other creatures? What makes you an original? Why are you now God's material when once you were God's masterpiece? How far do you go back in history? Who is your Creator?

WHAT MAKES IT SO HARD FOR THE AVERAGE PERSON TO PRAY? Why does he find it difficult to talk to God? Why is it so difficult for you to have a concept of what God looks like? What is there about God that when the average person thinks about Him there is a spirit of awesomeness, a reluctance to speak with Him... to converse with Him? How can you walk with God? How can you sense Him as a being ... as your Creator... as your Redeemer... as your Savior... as your Friend?

In this chapter I want to consider the answers to these questions. I want to begin by going back to the very beginning of man... to his creation.

In the beginning there was an intimacy between God and man and between man and God. In Genesis 2:7 it says:

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

God formed man's body out of the dust of the ground and then He breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul ... a MAN. The man looked up into the face of his Creator. The implication of man's response to God, as indicated here in Genesis, is when man saw that he had been created, that God had given him his life and in it was his soul, his spirit, his existence, his identity, he looked up at God and smiled and said:

"Hello, God."

Man seized the gift of life exuberantly. He received it joyously It's all epitomized in these words, "Hello, God."

And God's response has the same implication: "Hello, Man."

It was said with a warm embrace. It's that same spirit a man has when he embraces the girl whom he's going to marry and says, "Hello, Darling, I want you to be my wife." Or when she says to him, "Hello, Darling, I want you to be

my husband.”

It’s the same spirit a mother feels when she first sees her newborn baby, "Hello, little Darling." And when that baby is able to focus his eyes and see his mother, out of the depths of his being is that feeling, "Hello, Mother." It was that kind of love and warmth with which God formed and created man so man could respond exuberantly:

"Hello, God.

I celebrate life!"

The first gift given to man was to be able to communicate freely ... to TALK with God. Then God gave man a home which He called Eden. God placed man in the garden to dress and tend it and keep it. In that garden was the same harmony and love with which God had formed and created man and through which man had responded, "Hello, God." In that garden there was no discord, no sickness, no sin, no disharmony, nothing that would bring unrest. There was only peace, joy, and uncomplicated communication. GOD MADE MAN TO BE AT HOME WITH HIM ... TO WALK WITH HIM ... AND TO TALK WITH HIM.

Then a new presence, anew voice, invaded Eden. In essence, that voice said:

"Go to hell, God."

That voice said to man:

"God is a liar. God is tricking you. God is cheating you. Don't you believe God. Don't speak to Him anymore. He isn't worthy of being spoken to because He has lied to you."

That voice belonged to the serpent, the devil. There is now a discordant note in Eden. A voice that is out of tune. A presence that has rejected God, who strikes through the power of choice that God has placed in man.

God has shown His trust in man by placing him in the garden and giving him all legal rights to everything in the garden ... to the fruit of all trees ... except one. Now in order for man to be MAN he had to be a person of choice. He had to be able to say yes or no ... to respond or to react to God. Man had to make a choice of whether or not he would follow God ... whether God would be God to him... or he would be a god to himself. Seeing that possibility in man, the serpent seized upon it. He struck at man and planted a seed of doubt, the doubt of the goodness of God, in his mind. The serpent said to Eve ...

Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? (Genesis 3:1).

And Eve replied:

We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said,

Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die (Genesis 3:2,3).

Then the devil slyly said:

Ye shall not surely die ... (Genesis 3:4).

In other words, the devil said, "God said you would die...but you won't!" Now the devil told a half-truth. He was referring to physical death, while God was talking about the death of man's spirit. And even then, the devil did not tell the truth about physical death, for ultimately the death of man's body would be involved.

When God said, "Ye shall. . He was speaking of the spiritual and moral image of himself in man. God told man ...

if he chose to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil... if he chose to live by his five senses alone ... if he chose to elevate his mind to the position of dominance rather than having his spirit dominate his life as it had originally been created to do ... then HE WOULD DIE.

That is, man's spirit would die. It would not cease to exist but it would be suppressed. Man's mind would dominate his life and man would say:

"I am my own master.

I will direct my own life.

I don't need God."

When Adam and Eve made their choice and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, man fell. Man fell from his first estate and in an instant of time it was like an orchestra of disharmony. It was like a thunderclap on a peaceful summer evening. It was like the light had been snuffed out and darkness filled the place. There was a cry of alienation. In that moment... the spirit of man was suppressed. Something in man died and he ran off and hid. He no longer felt comfortable with God.

THE "HELLO" DIED ON MAN'S LIPS ...

AND IN ITS PLACE CAME THE WORDS, "LET'S RUN AND HIDE.

LET'S CONCEAL OURSELVES. LET'S NOT LET ANYBODY KNOW WHAT WE ARE OR WHERE WE ARE. LET'S COVER OURSELVES UP."

The first negative word ever spoken was spoken by the devil. He said it to Eve who repeated it to Adam and together they said it to God who came inquiring: Where art thou? (Genesis 3:9).

And Adam said:

I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself (Genesis 3:10).

Adam meant that he had discovered what he had become as a result of his sin ... that he was exposed and he became afraid. Ever since then ...

ALIENATION has been the word that defines most clearly what man feels.

Alienation is what man is. He is alienated from God.

You see, when God formed man's body and breathed into it the breath of life and made him man, God wanted him to be a completed man. God made man so that he was able to walk and talk with God in togetherness.

Togetherness

An example of this togetherness is the marriage relationship. Marriage under God is based upon the togetherness that God and man once shared together. Man and woman were to share this same kind of togetherness. (Notice God did not make them man and man, or woman and woman.) God made them male and female so that a man and woman would leave their parents and everyone else and become ONE. They would cling and cleave unto each other (Matthew 19:4-6). In the unity of marriage they would be able to bring forth children; they would multiply and replenish the earth. The home that was Eden would be multiplied forever and man would live in that same kind of harmony and unity... in togetherness with each other... and in togetherness with God.

When you are together you are relaxed, you are at home. There is a perfect naturalness about it. When you enter your home ... when you sit down with your family... you drop all of the artificial covering that you might have had during the day, you relax. You can be yourself. You can laugh if you want to laugh. You can talk if you want to talk. You can be quiet if you want to be quiet. You are TOGETHER.

Now can you conceive of this same togetherness existing between God

and man? Well, that's the way God made us... so that our spirit, our mind, and our body would become such a perfect unity that God and we would be like ONE ... we would walk, we would talk, we would touch one another, we would feel one another.

That's What Creation Is All About... Togetherness!

Man is made to communicate, to talk. He has to talk either with his voice, or his hands, the motions of his body, the movements of his face, the expression on his countenance, the feeling in his spirit. He speaks with his voice ... with a look in his eye ... a touch of his hand... a nudge of his elbow. Man has to TALK.

Man has to be. He cannot be a fleeting something that lives in a house that doesn't become a home. He can't live with a woman who isn't his wife. Oh, he can live physically with her, but he can't be joined to her in the way God created him because if he lives with her merely as a woman, instead of a wife, it's an adulterous union. It's not a marriage, it's not a unity. It is a further act of sin.

The family reflects togetherness, the father, the mother, and the children becoming one. The family is a body. There is a unity that comes all the way from creation so that the father says to the children: "Hello, Son... Hello, Daughter."

And the child says:

"Hello, Dad."

The husband says:

"Hello, Wife."

And the wife says:

"Hello, Husband."

And they say:

"Hello, Life ... Hello, Neighbor... Hello, Friend."

LIFE as God created it is an unceasing, responding "Hello."

I remember dealing with a young couple along this line. They had a beautiful baby and a lovely life ahead of them, but their marriage was falling apart. I was asked by a friend to pray for them, which I did. Then they themselves asked to talk with me. It wasn't long until I felt that jarring note of disharmony between them. I sensed in my spirit that although they were married

in the flesh there never had been a real marriage nor a real home.

Suddenly one of them said something negative to the other. And right back came a negative reaction. I sat listening and watching them for several moments. It was nothing but negativism. It was the devil coming in the same way that he spoke to Adam and Eve, telling them to shut up this "Hello, God" and to say instead, "God, I don't need You."

Then I asked one little question, "What about the baby? What does the baby need?"

"Oh," they responded. "The baby ... the baby! What's going to happen to the baby?"

I said, "I want to share with you how you are violating life. When you violate life you violate your marriage.

When you violate your marriage, you violate your family.

When you violate your family, you violate your existence, your identity. Then you are a nothing. You are a zero. You are nothing but a negative in the world.

"This thing that you are creating within your marriage is from the devil. I want you both now to quit thinking of any negative thing about one another. Think only of something positive."

Then I quickly thought and said to the husband, "Do you remember when you courted this girl, when you put your arms around her and said, 'Honey, you are the only girl in the world for me'?"

"Yes," he said, "I remember that."

I turned to her and I said, "Do you realize that you are the only woman in the world for him? He chose you out of all the women in the world. You are an original... you are his masterpiece."

A smile came over her face and she eyed him for a moment and then said, "Yes, that's true. I remember what he said."

Then I said, "Do you remember how you felt about him then?"

"Oh, yes! I thought there was nobody like him." "Did you love him?"

"I loved him with all my heart."

"Did you ever tell him that?"

"Many times," she said.

Then I turned to him and said, "Have you ever said to her, 'I love you'? "

He said, "Well, by my actions, I have ... providing her a home, by taking care of her, by being a husband to her."

"But," I said, "have you ever SAID it?"

"No... not in so many words."

"Do you realize how important words are?" I asked. "God made man to TALK. In the Garden of Eden, God and man walked and talked together. And this is what God intends for you as husband and wife. Now, is it possible that you could be positive enough to look over at your wife, to recapture the feeling you had when you courted and married her, and to put all of that into three or four words and say, 'Honey, I love you'? "

"Yes," he said, "I could do that."

"Will you?"

"Right now??"

"Yes," I said, "RIGHT NOW." I wish I could have read his thoughts in those next moments. Finally he reached over, took his wife's hand, looked right into her eyes, and said, "Honey, I love you."

She said, "You've never said it before... I'm so glad you SAID it." Big tears were running down her cheeks.

I nudged her and she said to him, "I love you."

"Now this is the togetherness that God and man had as they walked together in the garden, and this same togetherness can be yours," I said. "You can have it if you will make a commitment and make it right now. Make it to God and make it to each other. Then make it to me ... that you will try never again to say another negative word to each other as long as you live. Instead, you will say positive, loving things. Will you make that commitment?"

And they said, "We will."

Now this is the big difference between the devil and God:

The devil points out your weaknesses, the negatives.

God points out the possibility of your best.

The devil pulls you down.

God pulls you up.

The devil wants you to walk in the night.

God wants you to see the light.

The devil wants you to live on the dark side of life.

God wants you to live on the sunny side of life.

The devil wants you to feel hate and give it.

God wants you to feel love and give it.

The man God created was complete but by his own choice he chose the negative spirit suggested to him by the devil and in that choice he became incomplete. Now the devil didn't do it all, he just made the suggestion. Man believed him and carried it out. Don't blame the devil for everything. Not even the devil is to blame for every negative thing that happens to us. He can never get through to us unless we agree with him ... unless we start wanting what he is offering ... unless we give way to the weakness in us rather than to the strength.

There's a verse in the New Testament that is worth its weight in gold in everybody's life:

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak (Romans 15:1).

Or, in other words, LET THE STRONG SUPPORT THE WEAK. For example, here is a man and woman. Wherever he is strong, let him give to her of that strength. Where she is strong, let her share of her strength with the husband at the point of his weakness. Never give to another of your weakness...only give of your strength. As the husband and the wife practice this ... as parents and children practice this ... always putting down the negative, and elevating the positive ... then they will experience real togetherness in the home as God intended.

I've applied togetherness particularly here to the marriage relationship. But it is true of all our relationships. And it begins with our relationship with God.

Jesus, The Second Adam, Came To Restore Man's Togetherness With God

On the night Jesus was born the angels sang:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men (Luke 2:14).

This was God saying:

"Hello, Man."

When the shepherds came to look upon the babe, and the wise men came bringing their gifts, they were really saying:

"Hello, God."

Wherever Jesus went healing and saving and delivering and bringing new life to men, they were looking up and saying, "Hello, God." They, like Adam, joyously accepted the gift of LIFE for in it was their existence, their identity, their soul, their salvation, their eternity.

In His human lifetime, people walked and talked with Jesus. There was a restoration of the original togetherness that God and man had. In our mind's eye we can see Jesus walking together with His disciples. They could walk with Him. They could talk with Him. Jesus could say something to them and they could talk back. They walked and talked together... "Hello, God."

"Hello, Man."

In the brief span of His lifetime, 33 years, we see the new Adam, Jesus Christ, recreating man as he once was. But even that was not enough, for Jesus said:

I go unto my Father...

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 [Holy Spirit]; 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.

It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you (John 14:12,16,17; 16:7).

In other words Jesus said, "I must go away so I can send you the Holy Spirit. It's better for you that I send you the Holy Spirit because He is WITH you now but He shall be IN you."

Jesus went to the cross and died. He shed His blood for the forgiveness of our sins. He rose from the dead that we might rise from the dead, that our spirits might be made alive again and ultimately the resurrection of the physical body. Jesus recreated His likeness in us again and then He ascended into heaven and

sat down at God's right hand. He was glorified and there He poured out the Holy Spirit.

On the Day of Pentecost those disciples who had failed Him ... who had become alienated from Him in the last desperate moments of His life ... who didn't understand why He had to go to the cross ... who couldn't believe that He had risen from the dead... but who now had enough evidence to know that He had risen ... had gathered in the Upper Room in Jerusalem (Acts 2). It's Pentecost morning and the Holy Spirit is outpoured. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues (I call tongues the prayer language of the Spirit), as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:4). Again it was man saying: "Hello, God."

And God, the Holy Spirit, saying:

"Hello, Man."

The Holy Spirit came to make man complete again ... to restore his togetherness with God. This means that we can now be at home with God. We can have this relationship with God, not only on Sunday morning when we go into a church and worship together with other believers; but also we can enjoy this relationship every day of the week, ALL the time. Because togetherness is TOGETHER. Every house is God's house. Every place is God's place. Everything you do, you do it as unto the Lord. It's saying, "Hello, God" in everything we do.

Through tongues, or the prayer language of the Spirit, we can again communicate more freely with God. We can more completely talk to God with our spirit, our real self.

In the life of the Apostle Paul we see he was filled with the Holy Spirit. He spoke in tongues, meaning he used the prayer language of the Spirit in his life of prayer and praise to God (1 Corinthians 14:14, 15). He understood HOW the prayer language of the Spirit restored our togetherness with God.

Paul, as a child of God and a witness of our Lord, was beaten many times. He was stoned and left for dead. He was shipwrecked and was in the stormy deep for numerous hours. He was forsaken by dearest friends. He was given a thorn in the flesh that hurt him and pricked him day and night. It was never removed from him. He was often bewildered at events that swirled around him. He was confused at things he couldn't understand. He was sometimes depressed. He was even hungry on occasions and without proper clothes or a decent place to live. He was put in jail where he often lay rotting away in the

filth of the dungeon (2 Corinthians 11:23).

All these things left their terrible marks on Paul. In his heart... in his spirit, the man inside ... were many wounds. It was enough to make him despair, to make him give up, to make him say, "What's the use. It's not worth it." But in 1 Corinthians 14:15 Paul explains how he was able to stand all these troubles. He says:

What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

Paul prayed with his spirit. That is, he prayed in tongues, the prayer language of the Spirit. Down deep in the deepest levels of his existence where he had been wounded and hurt... where the loneliness was felt so much ... he prayed with his spirit. The Holy Spirit gathered it all up and brought it up like a river of living water over his lips ... and the Holy Spirit gave him utterance. The Holy Spirit gave Paul's spirit the power to pray, Paul was using his tongue to speak the words to God like one would use a faucet to turn the water on. Paul prayed with the prayer language of the Spirit and told God what he wanted to say but didn't know how to say with his mind. His spirit was speaking to God in ways that his human mind could neither create nor comprehend.

Then Paul prayed with the understanding. That is, after he had prayed with the prayer language of the Spirit he paused and waited for God to give him the interpretation, or the understanding, of what his spirit had prayed (1 Corinthians 14:13). Then in his own language it was like he was saying, "God, this is what I wanted to say... this is how I really feel."

God's response came back through Paul's mind or understanding and Paul understood. He understood what was going on inside. It gave him inner release and his spirit was edified, lifted up.

Then Paul would sing with the spirit. And he would follow this by singing with his understanding. He would praise God, saying such things as ...

In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:37-39).

Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). It began in his spirit and came up through his understanding.

As he was praying and singing with the Spirit God was making him a complete man. Paul was saying,

"Hello, God," and God was saying, "Hello, Paul, we are together."

Once Paul said:

For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you (Philippians 1:23,24).

Paul had such TOGETHERNESS with God that even death did not make him afraid, he said he would gladly go. Yet on the other hand, he would remain and face life with that same togetherness, that same ability to talk with God, because it was better for others that he do so.

The Prayer Language Of The Spirit Is A Completing Process

It's putting us back, or at least puts us in a position to go back to the way God formed and created us. God wants our spirit and mind to come back together... to be as ONE as we live in our physical bodies so that we can reach the place where we can say, "Hello, God," and God can say to us, "Hello, Man." God wants us to enjoy the togetherness He had with man in the beginning.

Dialogue With Oral And Evelyn Roberts

Oral: Evelyn, when we say, "Hello, God" and think of this as talking and walking with God in togetherness, what does it say to you?

Evelyn: To me, it means I can know God well enough to tell Him anything I want to tell Him. I have friends who tell me, "Oh, I can't pray in public; I have never prayed in public." That's like my saying to you, "Oh, I don't know you well enough to speak to you in public. I will only speak to you in private." We should know God, and we can know God, well enough to talk to Him on an intimate basis, don't you think?

Oral: Yes, we should but I think many individuals would ask you the question. "How?" It isn't that a person doesn't want to pray. Probably he wants to more than anything else in the world, but how ... how do we overcome the inhibitions, the reserve that we seem to have between us and God ... this thing that makes it almost impossible for us to say, "Hello, God." HOW?

Evelyn: Do you think because man lost his intimacy with God through the fall that now God seems to be such an awesome person we dare not approach

Him? Could this be why we feel a reluctance to talk to Him? Is this why people have a reluctance to pray?

Oral: Evelyn, have you heard the expression, "cold intellectualism"?

Evelyn: Many times.

Oral: There seems to be something about the intellect of man when it is devoid of the warmth of the Spirit, that is really cold. It seems to withdraw from life and from people.

I think Jesus recognized this when He told the story about the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves and was robbed and stripped. A priest came by and passed on. Someone else came by and passed on. But finally a Samaritan, who in those days was considered by the Jews to be a lowly human being, had enough love to stop and pick him up, carry him to a place where he could be recreated and helped by doctors and friends. Then the Samaritan paid for it all and went on his way. I think what Christ was trying to say to us is that we've got to get back to the inner man because that's where love comes from. Love comes from the heart. The mind by itself is so cold.

Evelyn: I was just so taken with this idea of

"Hello, God." I think that's a beautiful way to explain it.

Oral: Evelyn, I believe God is trying to complete you as a person. He's trying to complete me as a man and you as a woman, to complete every person. He is trying to give each of us this ability not only to talk to Him, but to be with Him. Adam and Eve walked and talked with God. It isn't only saying something to God, it's saying something with God in a togetherness, a life in the Spirit, a walk in the Spirit. How does it hit you?

Evelyn: Well, when we pray first with our spirit and then with our understanding, words come to us that we hadn't even thought of before. I think these words, in our own language, are being created by the Holy Spirit too, and it is then so much easier to pray.

Oral: Yes. Different friends ask me, "Can we pray in the Spirit with our understanding?" I say, "Of course you can." Somehow they've gotten the idea that we think they can only be in the Spirit when they are praying in tongues. Well, you can be in the Spirit when you are praying with your understanding also. It just so happens that you cannot pray in tongues (or the prayer language of the Spirit) without the Holy Spirit giving you utterance. In our own language we at least can put words together...

Evelyn: Sometimes.

Oral: Sometimes, but even then, it's hard. But when you pray with your spirit in the power of utterance in tongues by the Holy Spirit, the understanding opens and the words in your own tongue flow more readily. It's important for words to come out through the understanding.

Evelyn: Since you said that, I will ask you a question that I was asked this past week: Is speaking in tongues the evidence that you have the Holy Spirit?

Oral: This is a question a lot of people ask and they ask it honestly. They have a right to ask it but I think it's the wrong way to ask the question. When you say, "Is speaking in tongues the evidence that you have the baptism in the Holy Spirit?" you are limiting the Holy Spirit. So much so that if you are not careful when you receive this experience you may only get tongues and not much to go with it. And that's a disaster. That's what turns a lot of people off, including me.

Evelyn: All right, now, let's have a Scripture for what you are saying.

Oral: Well, there is no Scripture that says tongues is the evidence.

Evelyn: But there is one in Acts that says what will happen to you when you receive the Holy Spirit.

Oral: That's Acts 1:8 "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost (Spirit) is come upon you." This actually means this experience puts you into the area of the Holy Spirit's ministries and the powers and gifts of the Holy Spirit. There you have access constantly to them. This includes tongues, or the prayer language of the Spirit, which releases your inner self, which helps you pray with your understanding. To isolate tongues and to build everything around tongues is like taking a piece of your clothing and saying that little piece of clothing is evidence that you are dressed.

Evelyn: I'm glad you said that because I wanted to hear you say what else comes with the Holy Spirit besides the prayer language, because there is so much more.

Oral: Speaking in tongues is not so much the evidence that you have something as it is the revelation of the Spirit's power within you. The beauty of the prayer language is that it opens up the person. It edifies him. That is, it releases the inner man and gives a warmth, a therapeutic or healing influence inside him. It's a tremendous help in dealing with alienation, loneliness, a feeling of isolation, a feeling of helplessness. When one prays in the Spirit, it opens him

up. But it also opens up his understanding, or what we call the mind, intellect. And it puts him more into the circle where the other ministries and gifts of the Holy Spirit may operate through him.

I think the term "evidence" came about because at a time, near the turn of the century, the Holy Spirit baptism was rejected. When people received it they were often kicked out of their churches. So they had to form a new movement, or denomination. Speaking in tongues became more or less THE distinguishing characteristic of their spiritual experience. Whereas it was genuine and real, it should not have been put up so high until it was all people could hear or see.

These people didn't mean it that way, don't misunderstand me. My parents were among that group and they didn't mean it the way people interpreted it. However, in their own way they contributed to it by not knowing a better phrase to use. But I think we should grow. Today we should have more knowledge. We should be better able to put tongues in proper perspective and find their most practical and expectative use.

We have those people who suffered, people like my parents who paid the price to hold on to this experience. They never gave it up, even with the abuses of it. They held on to it. But now we have more light on the baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues, and we see it's the normal part of the Christian life. To me, it's like breathing. It's so much a part of my normal communication with God, but mostly in my private devotions.

I do hope that no one will take negatively what I said because it is meant to be a positive statement and not to put anybody down. We need to take speaking in tongues, or the prayer language of the Spirit, and put it in its place. Just like we put anything else in its place.

For example, the Lord's Supper, the Holy Communion, is not everything. But it is an integral, living, redeeming part of the Christian experience. It's a part of our Christian walk but it's not everything. There's more.

In the same way, the prayer language of the Spirit is not everything, but it has its valid and valuable place in the Christian's daily life. I believe every child of God has the prayer language of the Spirit stored up inside, whether he knows it or not. It's been there all this time. He doesn't have to seek it, it's there. What he has to do is release it, to learn to use it to release his deepest feelings to God, to receive back God's response to it in his own understanding **SO THAT HE CAN BETTER PRAY AND PRAISE GOD WITH HIS UNDERSTANDING.**

The prayer language of the Spirit is not an either-or. It's the originating

point of the inner man of our prayer life leading directly into aiding our minds to pray with the fullest of our understanding. In actual practice the primary function of tongues is to improve the mind's ability and capacity to express oneself to God and to receive from God and to understand. The edification that comes with it is the most refreshing, instructive, and releasing possible, bringing into us God's kind of relief. And it's for the NOW.

Evelyn: Honey, I've never heard you express it in such detail before, but in my own experience and the experience of many other Christians, I know it's true. And I praise God for it.

Chapter 2, How You Can Experience A Personal Closeness With God

Suggested Scripture reading for this lesson: Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:13-19; Matthew 4. Also review Genesis 1-3.

There is a legend of creation which says that all of the tiny seeds came up before God. He asked them to choose what they would like to become. One of them said, "There's more water on the surface of the earth than anything else so I would like to be given fins so I can spend my life in the water."

So God made that seed a fish.

Another seed said, "There's more air than there is land or water, so I would like to be given wings."

And God made that seed a bird.

Another tiny seed came up to God and said, "I want to live on land so I'd like sharp teeth and claws so I can eat food and defend myself."

God made that seed a lion. And so on.

There was one little seed that was almost forgotten. Finally God said to that seed. "What would you like to become?"

This seed said, "God, I don't want fins or wings or fangs. I don't want any of those things. I want to walk and talk with You. I want to build and create as You do. I want to be made in Your image."

And God made that seed a man.

Now that's only a legend. In the Bible we learn that God created man and He created him His masterpiece. He created man in absolute positiveness. God created man and gave him the gifts of life ...

1. God Gave Man The Power Of Communication

It is said that God made man's body from the dust of the ground, but He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul (Genesis 2:7). Man came alive!

In the words used to describe God's creation of man, there is the suggestion that when God had finished creating man and man realized that he was a creation of God, he knew WHO he was. He knew WHAT he was and he

ACCEPTED himself and his Creator. He looked up into the face of God and smiled and said:

"Hello, God."

God looked and saw His masterpiece ... He had created something that had never existed before ... someone different from all the other living things. And God smiled back and said:

"Hello, Man."

The "Hello, God" and "Hello, Man" rang throughout man's existence. It was the exuberance of the Creator looking at His creation and the created joyously responding to his Creator.

2. God Gave Man The Power To Walk And Talk With Him In A Togetherness

God placed man in the Garden of Eden. There He and man developed a togetherness where they walked and talked together. There was a naturalness about it. There was no alienation or separation or loneliness. There was no deception or phoniness. They walked together in a naturalness that is as natural as breathing. They talked and they walked and it was a togetherness.

This togetherness is at the heart of the success of every human life.

It is at the heart of the success of every family.

It is at the heart of every success that we have in living together as brothers, as sisters, as neighbors.

It is the ability to talk and walk together.

It is not a talking that goes off on a tangent. It is not a walking wherein we go astray from God or from one another. But it is a talking and walking that produces a togetherness so that we achieve a unity. St. Paul speaks of it in the New Testament as the unity of the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:1-16). It is what Paul was referring to when he said that we live and move and have our being in God (Acts 17:28). It is what the Bible means when it says all men are created of the same blood... that there is no essential difference in men regarding race, or color, or nationality, or things of that nature (Acts 17:26). This togetherness, if we will accept it, is built into us by the creative love and act of God.

3. God Gave Man An Enduement Of Personal Power

God gave man an enduement of power over everything He had created,

including the earth. He said for man to take dominion over the earth... to subdue it (Genesis 1:28). This was the beginning of science. This is our rationale for treating our earth reverently, for cleaning up our earth. We do it for God's glory and thereby we do it for our own health, our own welfare ... that the earth may produce and that we might be able to feed and clothe ourselves and other people who need to be fed and clothed.

God gave man a powerful intellect. He was able to name every living thing. Someone has figured that there were over 700,000 living things that Adam gave a name to. Can you imagine the intellect of Adam ... an intellect so great because it was an extension of the intellect of God. God gave man an endowment of power. Power to build. Power to create. Power to reproduce. Power to replenish the earth and multiply himself.

4. God Gave Man The Great Gift Of The Power Of Choice

As a person with the power of choice, man is absolutely unique in all of God's creation. This power of choice was given to man that he might choose the path he would walk, that he might look upon life and decide which part of it he was going to accept or reject.

Would he walk and talk with God, since God made him that way... or would he decide to reject God and walk and talk in his own way and go astray? Would he reproduce and multiply in the way that God had made him, in a togetherness, in a unity and love, or would he become a selfish creature taking care of his own but denying the being and existence of someone else? This was a risk of God's faith. This was God believing in man. This is God's faith in a human being. This is God saying, "I will risk you're having the power of choice."

Now that's the greatest faith that has ever been known. When people say to me, "I have trouble having faith in God," I always reply, "If you have difficulty having faith in God, think of the difficulty God has in having faith in you and me!"

GOD TAKES THE GREATEST RISK OF ALL WHEN HE GIVES US THE POWER OF CHOICE, FOR THEN WE CAN ACT TOWARD HIM AS WE WILL...

1. We can be reverent or irreverent toward our Maker.

2. We can uphold the living God or smash the very image of God in our own spirit.
3. We can be reverent toward one another or irreverent.
4. We can do with His creation as we will. We can pollute it or cleanse it.

God risked everything in order to give man the power of choice. You have it. I have it. You are using it. I'm using it. We do every moment of our existence. God believes in you. God believes in me. God not only loves us but He believes in us. Say it to yourself, over and over again:

"God not only loves Me ... He also believes in ME!!"

Then there came a discordant note in the Garden of Eden. Satan came. In John 10:10 Jesus describes the devil as a thief. He said:

The thief [or the devil] cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy...

The devil came into the garden in the form of a serpent and he spoke through the serpent to man.

God had placed many trees in the garden but He separated one and said:

Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Genesis 2:16,17).

Up to this point man has been immortal ... he is innocent. In his innocence and immortality he is like a little child. A little child doesn't know that it is mortal. It doesn't know it can get sick. It doesn't know it's going to die one day. Only as a child grows older and comes to grip with life as it is does he or she know mortality will overtake each and every one of us. The Bible says:

It is appointed unto men once to die ... (Hebrews 9:27).

Death was not in the original plan of God. Jesus said:

I am come that they might have LIFE, and that they might have it more abundantly (John 10:10).

The original plan of God was to give LIFE. The "Hello, God" and "Hello, Man" was LIFE. It was a celebration of the life that is in God himself, health, strength, intellectual ability, spiritual discernment. It was... an INTELLECT that could grasp whatever is in this universe ... a SPIRIT that could comprehend God and translate to the mind the ability that it has to comprehend God ... a BEING who could comprehend the depth of the riches of the love of

God.

ALL of that LIFE was poured into man. God intended that man would always be immortal.

And God intends that man shall be immortal again. When our Lord returns He shall translate the living who believe in Him, and shall resurrect the dead who died in Christ, and death will be swallowed up in victory. Mortality shall be overcome by immortality and this corruptible flesh, this flesh that will die, will be taken up in incorruptibility. We will become a new Adam, even in our physical bodies, we will lose our present mortality (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54).

Well, how did man lose his mortality? He lost it because he believed the devil. He believed a lie. The devil said:

Ye shall not surely die ... (Genesis 3:4).

In other words, the devil said, "God is lying to you. He says you will die but I say you won't die."

Let me point out to you several things that the devil did not do on this occasion:

1. The devil did not deny the existence of God.
2. He did not deny that God had created man.
3. He did not deny the immortality of man.
4. He did not deny the power of God.
5. He did not deny the life of God.
6. He did not deny the tree of life.
7. He did not deny that man has the power of choice.

The Bible says, "The devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19). Satan knows. Satan believes! Only man has become a disbeliever.

Satan rebelled in his heart against God and was cast out of heaven. He lost his original estate of beauty and perfection before God, and became the devil. He sought a way to strike back at God. Since he could not become God himself, he now seeks to be God through a man, through the created man.

If Satan can possess a human being and get him to do his will, then he thinks he can still be God.

The prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel graphically portray how Lucifer

(Satan), one of the three archangels, decided that he would ascend above even the throne of God. He would take over. God saw the sin in his spirit and cast him out. He was cast to the earth (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:13-19).

In Luke 10:18, Jesus himself said:

I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

Satan lost his celestial light. He lost his heavenly body. He became a disembodied spirit. I believe a third of the angels of heaven followed Satan in this transgression and also fell from their first estate. They also lost their spiritual illumination, their celestial bodies, and became evil spirits, or demons. Being disembodied, they seek human embodiment. For man has the widest powers of expression.

The only power that Satan can really have is when he possesses or occupies a human life, because it is through man, God's masterpiece, that the devil can strive again to be God. It is through man that Satan strikes again at God.

Remember this, the struggle over your life is between God and the devil, it is not between people. Your battle is not with flesh and blood.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God ... (Ephesians 6:12,13).

God created you and He is trying to SAVE you to give you life more abundantly. The devil is trying to DESTROY you. He tried to usurp the authority of God, to dislodge Him as God, to become God himself. Now the only way the devil can strike at God is through His masterpiece, man.

It is true that man lost his first estate. He fell and transgressed in sin.

MAN IS NO LONGER GOD'S MASTERPIECE ...

BUT HE IS STILL GOD'S MATERIAL!

We all know that we are no longer God's masterpiece. I know that I am not. And you know that you are not. You and I feel our mortality ... we see it cropping up every day in weakness of body, mind, and spirit. We feel our mortality in the way we fail in relating to God and to people. Our mortality is seen in every funeral procession. It's in every hospital bed. It's in every discordant note that we say to someone, or they say to us. Our mortality is everywhere.

But God has not left you like that. While man is no longer God's masterpiece, he still is God's sacred material and God is working with that material. He is trying to create a new man.

Well, the devil set about to try to get man to disbelieve God. He said, in effect, "God has on a false image. God isn't what you think He is." He went on to tell man if he would follow his advice ... if he would eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ... then he would be a god.

Eve was deceived first, then Adam. He accepted the deception and was just as much deceived as she had been. When they ate of the fruit their eyes were opened.

They knew ... (Genesis 3:7).

That is to say, the whole mortality of their being was exposed to them. It was frightening. It was so different from the way God had created them, and had placed them in a home of togetherness, with an endowment of power and the power of choice.

So man hid. He covered himself up. His inner man was in a state of death and he became frightened. He became frightened in the presence of the full potential of death. He became frightened in the presence of being a limited person, of being mortal. He saw that he was futile in his existence. He had lost something that seemed irretrievable. He was afraid and he hid himself. He even tried to hide from God.

God came in the cool of the evening, as was His custom, and called out to Adam:

Where art thou? (Genesis 3:9).

And Adam said:

I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself (Genesis 3:10).

Adam hid because he had eaten of the forbidden tree and his eyes were opened. Suddenly HE KNEW! His intellect was placed upon a pedestal and it took over his life. His spirit, or his soul, was put down. In the suppression of his spirit came the death of his spirit. Suddenly he was on the level of the five senses. He was no longer on the level where God had created him, the supernatural level where he was immortal. He was on the level of tasting and feeling and smelling and seeing and hearing. He's now an ordinary human... on the physical level, the sense level. He is mortal.

You saw the beginning...

"Hello, God."

"Hello, Man."

Now do you see the ending?

Do you see the funeral procession?

Do you hear the funeral dirge?

Do you hear the melancholy music in the soul of man?

Mr. William Henley who wrote "Invictus", considered to be one of the greatest poems of all times, revealed in it some of what happens when man responds to the devil and rejects God. The last two lines of the poem read:

I am the master of my fate.

I am the captain of my soul.

It is said that Mr. Henley would recite those two last lines when he became drunk. In his drunkenness he would mumble, "I am the master of my fate ... I am the captain of my soul."

Picture in your mind, if you will, a drunken, stumbling man, a wreck of a human being. He had once been able to reach down deep inside himself and touch again some of the splendor of his creation and bring forth a poem as great as "Invictus." Now with slurred speech he says, "I am the master of my fate. I am the captain of my soul." They are hollow words and they are a picture of man's rebellious spirit. For only God is the master of our fate, only God is the captain of our soul.

In the spirit of man everywhere we have this irreverence toward God to the extent that we think, "I can take care of myself. I know how far to go." When we do this we are doing exactly what Satan deceived man into doing in the beginning. We are doing what caused man to lose what God had made him to be.

God Sent The Second Adam, Jesus Christ

God came down and became a man, a human being like the one He first made. This Second Adam, Jesus Christ, had the same gifts that were first given to man.

1. The Second Adam Had The Power Of Communication: He Could Walk And Talk With God

In A Togetherness

As a man Jesus was able to communicate ... He was able to talk with God. He could walk with God in a togetherness. He was heard to say:

I and my Father are one (John 10:30).

Jesus called God "Father..." God was seldom referred to as Father in the Old Testament. He was not really called "Father" in a personal sense until Jesus, the Second Adam, came. This is important. God's name in the Old Testament really meant "I Am." But in the New Testament Jesus introduced a new word to describe God, "Father." And it was in the most endearing terms, as we might say "Daddy..." or, as I called my father, "Papa. .

Jesus introduced a new kind of nearness to God. This is new to us but it was not new to Adam and Eve. And it was not new to the Second Adam. He introduced us to God by referring to Him in the most personal and affectionate terms..."Father." Jesus said:

When ye pray, say, Our FATHER which art in heaven ... (Luke 11:2).

Jesus was able to talk with God because there was nothing He had to cover up. There was no sin that the Second Adam wanted to commit. He could say, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," because the Second Adam was living this. He was then what He was before He was made man and what He would be after He no longer was mortal ... when He would be raised from the dead and glorified and when He sat down at God's right hand again.

There is an opposite to this communication that Jesus had with God. It is called hell. It's being a sinner and going to hell. People say, "Why would a merciful God send any human being to hell?"

Well, God doesn't send any man to hell. The Bible says that hell was made for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). It was never intended for man. It was not made for him. It was not conceived in the mind of God as a place where man would go. It was made for the devil and his angels. A man who dies and goes to hell goes there because he has already lived that hell in his heart. He has already accepted it as a way of life and refuses to change. A sinner who goes to hell is different from a sinner who turns to God. How important it is to you and me to know this.

A Sinner Who Turns To God Changes His Mind

About His Way Of Life.

A sinner who turns to God rejects the thoughts which have been negative in his life, which have been harmful and hurtful to himself and others. He rejects the unbelief he has had in God. He rejects the fact that he has not loved and given his love away in acts of joyous giving. He rejects that old life. He changes and he now desires in his heart a transformation, a change. He wants to become a new creature in Christ.

A SINNER WHO GOES TO HELL DOESN'T DESIRE TO CHANGE. He's already practicing the spirit that he will be practicing when he is in hell. He stores up his love within himself, refusing to give it away in joyous acts of giving. He would be out of place in heaven. He would hate heaven. He would want out of heaven because to him heaven would be hell. To him, God is anathema. This is the opposite of a relationship when a person calls God "Father." And it's very important to you to know another difference.

When you are converted, or saved by Jesus Christ, you become a Christian. But you don't necessarily become a disciple of Jesus. A disciple is a follower and learner. You can be converted from your sins and saved by the grace of God, in a moment. God can miraculously give you that kind of conversion and turn your life around in an instant, but it takes a lifetime to become a disciple of Jesus.

Conversion is what God does for you, discipleship is what you do for God. Conversion is that moment of seeking God when His grace freely forgives and makes you into an instant new creation and, through His grace, ready for heaven. Discipleship takes a lifetime of loving and giving. To do this you have to follow Him daily ... and learn of Him. Jesus said:

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me (Luke 9:23).

Here Jesus is not talking about the instant experience of salvation. He is talking about living for Him day-by-day, day-by-day. Jesus also said:

He that endureth to the end shall be saved (Matthew 10:22).

If your experience fades away, then perhaps you didn't get much in the first place. If it fades away it may be because you did not go on to become a disciple. You may have accepted God's forgiveness for your sins and the new nature He has given you, but you never accepted the fact that you are going to follow Him in loving obedience.

Even in the Garden of Eden, God told man to dress the garden. God gave man WORK to do. There was no permissiveness whatever. Man lived under the authority and discipline of God. And to be a disciple one must accept discipline, God's.

The original rule of God on the earth was a theocracy. It was God ruling from above. The Bible says:

To obey [God] is better than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22).

In our society we have a permissiveness, a rejection of discipline of almost any kind. We rebel against anything compulsory. We say, "I will have none of it." This goes all the way back to what the devil was trying to do through man in Eden, to get him to reject the authority of God. (Lucifer himself became the devil for the simple reason that he rejected the authority of God. He usurped that authority. He wanted that authority for himself.)

Jesus confirmed the importance of accepting God's authority in Matthew 8. There, the story is told of the Roman army captain who came to Jesus asking Him to heal his servant. Jesus said:

I will come and heal him (Matthew 8:7).

But the centurion quickly replied:

Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it (Matthew 8:8, 9).

Then Jesus said:

Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.. .Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee (Matthew 8:10,13).

Jesus was indicating here the importance of recognizing God's authority over our lives. What God wants us to be, we accept. We gladly obey. We receive it as a gift of life. And when we reach this place of discipleship where we are following Jesus daily... where we are learning of Him ... then we will realize that when Jesus asks something of us He always has a blessing to give us in return.

Christ's demands on us are not oppressive. They are demands based upon God's love for us and His belief in us. They are rooted in the seeds of love and faith which He always MULTIPLIES back in the form of our own needs being

met (Philippians 4:19).

2. Jesus Had The Gift Of Enduement Of Personal Power

The Holy Spirit came on Jesus at His baptism. After His forty days of temptation in the wilderness He went in the power of the Spirit into Galilee. There, great miracles began to take place:

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and HEALING ALL MANNER OF SICKNESS AND ALL MANNER OF DISEASE among the people.

And HIS FAME WENT THROUGHOUT ALL SYRIA: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and HE HEALED THEM. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan (Matthew 4:23-25).

Not only did Jesus have power over all manner of sickness and disease ... and the power to attract great multitudes of people ... but He also has power over the elements. The story is told in Mark 4:35-41 of how Jesus and His disciples began to cross the sea in the evening. A great storm arose. When the disciples reached the end of their strength and were beside themselves with fear, they came to Jesus and said:

Master, carest thou not that we perish? (Mark 4:38).

Then Jesus, who had been asleep, arose and rebuked the wind and said to the sea ...

Peace, be still (Mark 4:39).

And the sea was immediately calm. Then the disciples said to one another:

What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him? (Mark 4:41).

3. Jesus Had The Gift Of The Power Of Choice

After His baptism by John in the River Jordan, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness (Matthew 4). There for 40 days He was tempted by the devil. The devil came to Him just as he had to the first Adam and tempted Jesus

to reject the authority of God. The Bible says:

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, ALL these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me (Matthew 4:8, 9).

The devil knew what Jesus wanted, and he tempted Him at the vulnerable point, but Christ rejected this compromise and said:

Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve (Matthew 4:10).

The devil tempted Jesus many times. He tempted Him again in the Garden of Gethsemane just a few hours before His death. There, Jesus was again tested in His power of choice. It was hard for Jesus, and it's hard today, to say no to the devil. It's hard because we are mortal. It's hard because we want permissiveness. We don't want to accept authority over us.

I'm glad Jesus' humanity was shown in the Garden of Gethsemane, in that He didn't WANT to accept the authority of God. As a man, a human being like you and me, it was hard for Him to say yes to God and no to the devil. It was so hard that He sweated ... and the sweat become bloody (Luke 22:39-44). Finally Jesus said:

Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done (Luke 22:42).

It was clearly not Jesus' own personal will to go to the cross, it was His acceptance of God's higher will. He went to the cross because He understood the joy that would be set before Him (Hebrews 12:2). He knew that God would raise Him from the dead.

Jesus gave the seed of His life on the cross because He knew it would be multiplied back to Him in the Resurrection. He knew the seed He sowed would be returned by an abundant harvest. That is what brought Him the joy to have the courage to plant the seed of His life on the cross.

4. Jesus Had All The Great Gifts That The First Adam Had But He Went One Step Further, He Sent Us The Gift Of The Holy Spirit

In Jesus' lifetime He talked a lot about people thirsting and hungering. He said:

If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on

me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) (John 7:37-39).

Jesus frankly admitted that He, as the Second Adam, coming down in human form, was not enough. The human form of Jesus could not remain on the earth. Jesus said:

It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you (John 16:7).

You see, in the Garden of Eden when man rebelled and sinned he repressed and suppressed the spiritual part of himself. That part of him no longer functions as God created it to. Man elevated his intellect to the position of rulership over his life. He rejected the authority of God over him. He went his own way. The moment he did this, his understanding was blurred. He couldn't grasp God any longer; therefore, he hid himself. He was filled with inhibitions. He no longer knew how to talk to God, how to pray.

This is still so true of man today. I am astonished at how difficult it is for us to pray. I know at one time in my own life I was so inhibited, so inwardly bound up, that it was not natural for me to think about God. It was not natural for me to talk to God. There was a fear. There was a reserve toward God. I could talk to my father... my mother... my brothers ... my sisters ... my friends. I could talk to my teacher... but I could not talk to God.

It's a human reaction and I know what it is. The understanding of man has suffered a mortal blow by man's transgression. So now Jesus says, in effect, "After I am glorified ... after I am no longer in this human body... after I'm out of it and I'm back in My limitlessness, where I am no longer limited, I will send you the Holy Spirit. And when the Holy Spirit comes, He will be IN you.

"I am visible to you but God, the Holy Spirit, will be invisible. I have been with you, but He shall be in you. I am physical and limited to you now, but He will not be physical and limited. I am limited by living in this mortal flesh, but the Holy Spirit will not be limited by living in mortal flesh.

"And the Holy Spirit will teach you whatsoever I have said unto you."

The Apostle Paul further explained the purpose of the Holy Spirit. In Romans 8:26, 27, he tells us:

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us with

groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Now connect this with 1 Corinthians 14:14,15 where Paul goes on to say:

For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

What is it then ? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also:

I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

Listen carefully. What Paul is saying is this:

"What I say with my spirit will become what I'm saying with my understanding. Or, in other words, the opening up of my spirit will open up my understanding. The words that I say in tongues, or the prayer language of the Spirit, are being said by my spirit which has been renewed by the Holy Spirit. When I pray with my spirit those words become words of my spirit. Next, they become words of my understanding. And that which is spirit becomes flesh. Just as God became flesh,

God is the Word and the Word became flesh, so through the Holy Spirit what we feel and express toward God with our spirit we then can feel and express toward God with our understanding."

When we pray in the Spirit we lose those inhibitions and fears that we have had toward God since childhood. We lose that reserve. We get into a new freedom, if we WILL ... if we will... if we will.

When I was a little boy, oil was discovered on my uncle's farm. He was paid thousands of dollars for it. He had all the money he wanted so he bought the most expensive car that could be bought at that time, but he never learned to drive it. In the same way, a person can be filled with the Holy Spirit and pray with his spirit in tongues and yet never really know what he has. He receives very little benefit from the experience because he doesn't make the Word become flesh. He doesn't make what is in his spirit come alive in his understanding.

God made us rational creatures. He made us to understand and comprehend himself. God made us to communicate with Him ... to talk and to walk with Him. He made man to take dominion over this earth and to subdue it. He made man to have a togetherness with Him and with one another. He did not

make man to be inhibited ... closed off ... shut up from one another. God made us to be open toward himself and open to each other. He made us to love one another.

Through the Holy Spirit God wants to restore to you and to me the great gifts that He first gave to Adam, and that were manifested through Jesus Christ, the Second Adam. Through the Holy Spirit God enables us to talk and walk with Him. He enables us to pray with our spirit and to pray with our understanding, to think with our spirit and to think with our understanding. This is the glory of Jesus sending the Holy Spirit back to you and me.

God made us to walk in the Spirit. And that's a walk of love. In 1 Corinthians 13 we are told about this love. (The King James Version uses the word charity for love but I prefer love, which is expressed in joyous acts of giving.)

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away ... And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

In this great passage of Scripture God says to you and to me:

"HELLO ...WITH LOVE!" and we answer back:

"HELLO ... GOD!"

I LOVE YOU... THEREFORE I JOYOUSLY GIVE MY LOVE AWAY!"

Chapter 3, Jesus Has A Gift For You That Can Change Your Life

Suggested Scripture reading for this lesson: Acts 2

Jesus lived on this earth for 33 years ministering to humanity. He was in the FLESH. God had come down in a human form. Jesus was divine but His body was born of a young girl, the virgin Mary. Jesus' physical body had no human father. The conception was by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20). Jesus was God on the one hand and man on the other. He was total man and total God. This man Jesus was God in the flesh. He came to show us what God is like:

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost [Spirit] and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him (Acts 10:38).

In order for Jesus to become man He had to limit himself. He had to lay aside the glory, the power, and the riches He had had in heaven and come down and be born of the virgin. He came down and lived on the level of the five senses, seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting. He lived on the physical level. He was a man. But also He was filled with the Holy Spirit just exactly as we must be. Jesus lived as a man, as a human being, always dependent on God.

In becoming a man Jesus limited himself to time, to space, and even to death. He did this because we are limited to time, to space, and to death. But Jesus knew He couldn't remain in that human form forever because in becoming a man the physical part of Him became mortal.

You see, the first Adam became mortal when he chose to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 3). He was immortal when God created him, but through his sin of rebellion he became mortal. That is, man became subject to death.

In order for the Lord Jesus, the Second Adam, to become man and to sit where we sit and to feel what we feel, He had to become mortal also. His body had to be mortal. That's a very important point to remember.

During the latter part of His ministry on earth Jesus began to prepare the disciples for His leaving and for the coming of the Holy Spirit. He said:

I go unto my Father. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever (John 14:12,16).

The Greek word used in this verse for Comforter is "paraclete." Paraclete

means "one called alongside to help."

In other words, Jesus was saying:

"The Comforter is the Holy Spirit. But He won't come in a physical body as I have.

He will not come as a limited person as I am.

He will not come subject to time and to space and death as I have. But He will be My other self."

Jesus realized that we would have a great need for the Holy Spirit... that we would need Someone who would be unlimited and invisible ... One who would be IN us ... who would abide with us forever.

He may abide with you forever... Now these words were very precious to the disciples. Their Lord was talking about going away They didn't understand this. He, who they thought would live forever in the human form, was saying to them:

It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you (John 16:7).

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost [Spirit], whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:26).

Jesus was saying:

"It's much better for you if I don't live forever in this mortal body... that I take it out of the world and that I come back in the Person of the Holy Spirit. For in the Holy Spirit I'll be unlimited and invisible. I will be IN you and whatsoever I have tried to share with you these three years that you have not understood ... when I come back as the Spirit, the Spirit will teach it to you.

The Spirit will reveal it to you. The Spirit will tell you all that I've been trying to teach you. He will open it up to you."

Now why couldn't Jesus give the Holy Spirit to His disciples while He was still here on the earth ... before His death, His resurrection, and His ascension to the Father? Because Jesus himself, in His physical body, was their Comforter. He was everything to them. But when He went away He said that He would come back, not in the human form that He came with, but in the unlimited, invisible form of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, then, would be Christ in every man's NOW. He would

be alive forevermore. He would ABIDE FOREVER... He will always be in the NOW!

This means that you do not have to risk all your faith on history. Two thousand years ago Jesus lived, that's a fact of history. But you don't have to go all the way back in history. The Holy Spirit will make Jesus alive to you right NOW.

JESUS CHRIST CAN BE AS MUCH ALIVE, INVISIBLY AND IN HIS UNLIMITED FORM, IN YOU NOW AS HE EVER WAS WHEN HE WAS IN HIS HUMAN BODY 2,000 YEARS AGO ... EVEN MORE SO. THE HOLY SPIRIT BRIDGES HISTORY AND BRINGS GOD INTO EVERY MAN'S NOW .. YOUR NOW.

The disciples had to wait to receive the Holy Spirit until Jesus had been raised from the dead, ascended back to the Father and sat down at the Father's right hand. So it was a matter of timing.

JESUS PROMISED TO SEND "THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER"

Just before His ascension into heaven Jesus gave some final instructions to His followers. There on the hillside He said:

And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God (Luke 24:49-53).

This phrase, "the promise of the Father," we find again in the first chapter of Acts where an account of the ascension is also given:

And, being assembled together with them,

[Jesus] commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost [Spirit] not many days hence (Acts 1:4, 5).

We read later in the second chapter of Acts where Peter also used this phrase:

Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of

the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost [Spirit], he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear (Acts 2:33).

For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call (Acts 2:39).

Now the Promise of the Father and the infilling of the Holy Spirit mean the same thing. And we have the record of what happened when the Promise was given to Jesus' followers. The story is found in Acts 2. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place (Acts 2:1).

Pentecost means fiftieth. The Day of Pentecost was 50 days after the Jewish Passover. The Jews celebrate the Passover feast in remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt. You will remember God sent Moses to Egypt to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. But the Egyptians did not want the Israelites to leave. They were their slaves and Pharaoh refused to let them go. So God sent plagues on the land of Egypt, each more severe than the last. Still Pharaoh refused to set the children of Israel free.

On the night before God led the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, the final and seventh plague struck the homes of the Egyptians. The firstborn in each household was slain by the angel of death.

In order that the homes of the Israelites might be spared God told them to slay a lamb and place the blood of the lamb on the door post of their homes. Then when the death angel saw the blood he would PASS OVER their homes and their children would be spared.

Every year after this the children of Israel, the Jews, celebrated the Passover feast in commemoration of this occasion. However, the Christian does not celebrate the Passover feast; for Christ is the real Passover Lamb slain for the sins of the world.

For even Christ our Passover [lamb] is sacrificed for us (1 Corinthians 5:7).

The Bible tells us that when the Day of Pentecost came, the disciples and followers of Jesus were gathered in one place in one accord. According to Acts 1:15 only about 120 people were present in the Upper Room. These included the apostles, Peter, James, John, and the others, Mary, the mother of our Lord; and other men and women. They had gathered there in the Upper Room for, I believe, ten days. They had been praying and praising and blessing God continually. They finally got IN ONE ACCORD. This is the first time that we read of this happening to that group. More amazing still, they got in one accord

IN ONE PLACE. Now when you can get in one accord that is great. But when you get in one accord and in one place, that's a miracle!

I don't know if we realize that this is beginning to happen again. I see it everywhere; groups achieving a oneness, a unity, a harmony. Often they have it while gathered in the same place. It is no wonder that God can do so much when people get into the unity of the Spirit. I'm sure these people had differences but they were able to rise above them. You seldom can resolve all your differences with your Christian brothers but you can get in one accord if your spirits are really turned toward God.

While they were sitting there worshiping and praising God they were able to get it all together for themselves. They certainly were followers of our Lord. They certainly believe on Him now. They don't understand His death yet ... they don't yet know why He had to suffer so ... they don't quite understand the Resurrection, even though He appeared unto them ... but they do BELIEVE it.

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind ... (Acts 2:2).

It was a sound... it was not a wind but it sounded like a wind.

And it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire ... (Acts 2:2, 3).

Now there was no actual fire there. These were "cloven tongues" or split tongues that one could see with the eye.

And it sat upon each of them (Acts 2:3).

Probably on their heads. The tongues of fire and the sound of the rushing wind were symbolic, they ushered in the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit. There is no record of this happening again after this occasion.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost [Spirit], and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:4).

Now this verse is "where it's at." If you had only one verse, this would be it. This is the pivotal verse of the entire chapter. This is the key verse.

They Were All Filled With The Holy Spirit And Began To Speak With Other Tongues As The Spirit Gave Them The Ability.

They spoke in "other tongues." They spoke in languages that they had not learned. It was miraculous. There's no doubt about that. And they were given this ability by the Holy Spirit.

And there were dwelling at Jerusalem [at this particular time] Jews, devout men, out of every nation.. . Now when this was noised abroad.. . (Acts 2:5,6).

Now what was noised abroad? The fact that this group of unlearned Galileans were speaking in languages that they had never learned. When this fact was known in the community a multitude of foreign speaking Jews who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover feast rushed to the place where it was happening.

Now the one hundred twenty were not speaking in tongues for the benefit of these outsiders. This was not the purpose of their tongues speaking. I cannot say anything more important than that.

Jesus had promised these followers that they would receive THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER which is the Holy Spirit. It was a PROMISE ... a promise to each of them. When it happened ... when the promise was received ... they were each given the ability to speak in other tongues without ever having learned them.

This was an extremely personal thing. It was first promised to these disciples, the first followers of our Lord, and they began to speak with other tongues as the Holy Spirit gave them the ability. (Later we will see that this promise of the Father was also given to other people as well.)

Then the crowd gathered and the people came in. They were from different parts of the world and spoke the languages of their own particular countries. They could tune in to what the one hundred twenty were saying in tongues. And they were quite astonished. They had never heard anyone speak in a tongue he had not learned. Now what was it that they heard the one hundred twenty say?

We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea... (Acts 2:11-14).

Peter stood up and in his own language began to explain to the crowd what was happening. And what was happening? These disciples were releasing from their inner man, in other tongues, praises for the wonderful works of God. They were speaking of God's mighty works. The crowd came simply to eavesdrop.

The one hundred twenty had received the promise of the Father, the infilling of the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak with other tongues. These "other tongues" are what I call...

The Prayer Language Of The Spirit

It is the language of the spirit, not of the intellect. It is talking to God out of the depths of your inner being ... out of your spirit. Your spirit is now able to talk to God because the Holy Spirit has come in and by the fusion of your spirit with the Holy Spirit (much like your two hands joining together) it produces the prayer language of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit enables your inner man to talk to God as well as your intellectual man. Your spirit can communicate directly with God, without the aid of your mind, through "other tongues" given to you by the Holy Spirit.

The first gift you receive when you receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit is the prayer language of the Spirit, whereby you can communicate with God directly with your spirit. The first gift is COMMUNICATION. The one hundred twenty were communicating with God with their spirits.

You will remember that this is the way God made Adam in the beginning. Adam walked and talked with God in a togetherness ... in a communication. In 1 Corinthians 14:2 the Apostle Paul tells us:

He that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God.

Unto whom?

Unto God!

The one hundred twenty were speaking TO God from their inner man ... their spirit ... and this prayer language of the Holy Spirit was coming up over their tongues. Their tongues were like faucets that let us turn the water on when we need it. That is what the tongue is for, it's like a faucet. It conveys what is to pass through it. It is an instrument for speech.

Notice that the praise was going up to God. It was not going to man ... it was coming up from the inner man, over the tongue, and up to God. It was not horizontal, man to man. It was vertical, man to God. Not but I've often used the three V's to describe tongues, or the prayer language of the Spirit. Tongues are vertical, valid, and valuable.

So many people think that right here the one hundred twenty preached the gospel in foreign languages through speaking in "other tongues" but they are

missing the whole point. The tongues that the crowd heard merely astonished them. It amazed them and even made some of them doubt.

When the crowd gathered, Peter stood up and began to preach. Now, obviously, the others who had been speaking in tongues while they were in their own prayer group became quiet in order for the great crowd to hear Peter speaking. They ceased using the prayer language, as did Peter, for now there was another purpose involved. It was time for the gospel to be preached, but NOT IN TONGUES. Peter spoke in his own language and began to explain what was happening. Suddenly Peter KNEW... he UNDERSTOOD.

THROUGH THE EXPERIENCE OF THE INFILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT PETER'S MIND HAD BEEN ENLIGHTENED, HIS UNDERSTANDING HAD BEEN OPENED.

At this point I want to remind you that when Jesus was on the cross He said:

Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do (Luke 23:34).

Or, Jesus said:

"Father, forgive them because they don't KNOW what they are doing. In their mortality, with their limited mortal minds, they don't know that they are killing the Lord of life. They are acting in response to their minds... from the standpoint of their minds."

The crowd acted from the mind that Adam chose to live by when he fell. He chose this in place of living by his spirit. Adam put his spirit down and elevated his mind and chose to live by his brain, his intellect. He said, in effect, "I am the master of my fate... I am the captain of my soul." That's the spirit of Adam. And it was the spirit of the people who killed Jesus. It was this spirit that said, "We aren't going to have You. You are not going to be our Lord ... You are not going to tell us what to do. We are going to kill You."

But Jesus said:

"They don't know what they are doing.

In their mind, they don't really understand. They don't grasp the terrible thing they are doing."

But Peter, after speaking in tongues, and through it having his mind enlightened, KNOWS. He UNDERSTANDS. His understanding is no longer blurred and he speaks to the people who have gathered, speaking no longer in tongues (which is to God) but in his own tongue which was probably Aramaic.

He says:

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it (Acts 2:22-24).

In other words, Peter said:

YOU KILLED HIM!

YOU KILLED HIM!

YOU KILLED HIM!

And it began to sink in. The effect of Peter's sermon was devastating. In verse 37 of Acts 2 we read:

When they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

Notice that they were "pricked" or convicted in their hearts. Peter was preaching with his understanding to their hearts, to their spirits. He knew they wouldn't understand if he spoke only to their minds.

Peter had been filled with the Spirit, he had spoken in tongues and the tongues had released his inner man. His spirit had been released and through the release a terrific positive effect had taken hold of his mind. He now understood who killed Jesus. He understood why Jesus died. He understood the Resurrection.

If you will read the entire second chapter of Acts you will see that Peter now really understands the Resurrection. He understands the whole thing. Peter now understands, in seconds, what he had not been able to understand in three years of listening to Jesus, face-to-face. The Holy Spirit did this for him.

Peter preached this sermon in his own language and it touched their hearts. It got down in their spirits. Notice that the speaking in tongues had astonished them, but the sermon, the preaching of the Word, CONVICTED them. And they said:

What shall we do? (Acts 2:37).

And Peter replied:

REPENT... (Acts 2:38).

Repent means to change your mind. The downfall of man began with his choosing his mind over his spirit. God made man spirit, mind, and body. He intends for us to use them all, but man was created a spiritual being. His spirit was to rule his mind and body. But man, in rebellion against God, suppressed his spirit, and raised his mind and made it dominant in his life.

Repentance Has To Do With The Mind

Through the fall of man, your mind has been blurred, it doesn't see God clearly. As someone has said, your mind acts as a censor and it censors out what God says to you. A censor lets only certain things go by. For example, if a prisoner writes a letter, that letter is intercepted by a censor and read and portions of it may be deleted ... so that the person who receives the letter may or may not receive the entire letter as it was written.

In the same way, when Jesus was on the earth talking to His disciples they listened to Him; but their minds censored out parts of what He said. Their minds intercepted lots of things that Jesus said and would not let it get down into their spirits.

But now on the Day of Pentecost Jesus is filling them with the Holy Spirit and the Spirit gets down into their spirits so they can speak in another tongue which their mind has not learned. The mind can't censor this new tongue because it doesn't understand what the tongue is saying. This new tongue is created by the Holy Spirit, who knows what the will of God is, and it is to God's will that this new tongue is addressed.

The entire sermon on the Day of Pentecost was given by a man who only a few minutes before could not have preached it if his life depended on it. Because Peter's mind could not understand, it was not until after he was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues that his mind opened up and he began to remember and to understand what Jesus had been telling him.

That day Peter probably preached the strongest sermon that has ever been preached. That sermon brought conviction for sin to the hearts of 3,000 people who had previously eavesdropped on the "tongues speaking."

The sermon that was preached on the Day of Pentecost was carried by these people perhaps to the ends of the earth, but it was not preached to them in tongues or later by them in tongues ... it was carried in their own languages back to their nations.

We do not preach or teach in tongues. We PRAY or PRAISE GOD in tongues for our own personal benefit, to open up our own understanding of God and a clearer view of His will for our lives, also to edify or build up our inner man.

After Peter told the crowd to:

Repent, he went on to say:

And be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost [Spirit], For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call (Acts 2:38, 39).

HERE THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER IS EXTENDED TO THE GENTILE WORLD ... TO PEOPLE OF EVERY AGE ... TO EVERY PERSON THAT GOD SHALL CALL TO HIMSELF. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized (Acts 2:40,41).

Were they baptized in water or were they baptized in the Holy Spirit? It doesn't say, but I'll always believe that they were baptized in the Holy Spirit exactly the way the one hundred twenty were.

The same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers (Acts 2:41,42).

These new converts entered a discipleship ... a whole new way of life. It was a whole new beginning ... a celebration of life. It was "Hello, God" and "Hello, Man" for the rest of their lives.

IN SUMMARY: Speaking in tongues, or the prayer language of the Spirit, is a means to ...

1. COMMUNICATE with God the way Adam did, directly, straight from the depths of your spirit, to God.
2. Enlighten your understanding so that your mind can grasp what your spirit is saying to God.
3. An extra endowment of personal power so that you can BE a better witness of Jesus Christ. Now some people think of witnessing as saying a lot of words or doing something, but Jesus said:

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost [Spirit] is come

upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8).

Your witness is YOU. Your witness is you... yourself... it is the power of the Holy Spirit who is within you. In you in the NOW! In you FOREVER!

As I end this particular lesson Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 14:5 come sharply to mind:

"I would that ye all spake with tongues . . . Also his words, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all" (1 Corinthians 14:18).

The beneficial results of using the prayer language of the Spirit in my daily private devotions have done so much to open my mind to God and His greatness, to His mighty works, that I cannot thank Him enough for revealing to me the exciting privilege of speaking TO Him first in tongues, then with my understanding. While I am learning better every day to use the prayer language of the Spirit and expect to continue to learn, I, like Paul, wish every child of God would pray in tongues often and experience it's exhilarating, therapeutic, and instructive benefits. I know it is simply the Holy Spirit enabling you to receive and learn more of the unlimited Christ and make Him more alive and real to you.

Chapter 4, Philip, A Man For All Seasons

Suggested Scripture reading for this lesson: Acts 6:1-5; Acts 8:5-22

We first hear of Philip in John 14:8 when he came to Jesus and said, "Shew us the Father . . . In other words, Philip said, "Jesus, what does God look like? What is God like?" Philip was a man who was concerned about knowing what God was like.

Jesus said:

Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father (John 14:9).

Or, Jesus was saying:

"In the revelation of myself you have seen the revelation of God. God is like I am ... and I am like God."

Jesus came to show us what God is like. But Philip is the one who asked the question.

We see Philip on another occasion when certain Greeks came to him and said, "Sir, we would see Jesus" (John 12:21). Philip was instrumental in seeing that these men got introduced to Jesus. Although we are not told what happened, we are very grateful that Philip had this interest in these people, he wanted them to see the Lord.

Philip was a very sincere, dedicated man who wanted to know God. He was instrumental in introducing people to God. Philip was also there on the Day of Pentecost and received the infilling of the Holy Spirit and spoke with tongues as the Spirit gave him utterance. The prayer language of the Spirit became real to him and an integral part of his life with Christ, and in becoming a bold witness for our Lord.

In Acts 6, we see Philip in a serious part of the new church's life. The Early Church in Jerusalem was feeding a tremendous number of people. Many who had accepted Jesus Christ as Messiah lost their positions, their jobs, their careers, their social standings, their homes. They were thrown out upon society. It's reasonably evident that these people were fed in common, each of them contributing what food they might have so that everybody would have something to eat.

The Jewish converts who had come from Greece felt that they were being

discriminated against. They thought the Jewish people who were Jerusalem born were getting the better cuts of meat and a little better deal on the food. So the apostles were having quite a problem in handling it. They decided to select seven men to handle this bit of business. One of those chosen was Philip.

Philip was a man filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom, and a man of honest report. I think perhaps the most significant thing about Philip in this situation that is most meaningful to us today, is that... PHILIP COUNTED WHEREVER HE WAS AS HIS PLACE OF WITNESS.

WHATEVER HE DID FOR GOD WAS HIS WITNESS.

Philip didn't feel that he had to be somebody special ... or have some special position or designation. He just did whatever had to be done.

If preaching was needed, he would attempt it.

If a layman was needed, he would be willing to be a layman.

If he was asked to be a businessman for a few months of the year, he would try to do that too.

Philip Was A Man For All Seasons

It wasn't long until tremendous persecution took place against these Christians in Jerusalem, to save their lives, they had to flee. Philip took the toughest assignment of all. He wound up right in the middle of the city of Samaria.

Believe me, if you know a little about the background of Samaria you would agree that Philip took the toughest assignment. Evidently Philip believed that if it was real easy, it wasn't worth doing. But if it was hard, he was ready to go. That is the real spirit of this man Jesus Christ. Apparently the Holy Spirit is wanting us to understand that there are a lot of tough things that we must face, and we are to do them with joy in our hearts.

Samaria was populated by a people who were racially mixed. They were looked down upon by the Jewish people and in turn they looked down upon the Jewish people. Neither group wanted to be around the other. They worshiped the same God, but the Jews said, "You must come up to Jerusalem to worship," and the Samaritans said, "No, you must go to a certain mountain." The institutions each of them had formed to worship God were entirely different, and it further divided them.

The Samaritans were a very immoral people and deeply involved in

witchcraft. The whole city was following after a man by the name of Simon, who was a sorcerer. He had introduced the occult into the city of Samaria. He had been so successful at it that the people thought Simon was the great power of God.

There was much illness in Samaria. In fact, there was a spirit of oppression and depression in the city. A pall hung over the place. In the sense that I describe Samaria, I describe most of the cities of the world. For most of our cities have an air of depression. There is certainly no spontaneous joy in the cities of our society because the problems have become so great. There is ... the problem of sickness of every kind the problem of the occult the problem of racism and prejudice the problem of institutional religion that creates a great deal of bitterness between even dedicated Christians the problem of how to be a witness wherever we are the problem of humility... of being willing to be at any moment whatever Christ would have us to be, and go wherever He would have us to go ... whether it is hard or easy... to really tackle it and do it as unto the Lord.

These are the problems that exist among us today and they existed in Samaria.

“Philip Preaches Christ” Is The Answer

Now one would think that as Philip undertook to have an influence upon the people of Samaria, he would have a long line of things he wanted them to do, certain panaceas to recommend for the solving of their problems. But the Bible makes it clear that Philip simply did one thing:

Philip ...preached, Christ unto them (Acts 8:5).

It seems simplistic to face a person with great needs and give him the simple message of Christ... to say to him, "Christ is your answer." Can you think of anything more simplistic than that, particularly in the way that people think of solutions to their problems? Christ is ordinarily the last one a person thinks of when he's concerned about solving a problem. He goes to maybe a dozen or more different types of individuals or groups or agencies to get his problem solved, and he bypasses the one solid force in the universe who is the Source of all solutions to our human problems, Jesus Christ of Nazareth who is in the now of our lives and problems.

You would think also that as Philip faced the city so racially divided, so full of religious bias and bitterness, with so many of them physically and mentally ill, that he would have all kinds of remedies to offer. But he preached

Christ to the city. His one message was, Christ is the answer.

But there was a lot of difference in the way Philip understood Christ and presented Him and the way most Christians think of Christ in the now, and present Him to solve the needs of people. The Christ Philip preached to these people in the city of Samaria was not the Man who had walked in the flesh ... He was no longer the Man who was in a limited body and who had been visible and physical. Philip was no longer thinking about Jesus as being on the sense level. He had seen Him with His own eyes and heard Him with his own ears and touched Him with his own hands. But Philip was presenting Christ now in an entirely different way.

Philip Was Presenting A Glorified Christ ...

One whose body had been nailed to the cross who had been killed and buried who had risen from the dead who had laid aside all of these earthly things, these human limitations, and had ascended far above the kingdoms and principalities of this world who had sat down at the Father's right hand who had been reinvested with all the riches He had laid aside in order to become a man and to feel the needs of people PHILIP PREACHED THE RISEN GLORIFIED CHRIST... THE SON OF GOD ... JESUS CHRIST THE UNLIMITED, INVISIBLE LORD COMING NOW IN THE FORM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Philip was thinking of the unlimited Christ in the sense that there was no problem any individual in Samaria had that could not be solved. Philip preached this Christ and he had a knowing in his heart that Christ could save every person in the entire city.

Philip didn't come to the Samaritans with mere philosophy or current events. He didn't come to them with something out of a book he had just bought. He came to them in a PERSONAL LIVING RELATIONSHIP that he had with Christ in which he knew through the Holy Spirit that he could do "greater things" than even Jesus had done. Jesus had made it clear to men like Philip that this would be so. He had said:

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you (John 16:7).

He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father (John 14:12).

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 14:16,17).

Or, in other words, Jesus had said:

"It's better for you that I go away for if I go not away the Holy Spirit will not come.

But if I go I will send Him to you. He's been with you but He shall be IN you.

I've been with you a little while but He shall abide with you forever... and greater things than these shall you do because I go to my Father."

While Jesus was on earth He was a limited human being. By His own choice He was limited to time and space ... to a little spot there in the Holy Land. He was limited to death. All of these limitations were upon Him that He might become a man ... to sit where you sit... to feel what you feel. In those limitations there were barriers the human Jesus never crossed. But when He got out of those human limitations and rose from the dead, He suddenly becomes the limitless Christ. This is the Christ Philip knows. This is the Christ Philip preaches. Therefore ... Philip can challenge Simon the sorcerer.

Philip can challenge an entire city that's steeped in sin.

He can face people with problems that they feel can never be met, because he's not coming in his own self... he's coming in the power of the Holy Spirit that brings Christ, the LIVING Christ, into every man's now.

The Holy Spirit Is God Coming Into The Now Of Every Man

The Holy Spirit makes the limitless Christ as real today as He ever was when He walked the shores of Galilee. In fact, He is more real because He's no longer on the physical level of the five senses . .

He is invisible ...

He is limitless...

He is unlimited!

If our eyes could be opened spiritually we could see Him, not as He walked the earth 2,000 years ago, with all the human limitations He assumed in order to be our Savior... but we would see Him as having broken through all those barriers and having broken down the middle wall, or partition, between us

and God. We would see Jesus Christ in all His glory. We would see Him as the Holy Spirit presents Him to us.

That was the reason Philip preached Christ as the basis for the solutions of the problems of the people. He preached Christ and miracles happened. These people believed Philip's preaching because not only did they hear him preach Christ, but also they saw the miracles which he did.

Philip Preached A Christ Of Miracles ...

The demon-possessed were set free.

The lame were able to walk again.

Those taken with paralysis were healed.

The city's entire attitude was changed.

The people woke up one morning and there was a new spirit in the city. The Bible describes it: "There was great joy in that city."

In the Old Testament, in the book of Nehemiah, the prophet said:

The joy of the LORD is your strength (Nehemiah 8:10).

When Philip came to Samaria, joy was absent. It was absent because the devil had filled the vacuum in people's lives. Power gravitates toward a vacuum. When God was not filling their lives the devil began to fill their lives. One of the devil's cohorts, Simon, began to deceive the people and lead them into the occult. Because of this, a pall of deep depression was over the minds and spirits of the people. They were weak and unable to resist Satan's advances.

Without the joy of the Lord in your heart you cannot resist what the devil tries to put upon you. For example, at such a time it's not hard for the devil to break up your marriage. When the joy of the Lord is absent, you are weak and you are not able to repulse the suggestions that the devil puts in your mind about your wife or your husband. You begin to concentrate on the problem instead of the solution.

Not only is this true in marriage but it is also true in business ... in your relationships with other human beings... or in bringing forth your talent. Without the joy of the Lord, there is a weakness in you. But when you are filled with the joy of Jesus of Nazareth, the devil can have no power over you.

There Was A Great Joy In Samaria

The Bible says there was great joy in Samaria because Philip preached

Christ unto them. Even Simon the sorcerer believed. We don't know how deeply he believed, but the Bible says he believed. It seems that he believed in Christ and he followed Philip. He was amazed at the great miracles he was seeing. The joy of the Lord began to sweep that city.

Then something rather dramatic happened. It was like an intrusion from outer space. The Church in Jerusalem heard of the revival in Samaria and they sent Peter and John down to investigate. When they arrived they saw all of the things God was doing.

They saw the great joy in the city but immediately they had one deep concern, that these people had not received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This is one of the great paradoxes in the Bible. Here Philip has preached Christ and the people have given heed to his preaching. They have received the Word of God. Many of them have been miraculously healed. The joy of the Lord filled the city. Simon the sorcerer's work had been exposed. There was a real spirit of renewal in the hearts of the people.

Then Peter and John came down and they were concerned.

Now why are they concerned? They noticed that the people had repented ... they had believed on Jesus. They noticed they had been baptized in water, in the name of the Lord Jesus ... but they had NOT received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Now why had they not received? Was it because Philip had led the people as far as he could? Was it that Philip in his knowledge of Christ was not able to take them beyond receiving the gift of salvation ... being born again ... getting healed? Was he unable to lead these people into the experience he himself possessed, the gift of the Holy Spirit?

The Bible doesn't say.

This is certainly a picture of the condition in many institutional churches today. The man of God in the pulpit is dedicated and sincere. He knows Christ and preaches Christ, but he often stops short of the gift of the Holy Spirit. He's able to bring his people up to a certain point. Up to that point you can say nothing but good. It's genuine. But some way... somehow ... he stops. There has become a cleavage, a division, in various denominations today at the very point where Philip stopped.

This is when Peter and John moved in. They saw that the people had taken the first of the three steps given in Acts 2:38. You will remember that on the Day of Pentecost Peter stood and preached to the crowd that gathered. They

were convicted and asked, "What must we do to be saved?" and Peter answered:

Repent, [Step #1] and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, [Step #2] and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost [Step #3] (Acts 2:38).

The Samaritans had repented (Step #1). They had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Step #2). But they stopped there. They had not gone on to Step #3: They had not received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

THE SAMARITANS WERE NOT COMPLETE CHRISTIANS ...
THEY HAD NOT RECEIVED THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Now there's something remarkable about men who are really called of God, who are filled with the Holy Spirit, and have been down that long trail of Christian experience, hardship and suffering. Men like Peter and John. They could accept every part of the spiritual renewal that was taking place in Samaria, but they saw that these Christians had not gone all the way. They were not in a state to become COMPLETED Christians. They had not received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Receiving Is An Act

People often say to me, "Well, when God is ready He can give me the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit has to be RECEIVED. Anything received involves action on your part. Receiving is something YOU do. I can offer you a gift, but in order for it to be yours you have to receive it... you have to reach out and take it.

Let's consider the word "receive." In John 1:12, it says:

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name (John 1:12).

When you believe on Christ you receive power, the Greek word for power used here means "legal right", or the legal right to become a child of God. So these people at Samaria had received the power, or legal right, to receive Christ and they had received Him.

Now read Acts 1:8 and notice that Christ is talking about RECEIVING in a deeper dimension of power.

He says:

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in

Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The Greek word used here for power is "dunamis" and in our language it means "the explosive power of dynamite." This is the kind of power that Jesus said we would receive when we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Now Peter and John were very concerned that these Samaritans who had received Christ and believed on Him... who had been baptized in water and received miracles of healing ... had not received the "dunamis," or the power of the Holy Spirit, or if they had received they were not aware of it.

Why were Peter and John so concerned about this? Could it be they understood that the Christian experience is more than a onetime act? Did they believe that there is a point and time when you do receive Christ? Is it that moment the Holy Spirit himself comes in? That you must go on into the Holy Spirit, that His "dunamis" will saturate your being? That to live for Christ and be His bold witness you must allow the act of personal salvation to be a continuous receiving of the Holy Spirit and His power?

Could it be that this is your condition? That you are a genuine Christian ... the Holy Spirit is in you but you have no awareness you have received Him or that in Him is your real power as a Christian? It certainly is the experience of many sincere Christians.

There is no hint in the Scripture that Peter and John, in any way, put down the Samaritan Christians because they had not received the gift of the Holy Spirit. They did not depreciate what they saw in the lives of these new disciples.

And in no way are we to put anybody down who has not received the gift of the Holy Spirit. He may not have the light on it. It may be that his leaders have not experienced it or for some reason or other have not preached it. They may not even understand it. Certainly those who have received the gift of the Holy Spirit should have a great degree of love and understanding so that they would never condemn a person who has not received ... so that they would understand that CHRIST is the bond that brings us together.

Could it be that Peter and John were concerned because they were looking down the road and seeing that the Christian experience is not easy... that it is hard and there are difficult tasks ... that the Christian life is a cross itself? Were they thinking of our Lord's statement:

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me (Luke 9:23).

And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my

disciple (Luke 14:27).

Notice that Jesus is not talking here about being born again or saved. He is talking about DISCIPLESHIP. A disciple means "to be a learner or a follower of Jesus." And Jesus said if we are to be His disciples, then we must take up our cross... we must be able to endure hardship.

You see, you are saved or born again or given salvation, these are synonymous terms, by repentance and believing on Jesus. Through His shed blood you are made a child of God. You are given the legal right to become a child of God. By receiving Christ, you are saved. But that does not necessarily mean that you follow on to become a disciple. You have entered the kingdom of God. You are a genuine Christian but becoming a disciple takes a lifetime. It means that you follow Jesus day after day after day. This is why the gift of the Holy Spirit is so important.

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS TO DO WITH THE BATTLE THAT WE GO THROUGH TO BE A CHRISTIAN ... TO STAY A CHRISTIAN ... TO SOLVE OUR DAILY PROBLEMS ... TO HELP MEET THE NEEDS OF OTHER PEOPLE ... TO LIVE IN THIS WORLD AND BE VICTORIOUS. THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS AN ENDUE-MENT OF POWER FROM ON HIGH (Acts 1:8). IT IS A POWER OF EXPLOSIVENESS THAT IS GIVEN TO OPEN UP THE INNER MAN FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION WITH GOD.

I often think this is the greatest power of all because we are so closed up... we are so shut down. Our inner man has such a terrible time. You can look at a man and never guess that inside he is miserable. Or you see a woman and never guess that inside she is lonely. You see a married couple and think they have a happy marriage when really it is just about on the rocks. You see a person who is well-dressed and you may not realize that he is torn up inside because the bills are piling up and he sees no way to pay them. You see another person and you may not realize it, but he has cancer or some other dreaded disease. So much is hidden inside us. So the Holy Spirit comes to open up our inner man.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is given as an aid for our prayer life ... that we might have a special prayer language, a language deeper than our own intellectual language. The Holy Spirit is given so we may pray with the spirit and with the understanding also (1 Corinthians 14:15). Through the prayer language of the Spirit these inner hidden frustrations and problems, those things deep within us that torment us and make us unhappy, can be brought to God in prayer.

Just as in the natural we cannot overemphasize the importance of birth so we cannot overemphasize the importance of the new birth, of being born again in Christ. Likewise, we cannot overemphasize the importance of growth. Ask any dwarf what it is like not to have grown to a normal size. Ask him what life is like for him. In the same way, we cannot overemphasize the importance of spiritual growth ... of following on and becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ... of being constantly filled with the Holy Spirit, this enduement of power from on high.

Peter And John Were Concerned That The Samaritans Become Disciples Of Jesus

Could it be that Peter and John were concerned about people not growing and learning and following the man Jesus? Was it the concern of Peter and John that the Samaritans be filled with the Holy Spirit... that they receive this enduement of power... so that they might become DISCIPLES of our Lord ... so that they might take up their cross daily and become strong in the Lord? I believe it was.

Peter and John laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. Simon, the sorcerer, was there and immediately he noticed that when Peter and John laid hands on the Samaritans ... at that very moment... they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Simon offered Peter and John a lot of money if they would give him this power to lay hands on people so that they would receive this gift of the Holy Spirit. And Peter said to Simon:

Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee (Acts 8:20-22).

You see, Simon immediately saw the mechanics, the laying on of hands, and thought the mechanics were more important than the engine, the gift of the Holy Spirit. He thought the laying on of hands was the most important thing.

The fact of the matter was that Peter and John themselves had not received the gift of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands. On the Day of Pentecost when they both received, nobody laid hands on them. So Peter and John were not hung up on mechanics. They just wanted the engine full of power and ready to go.

Could it be that we are so hung up on mechanics today we don't always

see that the Holy Spirit is God in every man's now ... bringing Christ to us in the now, the unlimited Christ ... the Christ of miracles ... the Christ who can heal a human body... the Christ who can heal a human mind ... the Christ who can solve our financial problems ... the Christ who can take out a deep loneliness within us ... the Christ who can transform a human life.

How many times have you been asked to do something difficult for the Lord and you refused? You would have done it if it had been easy...

I think Peter and John were also very concerned about us ... that we would receive this endowment of power, the "dunamis," the explosive power of dynamite, so that we would accept the discipleship of our Lord... so that we could do the things that God asks us to do even if we don't want to ... so that we could learn to love people that we don't want to love.

I Know The Joy Of A Miracle

A man once watched me wash my hands and disinfect them because of the odor on them after I had prayed for hundreds of people with many diseases. He asked me how I could stand it... how I could endure it. I told him that I could do it because I had been there. Jesus had healed me and I knew the joy of a miracle. I could do it even though the odors of the diseases of the people were hard to get off my hands.

I remember the time when I turned and walked away. I was praying for a man who had cancer and the odor was so bad that I threw up. I just turned away and said, "God, I can't do it." I remember how the Holy Spirit whispered in my heart and said, "If you are not willing to go back and touch and pray for a man whose odor is so bad it makes you throw up, you don't know what being a Christian is all about."

I went back and hugged that man. I threw my arms around him and I prayed for him and I didn't throw up anymore. I could take the odor now because I was relying on the power of the Holy Spirit within me.

So many times I've found that I'm not a very good Christian, I'm not a good disciple, but when I get control of myself... when I go back and do the thing that God wants me to do ... then I know what discipleship is. Then I know what joy is!

Now I want to tell you two stories. One of them is funny and one is serious, but I've got to tell them together.

The first is about a lady from the community who enrolled in our Holy

Spirit In The Now class here at ORU. She enjoyed herself very much and she received the gift of the Holy Spirit. She has a little five-year-old boy who doesn't like to wash his hands. When she says, "Johnny, go wash your hands," he goes off but he doesn't wash his hands. She has had a terrible time getting him to wash his hands.

One day she finally hit on the thought, "Johnny, your hands have germs on them ... you've got to wash the germs off your hands." So she began to continually harp on germs, thinking this might help. One day she told Johnny to go wash the germs off his hands and he said, "All I hear around here is germs and the Holy Spirit... and you can't see either one of them!"

My second story has to do with a minister of the gospel. The crowds were dwindling down to nothing in his church. One day the men of his church put a note on his pulpit that said:

Dear Pastor,

We would see Jesus ...

It struck his heart like an arrow. After he had dismissed the audience, he told his family he would not eat that day. He went to a little place of prayer and got down before God and said, "Is it true that the people are not seeing Jesus in me?"

All afternoon he searched his heart and sought God. It was not long until he felt the Holy Spirit coming upon him again. When the time came to preach again, he did.

In a few weeks the crowds were back ... there was standing room only. The Holy Spirit was at work. Then just as he started to preach one Sunday morning he saw another piece of paper on his pulpit and it read:

Dear Pastor,

Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.

(signed) Your church

Do we need to pause and ask ourselves, "Have we lost something that we once had ... do we have the joy of the Lord in our heart today? We were once filled with the Holy Spirit, but are we filled today? Is the Lord working through us today?"

IT IS WONDERFUL TO RECEIVE THE INFILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, BUT IT IS JUST AS IMPORTANT TO HAVE THE POWER OF THE

HOLY SPIRIT WORKING IN OUR LIVES DAILY.

Dialogue With Oral And Evelyn Roberts

Evelyn: I have a question for you. Philip was a layman, right?

Oral: Well, some theologians may disagree with my premise that he was one of the apostles. He may not have been the same Philip. I rather think he was. I think Philip was a man for all seasons. When he needed to preach, he preached. When he needed to be a layman, he was a layman. When he needed to be a businessman for Christ, he was a businessman for Christ.

Evelyn: Philip had received the Holy Spirit, so why didn't he tell the people about this experience?

Oral: It could be that he had led them as far as he could. Or it may have been that the path he encountered was so great he could not get into the deeper dimensions, such as the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Or perhaps it was not God's particular time at that moment for them to receive. It may be that God wanted to have an interval between these people receiving salvation and receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. You can't box God in. You can't say He's going to do it the same way every time.

Evelyn: Could be.

Oral: I thought you were going to ask, "Did they speak in tongues when they received the Holy Spirit?" Most commentators agree that they did. It doesn't say so in the Scripture. It does indicate that Simon saw something. When these people received the gift of the Holy Spirit, there was something so physical about it that Simon saw it. There was evidence of some kind that caused Simon to want this power.

Evelyn: Oral, I was hoping that you would be specific and talk to people who feel this deep inner need and want to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Would you discuss what a person should do to receive?

Oral: First, I'd like you not to stumble over the simple way I'm going to put it. I think it is natural to feel that such a high experience as receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit would be rather complex. I think it is a natural reaction to think, how could I? Who am I that God would give me the gift of the Holy Spirit?

It's my own deep conviction that Jesus is absolutely right when He said if you thirst to come to Him; and if you believe on Him, out of your belly (your inner man) will flow rivers of living water, which is the Holy Spirit... (See John

7:37-39.) It is there. It's my conviction that when you believe on our Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Person of the Holy Spirit, is there. He's in you.

Now there is a sense in which this indwelling Christ will suffuse you, or baptize you. He will just suffuse you in the Spirit, and the Spirit will flow up. But the flowing is so near you. I've often said if you can just shut your mind down for a few moments and open your mouth, you will release the Holy Spirit within you. If you could pray with someone who prays in the Spirit, or prays in tongues, and just sort of start, then the Holy Spirit will take you right into your own prayer language. I've never seen this fail.

What I'm saying is very simple so I hope you don't stumble over it. Yet, at the same time, I would not say that's the only way you can receive, because you can't box God in. These people at Samaria had the laying on of hands before they received. At Pentecost the one hundred twenty did not. At the house of Cornelius, in Acts 10, there was just a sermon, and they received even while Peter was preaching. It's apparent that the Holy Spirit is so near you, that there is simply a receiving to do. A receiving. For example, Evelyn, if I were to hand you a Bible, would you receive it?

Evelyn: Oh, gladly.

Oral: What would you do?

Evelyn: Reach out and take it.

Oral: You'd reach out and take it.

Peter told the crowd on the Day of Pentecost, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). The receiving is so important. I have dealt with hundreds and hundreds of people and I've never seen it fail.

All a person has to do is to open up, because the Spirit is there and wants to come up. If a person will let the Holy Spirit have his tongue just like the mind lets him have his tongue, he can receive. Just like your mind takes your tongue to speak through it, let your spirit take your tongue and speak through it. Because tongues are in the spirit, not in the mind. The tongues of the Holy Spirit are in your spirit by the Holy Spirit. They're there, so your mind has to stop and let your spirit take your tongue. Your spirit takes authority over your tongue and uses it as an instrument. All right, now our spirit has to do that. In order to speak in tongues, my spirit has to take my tongue and speak through it without the aid of my mind.

But that's not impossible for the Holy Spirit, is it?

Evelyn: When we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit there is enduement of power that comes, but the speaking in tongues is what releases us, at least in my experience.

Oral: Yes, it does.

Evelyn: It releases us, but there is a power that comes with it that helps us with the struggles of life. It is not just the speaking in tongues, even though that is, would you say, a sign to us.

Oral: Well, I wouldn't say that, no.

Evelyn: What would you say?

Oral: I would say that speaking in tongues, or the prayer language of the Spirit, opens us up inside and strengthens us within. It is also a helpful release of the deeper power of the Holy Spirit. I'm very strong on the prayer language of the Spirit, Evelyn. In no way do I feel that it's on the periphery. It's right at the heart of the Holy Spirit's work.

Evelyn: That's true. But I think some people might get the idea that speaking in tongues is the only part of the Holy Spirit.

Oral: Please don't make that mistake. For example, if you were to go downtown and buy a pair of shoes with tongues in them, you would not spend all the time being concerned about the tongues in the shoes, would you? You must take the package as God has it. Now don't take one bit of it and overemphasize it or underemphasize it. The prayer language is a natural part of the infilling of the Spirit. It's a natural part.

When people ask, "Do I have to speak in tongues?" I always feel bad. It's as if speaking in tongues were something terrible. Praying in the prayer language of the Spirit is a wonderful experience. I believe the question should be, "How can I receive?" rather than, "Do I have to?" Please don't make it something that it's not. Just simply accept it. I think acceptance comes before receiving.

Evelyn: I believe so.

Oral: You have to accept the validity of the experience before the receiving will take place. Now there's another part of this gift that you mentioned, enduement of power. I think that Christians who have really received our Lord but who have not received the prayer language, or the enduement of power that you talked about, expect people who have received the gift of the Holy Spirit to be almost superhuman.

Evelyn: And we really aren't.

Oral: We are not. That's why we asked for the Holy Spirit. We're not superhuman and we know we are not. On the other hand, people who receive this gift of the Holy Spirit sometimes never go on and become disciples. They just point back to where they spoke in tongues and that becomes the big deal. But to me, it's the NOW that counts. I mean the important thing is, am I walking in the power of the Holy Spirit NOW... this moment? That is to say, am I loving people? Am I honest? Am I a witness to Christ now?

Someone says, "I received it twenty years ago." Great! But what are you, a dwarf... or are you moving on in the Spirit?

Some people who have received our Lord and never knowingly received this particular gift appear to have more than some people who have received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Well, that particular person might have lost it somewhere along the way and doesn't have as much now. They may not have been taught to go into discipleship.

But that shouldn't hinder someone else from moving on into the experience because each of us needs it for ourselves. As far as my witness and growth is concerned, I can't do without the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Evelyn: How is this power of the Holy Spirit released in your life for your daily tasks?

Oral: Well, when I pray with the spirit, or in tongues, there is a divine force that takes place inside me. I could use the word "explosion" but it's too strong a word. There is a force that I feel. I actually FEEL it. It's coming out of me, it's releasing me, it's opening me up, it's making me know I'm getting through. I feel better. I feel stronger.

Evelyn: Does it help you lick your problems?

Oral: I'd rather say solve them, than lick them. When I pray in tongues every day as I indicated, it doesn't always help me solve my problems immediately. I don't get all my problems solved but somehow the problem looks different.

Evelyn: Right.

Oral: The problem looks less dreadful, less terrible. Then sometimes a word of knowledge is given to me about it. I can approach the problem differently. Or sometimes I am given a patience which I terribly need most of the time. Then sometimes the Holy Spirit stirs me up and I know what to do to get

the problem solved. I do this and the problem is solved.

Chapter 5, What Good Is Tongues, Or The Prayer Language Of The Spirit?

Suggested Scripture reading for this lesson: 1 Corinthians 14; Ephesians 6:10-18

I want to share part of a letter with you that I received from a member of one of my Holy Spirit classes at ORU. He is a man from the Tulsa community and he wrote:

Dear President Roberts:

I have been enjoying so much your lectures on the prayer language of the Spirit. Several weeks ago you explained that the Scripture, "Pray one for another, that ye may be healed" (James 5:16), promises healing to the one doing the praying. I relayed this, along with many of your other comments, to my wife Linda. She also caught the importance of this truth. I suggested to her as she was going into labor with our third child that she utilize this concept and also rely increasingly on the prayer language of the Spirit.

Linda reports that she relied on the prayer language of the Spirit during the labor and also concentrated on praying for the needs of her friends. She had great results. In spite of a difficult delivery, the baby had to be repositioned, she has been making an excellent recovery.

She says that in using the prayer language, she actually was able to give expression to her deep feelings during this difficult time. Furthermore, two of the three people she had been praying for have had their needs met, and we're expecting the other need to be met this week.

Our son was born at 8:35 p.m., October 8, on his grandfather's birthday, and he's doing fine.

President Roberts, I so appreciate your teaching in this area of the prayer language for its importance cannot be overemphasized.

Something good is going to happen to you!

(Signed) -

I include this letter in this lesson because I want to deal specifically with the prayer language of the Spirit. I want to get at the key issue of why we would use the prayer language of the Spirit, why we would speak in tongues.

Why would we go down into the deeper part of ourselves, into our spirit,

and there make use of our tongue and say words that are not intelligible to the mind? Why would we do that? What's the key issue? What's the main reason? What is the purpose? Is it important to you as a believer, as a Christian?

Why would you, as Paul suggests in 1 Corinthians 14:15, pray first with the spirit, which is in tongues, and then follow that by praying with your understanding ... or with your intellect?

What's the key issue of praying first with your spirit in tongues instead of praying first with your intellect? Why is it not reversed? Why would Paul suggest that we start first with the prayer language, this praise language, this language of the Spirit? Why would we start with our spirit first and then work up into our understanding?

Certainly from an intellectual point of view most people would agree that it should be reversed... that we should start in the mind and then go down to the spirit. Or, as many people believe, we should start in the mind and stay in the mind ... that prayer should be something that we do entirely with our conscious intellect.

What is the key issue? To begin with, let's go back to Genesis 2:7:

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Man Was Created A Spiritual Being

Now this is really hard for our intellect to grasp. Because you cannot see anything that is spiritual.

But you can feel it ... you can experience it in the same way that you feel the wind. In fact, Jesus compared the new birth, the experience of being born again by the Holy Spirit, to the wind. You feel the wind but you cannot see it. Nevertheless, the wind is very real (John 3:8).

Why would God make man a spirit? In Jesus' discussion with the woman of Samaria, as recorded in John 4, He said to her that God is a spirit. So if God is going to make man in His image and after His likeness He would have to make man a spirit. Man would have to be a spiritual being. Otherwise, he would not have been made in the image and likeness of God. He would have been solely matter.

We notice that when God created man He took of the dust to make the body. But the body was without life. The body in itself is nothing without life. The body has to be inhabited by something. Then God breathed into the nostrils

of that physical body and man BECAME. The word "became" is very important. Man BECAME a living soul... a spiritual being.

We believe that man originated as a spirit and was placed inside a body composed of the chemicals of the dust of the ground. Then because the spirit was put into him by God, who is Spirit, man BECAME ... a living soul.

God Gave Man The Gift Of Language

Perhaps there is no greater gift that God gave man than the gift of language ... the power to express himself from his inner self, his inner being, his spirit. Man walked and talked with God.

If you will read in the book of Genesis, Chapters 1-3, you will notice how man was tempted by the devil and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and lost his spiritual relationship with God. Something terrible happened to man's speech, his language, or his power to express himself. Before this, he had expressed himself clearly, naturally, and abundantly to God. God, in turn, responded to him. They had a perfect relationship, a fellowship that was so complete we can scarcely imagine it today.

Then suddenly all that was gone. For now man is hiding. He's hiding from the very God whom he had walked and talked with. He's covering up. When he is finally discovered by God, and God asks where he is and what he is doing, man says that he is hiding.

He's hiding because he's afraid. He wasn't afraid of God before. But now, in halting speech he describes his fear ... that he is frightened. He's frightened about his condition ... certainly about the mortality that he fell into through his fall. Man is frightened of God.

No longer does he have this clear relationship where he can talk with God in a natural way. Something has happened to man's gift of speech. He now has an inhibition, a reluctance to face God. A reluctance to think of himself as a spiritual being. A reluctance to depend on God. And all of this reluctance affects adversely his speech ... his gift of language.

Throughout history, from that time on, human beings have had this inhibition ... this reluctance ... in talking to God. It seems difficult to pray. Now that goes back to our beginning ... to the way we are made.

When Man Sinned, The Gift Of Language That Originated In The Intellect Remained; But The Gift

Of Language That Originated In His Spirit Seemed To Die

The Holy Spirit was active throughout the Old Testament times. But when our Lord, the Second Adam, came, it seemed that only then was the Holy Spirit's personality fully revealed. And we are now faced with the glorious prospect that our entire personality, spirit, mind, and body, can be reintegrated.

What we have lost, the gift of language which originates in the spirit, can be restored. We can reach down into the inner recesses of our beings and with our spirit start using our speech organs and create a language which according to Paul is "unto God" (1 Corinthians 14:2). This language is "speaking in tongues," or the prayer language of the Spirit.

It's so difficult for our reason, our intellect, to understand that which is spiritual. In 1 Corinthians 2:14 we are told:

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

That is, one has to get down inside his spirit to understand the things of God. Now there is a difference between your spirit and your intellect. Even though they exist together, there are times they act almost independently of the other.

A man in the class indicated to me one day how much it has helped him to understand that he is a spiritual being and an intellectual being. He said at the bank where he works he has made most of his decisions during his lifetime purely in his intellect. Now he realizes he can, by the help of the Holy Spirit, start his decision in his spirit and then work up through his intellect to his understanding. He says he is already making better decisions.

What we are saying is that the tongue is the servant of both the mind and the spirit. When I say "tongue," I'm referring to the speech organ. That is, our ability to speak or to communicate is available both to the mind and to the spirit. Sometimes one, either the mind or the spirit, acts independently of the other.

For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful (1 Corinthians 14:14).

I recall various times when I have held that verse before the Lord and tried to relate it to my own personal experience. Eventually I was able to do so. I believe Paul is saying here that he actually is praying with his spirit but his mind

is not necessarily part of that prayer. That is, his mind is not creating the prayer. Paul even goes so far as to say that his mind doesn't even comprehend it at all. It is in an unfruitful or inactive state. It is as though his mind were an observer.

Through The Prayer Language Of The Spirit Our Spirit Can Communicate Directly With God

Any Christian who has used the prayer language of the Spirit often is aware that it is like his mind is over to the side. It's there as an observer. It's hearing. It's observing. But it's not comprehending the words or the sentences that the spirit is putting together. Because what is coming over the tongue, through the speech organs, is not originating in the intellect. It's coming from within, from the spirit. It is as though the mind has been suspended from its activity temporarily. For maybe 30 seconds, or a minute, or even longer, it's standing there observing as the spirit, which is within, takes over and uses the speech organs and is in direct communication with God.

This communication is as perfect as Adam and Eve could ever have spoken to God, in the will of God, when they were in their original perfect state. They had that marvelous gift of language with which they could talk to God.

This is not to say that if one doesn't pray in tongues that he can't pray at all. We do pray with our minds. And we should. Many people have never prayed with tongues. And I'm the last one to say that they have not prayed, because many such people have had a marvelous prayer life. It remains to be seen what could happen to their prayer life if they went deeper into the spirit and were able to understand that they could pray with their spirit independently of their minds. As a matter of fact, Paul indicates in the very next verse:

What is it then ? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also (1 Corinthians 14:15).

Here Paul joins the spirit and the mind. He indicates there is a separation of spirit and mind. Any person who would take time to think about it, knows Paul is accurately diagnosing the very key issue of life. Man has cultivated his intellect almost to the exclusion of his spiritual being. It's as though he doesn't have a soul.

Jesus asks us:

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matthew 16:26).

Jesus was concerned about the problem of man's spiritual self being born again, being raised to newness of life, being redeemed and restored, being filled with the Holy Spirit... and living in the Spirit.

Jesus was also concerned that man be able to call God by a new name. A name that is a much better name than commonly used in the Old Testament. It was Jesus who first taught us to call God "Father. . The real meaning is Papa or Daddy. It speaks of that deep, close, intimate relationship that a child has with his father.

In the Old Testament the word "Father" was seldom used to describe God. But Jesus, in coming down here as a man, knew what was in man. He experienced what is in man. He felt what man felt. He experienced everything, even man's temptations, all of them. Jesus knew who God was and is. And Jesus gave us this new understanding of our relationship with God... "Father." That was His way of talking to God.

Jesus had that oneness with God. He's the only One we know who ever had it perfectly since Adam. There were many others who must have gotten very close, Enoch, Elijah, and David, for example. Jesus had this relationship with the Father that was so close that He talked to Him as naturally as He breathed. Jesus was always in the Spirit. And He wants us to have this same relationship with God our Father.

The Prayer Language Of The Spirit Helps Us To Give Fuller Expression Of Our Total Selves

The ability to express ourselves to God, both by the intellect and by our spirit, is exactly what God is trying to get us into. Because now we are going to give fuller expression of our total selves.

Your total self is seldom ever expressed. Even in your relationship with other people you scarcely ever reveal but a part of yourself. The seemingly perfect marriage doesn't always have the fullest expression between the husband and wife.

There is something about us that inhibits our opening up. Maybe it is because we are afraid of being betrayed. Or perhaps we have been betrayed before, we've been disappointed, and we've decided that we're not going to be hurt again.

I think our Lord is trying to say that we can pray in the spirit to God and never be disappointed. We never have to be afraid that God will not hear us. Or

that God will not receive us. But we can talk to God for what He is... our Father. And He will talk back to us ... as His children, as His son or His daughter. As coheirs with His Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 8:17).

Praying In The Spirit Is Part Of Our Spiritual Armor

In Ephesians 6, Paul speaks concerning our spiritual warfare:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places (Ephesians 6:10-12).

Notice that Paul says we are in a spiritual warfare. It is a warfare first with the devil, and then with the princes of the devil which could be translated devils, or demons, cohorts of the devil. You can't see the devil. You can't see these demons. They are fallen creatures. They are spiritual beings.

God who is Spirit, and the devil who is spirit, and the human being who is spirit, are locked in battle.

The battle is between God and the devil. It's not between you and me, or you and someone else. Back of every conflict that we face in life is not another human being ... although the human being may be involved. Everything that comes against us from a destructive point of view originates in the devil. It originates in these evil spiritual forces.

So Paul says:

"Because of this, you must be strong in the Lord. You must have the strength of God in you. And you must have the power of God in you. You must put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand.

Otherwise, you will not stand. You'll become discouraged and you will give up."

Paul likens this battle to a wrestling match. Have you ever watched a wrestling match? Have you seen how the wrestlers grapple with one another? How they turn and twist and lunge forward and then draw back, trying to find the other's point of weakness? One picks up the other and throws him as far as he can. Sometimes they get down on their knees and they grapple with one another as if it were a matter of life and death. This is the picture that Paul paints of our spiritual warfare with the devil.

It's a spiritual battle. Therefore, we are able to take on the whole armor of God. Paul enumerates seven pieces of that armor, all of which are terribly

important:

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore,

(1) Having your loins girt about with truth,

(2) and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

(3) And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

(4) Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

(5) And take the helmet of salvation,

(6) and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

(7) Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit...

(Ephesians 6:13-18)

And here Paul likens the spiritual armor to the armor used by the soldiers of that day. He speaks of the breastplate. This covered the entire chest area so that an arrow could not penetrate and pierce the heart. He mentioned also the shield of faith. This shield covered the entire body. It was held on the arm and was used to ward off the arrows of the enemy. By moving it around the soldier could protect his entire body. Paul called this the shield of faith. He says we are to be so full of faith that we can repulse the attacks of Satan.

The seventh piece of armor is "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." Praying always.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 it says:

Pray without ceasing.

How do we fight a spiritual warfare? We can't see the enemy. We feel the enemy. We feel the attack of a human against us, either physically attacking us or mentally attacking us or lying on us or disappointing us. Or we are disappointing someone else. It works both ways. And we say, "Oh, so-and-so is really trying to destroy me." It isn't true. That person isn't trying to do it. This is a spiritual warfare. Satan THROUGH that person is trying to destroy you for that is his purpose. Jesus said in John 10:10:

The thief [devil] cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy...

How are we to fight this spiritual warfare? Paul says we are to pray

without ceasing, and to pray always in the Spirit. The key words are "in the Spirit..." We find these words repeated two other times:

For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries (1 Corinthians 14:2).

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost [Spirit] (Jude 20).

There is something about the spirit taking charge of the vocal chords, or the speech organs, and bringing up what is down inside us, bringing it up over our tongue to God in another language that is most important in winning our spiritual battles.

Through The Prayer Language Of The Spirit, We Can Pray Without Ceasing

Praying always and praying without ceasing. I used to wonder how in the world anyone could pray without ceasing. I thought if one prayed without ceasing, he'd never get anything else done. He'd just go around praying all the time. My idea of prayer then was that when you prayed you had to pray out loud. You had to pray with so many words. It didn't take me long to exhaust all the prayer words I knew. I was left dangling because I couldn't pray very long.

Then I discovered that Jesus actually condemns long prayers. He condemns prayers that are prayed only for public sake. He teaches us that most of our praying should be done in secret (Matthew 6:5-7). The Bible also teaches that there is a time when we are to pray under our breath, or to pray to ourselves, to pray where no man hears us:

"And let him speak to himself, and to God" (1 Corinthians 14:28).

This seems like a paradox ...

On the one hand, Jesus says that we're not to pray long-winded prayers or to use a great number of words and we're not to make a public spectacle of our prayers, we are to pray in secret.

On the other hand, we are told to pray without ceasing. Not until the prayer language of the Spirit was released within me did I begin to understand what Jesus meant and what it means to pray without ceasing and to pray in the Spirit. For with the prayer language, prayer could just be coming up all the time. As a matter of fact,

Jesus indicated this would happen:

If any man thirst, let him come unto me ...

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) (John 7:37-39).

In other words, Jesus says here that the Holy Spirit would be like a river within us. Now think about a river for a moment. A river has to start somewhere. I remember when I visited the river Jordan and I went up to its very source ... way up in the north in the little part of Israel, called Dan. There I saw a spring of water coming up out of the earth.

Out of that little spring of water the river Jordan began. I followed the river Jordan from its source all the way to the sea of Galilee. As it flowed it got wider, faster, deeper, and stronger. It flowed into the sea of Galilee and kept on flowing until it flowed right on through the sea of Galilee to the other side and became a river again. By this time it was much bigger. I followed it all the way to the Dead Sea. Of course all rivers ultimately, in one way or another, end up in a sea or an ocean, which is typical of God.

So the prayer language, this river of the Holy Spirit, has to start. Then it has to flow. As you continually use it, it gets bigger and wider and deeper and stronger, that is, more natural and more useful.

A river enriches whatever it touches. That's why the most fertile land is down by the riverside. And as the prayer language is continuously used, it enriches every part of our lives. It's described in Jude 20 as

"building up yourself... praying in the Holy Ghost."

In 1 Corinthians 14:4 it says:

He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself...

When we pray in the prayer language of the Spirit we build up our inner man. We get stronger and deeper and the flow increases. We are enriching our own life.

Through The Prayer Language Of The Spirit, God Responds To Us

The ultimate purpose of the prayer language of the Spirit, of course, is that it goes to God. Then God has the prayer that originates in our spirit and that

is carried to Him by the power of the Holy Spirit. It's a prayer that was prayed in the will of God. It's a prayer that was prayed without the inhibitions of the intellect. The mind was in a completely unfruitful state. It's a prayer that originates in our spirit BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

This is why God responds ... always.

How does God respond? How does this take place? Paul makes it clear:

Let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret (1 Corinthians 14:13).

When you pray in tongues ... or in the spirit ... just stop a moment and ask God to give you the interpretation ... to speak back in your own understanding. One of the best ways to do this is to start praying again in English. Have your intellect start praying. For in the process of praying in the spirit, the Spirit has enriched the mind. God's response comes back in the mind. I have discovered that what I have said with my spirit now becomes what I say with my intellect.

When I pray I start in my spirit, or in tongues (the prayer language of the Spirit), then I immediately go to my own tongue, my own language. I pray back and forth in tongues, then with my understanding, until it's like it's one. It puts me together again.

The Prayer Language Of The Spirit Brings Us Closer To The Whole Man God Created Us To Be

The final point is this. I feel the nearest to being a whole man, to the extent that I can think more properly, I can make decisions more decisively and wisely, I can reach the highest degree of what I'm to be on this earth, when I pray with the spirit and with the understanding also. Through this experience I really am in my journey with Jesus in discipleship.

From the point I started as a born-again Christian, just like the river starts as a little spring coming up out of the earth, the Holy Spirit began flowing. As I follow on after Christ, I get stronger and deeper.

My life is enriched constantly Ultimately I will end in God.

There are two points to that. One, that the prayer language of the Spirit ends up in God. Two, my life, my human life, will ultimately come to an end. But my real life ends up in God when my body dies. My body will be resurrected when our Lord returns. I will become as man once was when God

first made him... perfect and immortal and eternal.

So I feel the greatest degree of wholeness, of being a whole person, when my prayer life is right, when I am able to pray with my spirit and with my understanding. I then am conscious of my inner gifts and capabilities in a greater way. I have a much deeper assurance of life. I seem to develop a "knowing" of what I am to do. In spite of the fact that I still make mistakes, there's always that upward moving of my life overcoming those mistakes, not letting them destroy me. My movement is upward.

I have shared with you as honestly as I know how, emphasizing the value of the prayer language of the Spirit as it fits into the total Christian life. Again I say, as I've said many times, it is not anything in itself. Even as your hand apart from your arm is nothing. Your hand is valuable only when it's properly attached to your arm and your body and in proper use. So the prayer language of the Spirit within itself is nothing. It's without value within itself but when it is properly used as a natural part of the expression of your deeper self to God, it is so valuable and helpful that we cannot overemphasize its importance. For its true importance is that it is to be immediately followed by your prayer with your understanding. Praying with your spirit AND with your understanding PUTS YOU TOGETHER AGAIN. This is the essence of Paul's teaching and his own personal prayer life, and it certainly is mine.

Chapter 6, Your Personal Journey Into Discipleship, The Only Way You Can Follow Christ

Suggested Scripture reading for this lesson: Acts 1:8; Acts 9

Suppose you had moved to Tulsa, or whatever city you now live in, to escape persecution. That is, in the city where you had previously lived they were persecuting the Christians so severely that you thought you might be killed if you stayed, so you left.

This is what happened to the Early Church. In Acts 9 we read where the persecution of the Christians in Jerusalem became so great that many were put to death. Others fled.

This was one way that God had to get the Christians out of Jerusalem and into the various parts of the earth ... even as Jesus has said that they would do. In Acts 1:8, Jesus said to His disciples (this was after His resurrection and just before His ascension into heaven):

Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost [Spirit] is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

You will recall that on the Day of Pentecost 120 people received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. On that same day an additional 3,000 people were converted and added to the Church. But it was quite apparent that not many of them intended to leave Jerusalem and to become witnesses of Christ in the uttermost parts of the earth. They were having a wonderful time of fellowship together. There was no reason for them to leave. But persecution proved to be an extremely effective means of getting them to leave.

However, some of the ringleaders of the persecution, such as Saul of Tarsus, secured authority to pursue these Christians into distant cities... even as far away as Damascus, said to be the oldest city in the world.

Saul of Tarsus, who later became Paul, the apostle, hated those who followed Christ. The fact that they received Christ did not necessarily disturb him. But the fact that they BECAME DISCIPLES of the Lord enraged him. He hated them. He went on a vendetta. He secured authority from the highest priest in Jerusalem to pursue these Christians into Damascus and bring them back, bound, to Jerusalem.

Saul was on his way to Damascus to find disciples when Jesus appeared

to him and said:

I am Jesus whom thou persecutest (Acts 9:5).

This was a strange statement because Saul was on his way to Damascus to find disciples of the Lord to imprison them ... not the Lord himself. But Jesus appeared to him and said:

"You are persecuting ME ..."

These Early Christians Were Reproducing Christ

You see, these Christians had Christ inside their beings in such a realistic manner that they were reproducing Jesus. They were multiplying Jesus. Their discipleship was such that Jesus could say:

"When you lay a hand on them, you're laying your hand on Me."

Two questions we should ask ourselves if we feel persecuted for our Christian experience are: "Does Jesus feel any persecution against himself? Am I enough like Jesus that He knows and recognizes it so that any hand of oppression, or any type of opposition I have, is recognized by Jesus and accepted by Him as a personal thing against himself?"

Or, are we so unlike Jesus, is our unlikeness so striking, that He says to our oppressors:

"You are not opposing Me. I'm not involved in this person's life. I was involved at one time when he accepted Me, but I'm no longer involved because he has not gone on to become My disciple. He has not followed Me."

The Bible tells us that Saul immediately replied: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? (Acts 9:6).

The Lord told him to go into Damascus and there he would be told what to do. Saul got up and because he was blinded by the brightness of the light that had shone on him, he had to be led into the city. There he remained in this blinded condition for three days.

The key issue of this story is that...

SAUL OF TARSUS IS POTENTIALLY THE GREATEST CHRISTIAN.

He is potentially the greatest preacher.

He is potentially the greatest apostle.

He is potentially the greatest man that Christ could have.

But right now SAUL IS LITERALLY THE DEVILS NUMBER ONE DISCIPLE.

He's the number one persecutor of the people of God.

After Christ came into Saul's life the apostle would look back to those months and years when he persecuted Christians and it would tear him up. He couldn't get over it. He became one of the greatest apostles, Paul. But he always carried with him the knowledge that he had been a persecutor of Christ... that he had been against Christ... that he had imprisoned Christians and put some of them to death. He said that he persecuted the Church (Philippians 3:6). So while he didn't come one whit behind the number one apostle, he felt that he was the least (2 Corinthians 12:11). I believe this is directly attributable to his feeling that goes back to those days of being a persecutor of the Christians.

We Never Know Who Around Us Is Potentially The Greatest Christian

Now we never know who around us, it may be the one who is acting most like the devil, may be potentially the greatest Christian. It may be that our loved one, that parent, or brother, or sister, or in-law, who is bitter against us may be potentially the greatest Christian we've ever known. That's a great thought, yet it's a frightening one as well.

It is apparent that there was one man in Damascus who could handle Saul of Tarsus. There was one man who could bring him to Christ... get him filled with the Holy Spirit... get him straightened out... and get him on the road to proclaiming his Lord. That man was a disciple by the name of Ananias.

Now Ananias was not aware that he was the man. He was aware only that he was a man marked for death. He knew he was included in the group of Christians in Damascus that Saul of Tarsus was coming to get and drag back to Jerusalem to put into prison, and then to put to death. Ananias knew he was a marked man.

As far as we can trace the history of this man, he was not anything but a layman. He was not called to preach. He was not an apostle. But he was a disciple ... or a man who followed Christ DAILY. His following Christ and his witness for Him was a very personal one ... and always daily.

I say this because so many Christians today seem to believe in a collective type of witnessing more than they do in personal witnessing. They seem to believe most of the witnessing should be done by ministers of the gospel

or by teachers or by the entire group of Christians assembled in a church service. Most of their witnessing is confined to the church service or through what they contribute to the church. They seem to feel that through the collective group they are discharging their personal responsibility to be witnesses for Christ. When they do this they are making a physical separation of their witness. They are saying, in effect:

"I'm a witness when I'm at a certain place.

But if I'm not there, say in the church service, for example, then I'm not under the same obligation as a Christian. I'm not obligated to follow the same principles of smiling and being friendly and being nice and sowing seeds of faith. After I leave the church service I can be and do whatever I want to be and do. But when I go back to church I will be something else."

This is NOT discipleship.

There is something very outstanding in this story of Ananias. It is his reply to Jesus when the Master called:

Ananias...

Ananias was following Jesus close enough that he could hear Jesus ... he could hear Jesus talking to him in his heart. Ananias had a vision ... some might say a dream. Or it could have been a moment of deep meditation. But deep inside himself Ananias heard our Lord say, "Ananias ..." His reply to Christ is absolutely captivating. He said:

I am here, Lord (Acts 9:10).

What meaning can we attribute to his statement, "I am here, Lord." Well, in Acts 1:8, Jesus said:

"You shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you and you shall be My witnesses. You shall be a witness unto Me either here in Jerusalem or in other cities, even to the uttermost part of the earth.

WHEREVER YOU ARE, THAT WILL BE YOUR WITNESS POSITION."

We don't know whether Ananias was one who had lived at Jerusalem and had to flee for his life and ended up in Damascus, or whether he had always lived there. We do know that he was a DISCIPLE.

The Word Disciple Means Follower Or Learner Of Christ

Ananias was called a disciple of Christ. You will remember in Matthew 11:28,29 that Jesus said:

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me ...

He also said:

And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:27).

If any man will come after me [or be my disciple], let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me (Luke 9:23).

Your Christian Experience Is Always In The Now

In these verses Jesus is not talking about being born again...or being converted. He is talking about DISCIPLESHIP. Jesus is speaking about something that happens after a person is born again and filled with the Holy Spirit. He is talking about taking up your cross DAILY. Your Christian experience is always in the NOW. You will remember that I said, "The Holy Spirit is God in the NOW. God is always in the now through the Holy Spirit."

I think I can best illustrate this by giving you a couple of experiences that I have had a part in. One of them concerns a young couple who lives some miles from Tulsa. They are married and have a wonderful child, and they are very dear to me. At one time they had a beautiful marriage.

Shortly after their marriage both of them accepted Christ. This young man had not previously indicated any interest in Jesus Christ. The girl had, but not the young man. So they were particularly happy when he joined the church and was baptized. He began going to church and was a picture of the radiance of Jesus. From all the descriptions I had about this young man and his work as a business executive, he was really letting Christ shine through him. Not in some loud boisterous way, but in a quiet way people felt Christ in him.

Then suddenly something happened. One day he walked in to his wife and said, "Honey, I don't love you anymore. This Christianity thing is not for me." He stopped going to church. Eventually, they separated.

Later she poured out her heart to Evelyn and me. She said, "When my husband said, 'I'm giving it up,' I gave it up also. When he gave up Jesus, I gave up Jesus. He ceased to be a real person to me any longer."

All of us who have been close to people who have had a shattered

marriage can understand how deeply a person can be hurt. Scarcely a family has escaped at least one member of the family having a shattered marriage. We all know by firsthand experience how deeply devastating it is.

But the fact is that Jesus is the same Jesus. When He was in their hearts and when they no longer recognized Him, He remained the same. He remained real. He remained the unlimited Christ in the NOW who could solve their problems and heal their marriage and put them back together. He's the same Jesus who first entered their hearts... who gave them that quiet power to really follow Him. He's the same Jesus. He hasn't changed at all.

Now a person who says, "I don't love you anymore" is striking at the very roots of the life of Jesus. He is saying:

"Jesus, You can't cut it in my life. When I began to develop problems in my marriage. You couldn't handle it for me and I'm going to let You go."

In letting Jesus go, both the husband and wife are floundering now. They are in ten times the trouble they were in to start with. We are working and praying with this couple that they will find their life again in Christ.

I believe ...

If Jesus can't cut it for your marriage,

He can't cut it for anything.

If Jesus can't keep love alive in your heart,

He can't give it to you in the first place.

The Christian Life Is Both An Act Of Conversion And A Discipleship, It Is A Personal Journey Into Discipleship

The other story I want to share is about a young man who has known Christ for eight years. We had a part in his knowing our Lord. Fortunately, he has been under this teaching and under the teaching of others who believe that the Christian experience is both a starting point in conversion and a continuation in discipleship until the moment one dies.

At one time this young man was a playboy and a hard drinker. He did the things that some in his social set do that are very demoralizing as far as character is concerned. He was born "in the purple"... highborn. He was born with all the social advantages. But then he accepted Christ and Christ became so meaningful

to him that he wanted to follow Him. He soon received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the prayer language of the Spirit. He began to use the three miracle keys of Seed-Faith:

Key #1. God is your Source (Philippians 4:19).

Key #2. Give, that it may be given to you (Luke 6:38).

Key #3. Expect a miracle (Mark 11:24).

He took these three miracle keys and built a business from nothing. In his own way he began to witness for Christ, not as a preacher but as a layman. Recently he gave his testimony in a large church. Some of those very close to him in his family were present.

When it was over his wife was thrilled that her husband had stood there before that crowd and shared what Christ had done in his life. But when they got into the car to drive away, there was not a word from those close to him. There was just a cold feeling.

He admitted this hurt. He couldn't understand it in his intellect why those so close to him would not appreciate the fact that he was no longer throwing his life away through various forms of immorality. He thought they would be glad that his marriage was now stabilized ... that he was being the right kind of father to his children. He figured they would appreciate this, but they didn't. And it hurt. But he pulled himself up and he said:

"I am a follower of my Lord. I'm going to be a Christian. I hope these dear loved ones will come to the Lord. But if they don't,

I'm still going to serve the Lord."

He kept that sweetness and never retaliated. He never struck back.

Do you see the difference between these two young men? Both were converted ... both accepted Christ ... but one stopped with conversion. The other went on to become a disciple, a follower of Jesus.

The persecution that the second young man received for his testimony brings up an interesting question: Why are there "Sauls of Tarsus" in this world? Why are there people with the spirit of Saul which is the spirit of opposition to the followers of Christ? Why are there people like that?

Is it, first of all, to test you and me as individual Christians? A test of whether we will be a witness of our Lord? Whether we will follow Jesus and not man?

Is it a test of whether Christ is real to us to begin with? Is it a test to see if we have a grip on Christ... or if we're holding Him loosely so that we can turn Him loose at any time if the fire gets too hot?

Or, is it something else? Is the opposition of these individuals really just the reflection of their own inner turmoil, of their own divided natures, their own unhappiness, their own unsuccessful pursuit of the answers to life?

If the latter is true, is this not an opportunity for you to BE a witness for Christ? Is there someone crossing your path right now who is giving you a rough time? Have you considered that this situation may be ...

To test you and to see if Christ is real in your life ...

To see if you are a follower of our Lord or if you just merely got saved at one time and that's about all there was to it...

Or is this persecution of you allowed so that the Holy Spirit's power in you can be revealed? To show you power that you never knew you possessed?

It's Important To Be A Witness ... Wherever You Are

If you have been filled with the Holy Spirit, you have received POWER to BE A WITNESS, to be a witness means that you are what you are ... wherever you are. And if the Lord begins to deal with you, your reply is, "I am here ...". Now it's very important to be "here." Ananias said, "I am here, Lord."

Some say, "Well, if I could go to Oral Roberts University I could become a better Christian."

Maybe ... but I doubt it. I have seen some come to ORU and become worse Christians. Remember, Judas Iscariot backslid among the rest of the twelve disciples. In the very physical presence of Jesus Christ, Judas became a thief.

On the other hand, it is true that there is an atmosphere at Oral Roberts University that can contribute to a person coming closer to God and learning more about God. That's the very essence of its being. But if a person doesn't truly WANT to become a follower of our Lord, being at Oral Roberts University will no more change him than you could change the chair you sit on and make that inanimate object become animate.

The fact is if I really have my Lord and you have the Lord in your life WHEREVER you are ... that is where we have our being, in Christ. We can say, "I'm here, Lord."

I think it was a great thing when Ananias said:

"I am here. I'm marked for death. I know the man's coming to get me, but I am here. I don't know why this man hates me. I don't know why he's coming to throw me in prison. But I am here."

He's saying:

"It's tough, but I'm here. I'M HERE."

I believe the toughest thing in the world is to be a follower of our Lord. It's tough because of the potential glory built into it. Because it is the only force in the world that can really heal. It's the only force that can transform. The schools try to inform... the reformatories try to reform ... but only Christ can TRANSFORM.

- **It's tough** to be a Christian on the baseball field as a player... or on the football field... or the basketball court... or the golf course.
- **It's tough** to be a Christian in the classroom.
- **It's tough** to be a Christian in the kitchen when the food that is being cooked doesn't turn out right and someone sits down at the table and says that it isn't right.
- **It's tough** to be a Christian when you're courting and something happens between the two of you. It's tough.
- **It's tough** to be a Christian on the job when you work hard and someone else gets the promotion you think you should have had.

One boy said to me, "I just wish the girls that I go with wouldn't be so available. I just wish they wouldn't be such an easy mark. I just wish they'd tell me no once in a while. I'm a Christian young man. I really don't know what's going to happen to me because even the Christian girls I go with let me go too far."

I said, "That may be true. They may let you go too far, but they can never let you go further than you want to go. Nobody can make you do what you don't want to do."

People Only Do What They Want To Do

Every time I've ever transgressed against the Lord God, it was because I WANTED to do it. I might have said that I didn't want to, but in my heart there was a part of me that Christ didn't fill because I hadn't let Him. There is no way that my Lord is going to do anything wrong. There's no way that Jesus Christ is

going to lie, or cheat, or be immoral, or discriminate against a human being because of his race or color or economic standing or social position. There's no way my Lord is going to do that. And if I follow this Man, there's no way Oral Roberts is going to do it.

Ananias said, "I'm here." And the Lord said:

"Saul of Tarsus is on the way but I've been dealing with him. He's over here in town right now and he's had a vision. He saw you in this vision coming in, putting your hands on him, and praying for him."

Ananias almost went straight up. He said, "You mean me?" And the Lord said, "Yes, I mean you! And I want you to go."

Ananias said, "Look, Lord, I know this man. I know what he's got in his mind. I know what he is after."

That probably would have been our first reaction too. Sometimes it is good to react and to say the negative things and get them out of us. I was once on a national TV talk show where a man was saying some terrible things about Jesus. The reason I didn't jump on him was that I felt like he should get those things out of him. I thought maybe he would feel better after he said them ... especially if I could show the love of Christ toward him while he was saying them. He looked at me and he said:

"I don't believe in your Christ. I don't believe in God. I don't believe in your experience.

I don't believe in anything I can't see."

Then he took the host's hand and said:

"I see your arm and hand. I believe in what I can see. I don't believe in something I can't see. I can't see God so I don't believe in Him."

I remember my response:

"We may not be able to see God but we sure can FEEL Him." I think this was inspired. Because God is Someone we can feel. This is not the end of that story. There has been a remarkable thing happening in this man's life since that talk show. I don't know the whole story but I have a strong feeling that he may yet accept Christ. Potentially, he is a great Christian.

To return to Ananias ... he remonstrated with the Lord. But because he was a disciple ... because he was following Christ ... Ananias said,

"Lord, I will go"

First, Ananias said:

"I am here ..."

Then he said:

"I will go."

Then the Lord told Ananias to go over to Saul and tell him what a tough time he was going to have BEING a Christian. We always want to talk about how sweet it is ... how much joy and peace we will have when we get saved ... and how great it's going to be when we die and go to heaven. But here Ananias is to deliver a message to Saul on how tough it's going to be ... how that Saul is to suffer for Christ's sake.

When Ananias arrived where Saul was staying he walked over to him, put his hands on him, and said,

"Brother Saul..."

Now can you imagine meeting your potential killer and saying, "My good brother... it's nice to be with you. I know you are going to cut my head off when you get a chance, but meanwhile let's have some fellowship."

This may be an exaggeration but it's the principle of what I've just related to you. Ananias said:

"Brother Saul, Jesus who appeared to you in the way hath sent me that you might receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Now we know that Ananias had to have been filled with the Holy Spirit himself or he could not have helped another man to receive the Holy Spirit. Ananias, in going through the crisis of becoming a follower of our Lord, a disciple, had to have the edification of the prayer language of the Spirit. There's no way that he could have gone through this terror that Saul of Tarsus was bringing to him without the Holy Spirit coming up like a river within him, as Jesus had said that He would in John 7:37-39:

Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost [Spirit] was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

There would have been no way that Ananias could have calmed himself

enough so that he could face his own prospective killer without the therapy of the prayer language of the Spirit. CONVERSION AND BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT IS ONLY THE BEGINNING.

Now this is what is missing in the Church and in Christians today. We talk so little about the Holy Spirit and becoming a disciple. We seem to forget that the conversion experience and being filled with the ^

Holy Spirit is only a BEGINNING. The rest of our Christian life has to be lived out every day and wherever we are. We must say, "Lord, I am here." Whether the task is tough or easy, we must say, "I am here... I will go."

You see, becoming a Christian is one thing but living out the Christian life, or becoming a disciple, is quite another. For example, the marriage ceremony is one thing but the marriage "lived out" is another. Or, just as you may own a farm but becoming a farmer, actually farming that farm, is something else. In the same way, one can take Christ into his life at a given point in his existence but does he go on and become a disciple? We need to ask ourselves: "Am I a disciple?"

Am I a follower?

Am I living out the Christian life TODAY?"

The Bible goes on to tell us that Saul was filled with the Spirit. He was healed. And he BECAME A DISCIPLE. He dwelt there with the Christians in Damascus for a time and later he went on his way.

I believe with my whole being that we must first be saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. Secondly, we must go on and become a follower of our Lord, a disciple, and face up to the toughness of the Christian life. Therein, we'll be saved as we follow our Lord. Therein, is our salvation. Because through the Holy Spirit the unlimited Christ abides with us forever.

Chapter 7, How The Holy Spirit Can Help Make You A More Understanding Person

Suggested Scripture reading for this lesson: Acts 10; 1 Corinthians 14:19,20

How often we say, "I wish ... OH, I WISH ... I could understand." Or we say, "I wish that person could just understand what I am saying." Or, "I wish he could understand what God wants him to do ... that he must not throw his life away... that he must turn to God." Or, we say, "I wish I could understand what God is saying to me."

From time to time we all feel a desperate need of understanding. The Bible talks about this great need in Proverbs 4:7:

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and WITH ALL THY GETTING GET UNDERSTANDING.

I want to focus now upon understanding God ... understanding how He deals with you ... understanding how God helps you and me to grasp, to understand, what we are supposed to know and to do.

When we understand as we should our actions are more objective. We are most apt to take the right step, to do the proper thing. When we really understand, things always turn out better in our lives.

As we talk about understanding God we will begin in Acts 10 and then go to 1 Corinthians 14:19,20.

First, Acts 10. By the time the events happened that are recorded in this chapter our Lord had ascended. He had poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The one hundred twenty had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and had spoken in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:4). The Christian church had begun to be established, although it was still young and new in the world. Although it was a great force it was not reaching far beyond the Jewish people ... that is, to the Gentile world.

A Gentile was a person who was not a Jew. All non-Jews were called Gentiles and they were more or less considered by the Jews to be barbarians ... at least, those who lived beyond Rome or Greece. The Jews felt that those great multitudes of races out there were not attuned to God ... they were not spiritually minded, or at least knowingly spiritually minded.

Everybody Is Spiritually Minded Because That Is The

Way God Made Him, But He May Not Be Spiritually Minded With Understanding

Here in Acts 10 is the story of a military man, a captain (centurion) in the Roman army. This man was in charge of 100 Roman soldiers stationed in Caesarea, a seaport town on the Mediterranean Sea. His name was Cornelius.

Cornelius was a devout man, one who feared God with all his house. He gave much alms, or much giving to others, and prayed to God always. One day while he was in prayer, Cornelius had a vision. It was about the ninth hour, or about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. An angel of God came to him and said: Cornelius (Acts 10:3).

He looked on him and he was afraid and said:

What is it, Lord? (Acts 10:4).

And the angel said:

Thy prayers and thine alms [giving] are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter (Acts 10:4,5).

Then the angel went on to say that this man, Peter, would come and tell Cornelius what he should do. As we read on in this chapter we see that Peter arrived.

As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation [that is, it is unlawful according to the Jewish Law or the Jewish religion]; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean (Acts 10:25-28).

Here we see the first breaking down of racial discrimination. And it came through Christianity. It came first of all through Peter who had a hard time with it. Finally, he had to be convinced by God himself.

Therefore came unto you without gain-saying [or doubting], as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? (Acts 10:29).

Cornelius explained that an angel had come to him and told him to send for Peter and then Cornelius said:

Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou

art come.

Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God (Acts 10:33).

Cornelius had his entire household gathered to hear what Peter would say.

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said,

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

God gets blamed for many things that He never does, or that He is not. He gets blamed for being a respecter of persons because some of His followers are respecters of persons.

But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him (Acts 10:35).

Then Peter begins a short sermon, every word of which is packed with meaning. I want you to read it carefully because it has a lot to do with you and me. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ:

(he is Lord of all) (Acts 10:36).

He is Lord of all... Here Peter indicated that this Roman, this Gentile, this military man, has not yet received the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost [Spirit] and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead (Acts 10:37-41).

Peter indicates that after the resurrection of our Lord that he and the other disciples actually ate and drank with Jesus.

And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead [the living and the dead]. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name [the name of Jesus] whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter

yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost [Spirit] fell on all them which heard the word (Acts 10:42-44).

They were not merely hearing the sounds coming from Peter's lips ... they were understanding ... perceiving... what he was saying.

And they of the circumcision [which means Jews] which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost [Spirit]. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God (Acts 10:45-46).

How did they know they had received the gift of the Holy Spirit?

They heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

In Acts 11 is an account of what happened when Peter returned from Caesarea to Jerusalem where the church elders are in session. He tells them what occurred in the house of Cornelius:

And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision [the Jews] contended with him, Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying.. .as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning (Acts 11:1-4,15).

If you remember, in Acts 2, when the one hundred twenty received the baptism in the Holy Spirit they spoke in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Peter is indicating to these Jewish brethren that this is exactly what happened to these Gentiles in the house of Cornelius.

Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John [the Baptist] indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost [Spirit].

Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift [the same gift] as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life (Acts 11:16-18).

The story of Cornelius brings up an interesting question: Why was it so terribly important that the Gentiles also be given the identical gift of the Holy Spirit with the speaking in tongues as God had given to the Jews on the Day of

Pentecost? WHY?

Why was it necessary for this man Cornelius and his household to go ahead and receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit? The Bible clearly says that he is already a devout man... he is a man accepted of God. He is a man who is generous with his giving and devout in his prayer life ... so much so that an angel came to him and said:

"Your alms [your giving] and your prayers have come up before God as a memorial unto you. It's a living memorial... it distinguishes you in heaven."

Most of us would agree that Cornelius already had all that it takes to be a man of God. He prayed and he gave. He sowed seeds of faith. God was his Source. He was expecting great things from God. He was a devout man. So why should there be a need for more?

Here is a great mystery. It was a mystery to the Church then and it is still a mystery to the Church today. Throughout the world people can't seem to grasp that there is a depth in God that can only be reached by the infilling of the Holy Spirit. That the Holy Spirit, the divine Paraclete, the other Comforter, Jesus' other self, must come in.

There is some history here in the story of Cornelius that we should go into. I've asked Dr. Howard Ervin, Professor of Old Testament in the School of Theology at Oral Roberts University, to assist me at this point and give you some historical background on Cornelius.

Oral: Dr. Ervin, how would you describe the position Cornelius held before God at this time?

Ervin: Cornelius was probably a "proselyte of the gate," President Roberts.

Oral: What do you mean by "proselyte"?

Ervin: A proselyte is one who is a convert to Judaism. There were two orders to proselyte. One, the full proselyte, accepted the full burden of the law, including circumcision and ritual observances. The second group, the proselytes of the gate, did not accept circumcision or the ritual observances, but were like Cornelius. They were devout men who prayed, gave alms, and identified themselves with the ethical and moral precepts of Judaism.

Oral: Is that what God is indicating here when He says that Cornelius is a devout man?

Ervin: I think it is.

Oral: He is devout according to the standards of the Old Testament.

Ervin: Yes.

Oral: He has not yet come under the New Testament.

Ervin: Not yet.

Oral: Has he heard of it?

Ervin: He has apparently heard of Jesus as a historical figure. But he lacks understanding of the true purpose for which Jesus came.

Oral: In other words, Cornelius had heard of Jesus as a historical figure to the extent that He had been born and lived as a man. He had heard about His death and His resurrection, I presume . . .

Ervin: Exactly.

Oral: The Bible says that Cornelius' giving and prayers had become a memorial before God. How would you describe that?

Ervin: They were recognized and accepted by God.

Cornelius is a devout man. He prays and he gives alms which are two of the pillars of Old Testament piety. In fact, some of the later rabbis said that these were the two pillars that replaced sacrifice after the destruction of the temple.

Oral: Peter indicated that whosoever fears God in any nation is accepted of God. Did you notice that?

Ervin: Exactly.

Oral: What's your comment on that?

Ervin: I think Peter is speaking of those in the same category as Cornelius. The word "fear" as it is used here, means "a righteous or a holy awe of God."

It refers to one who prays to God, one who tries to live up to the moral commandments in giving, in righteousness, but without personal knowledge of Christ.

Oral: Then there would have been people at that time throughout the world who had not yet really come into contact with Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, and yet were counted righteous before God.

Ervin: Unquestionably.

Oral: In your opinion, why was being devout, as Cornelius was, not self-

sufficient in itself? Why would a person need to go beyond that?

Ervin: Luke tells us in Acts 11:14:

Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

Oral: Are you indicating that Cornelius is not saved by Jesus Christ here?

Ervin: This is clearly indicated in the text.

Oral: How could he be a righteous man, fully accepted of God, and yet not be a saved man?

Ervin: Under the terms of the Old Covenant he is declared a righteous man but not a "saved" man.

Oral: What do you mean by the Old Covenant?

Ervin: The Covenant of Moses given to the people of Israel which was in effect until the death of Jesus Christ.

Oral: All right. What would the death of Jesus Christ have done to the Old Covenant?

Ervin: I think the Epistle to the Hebrews indicated that the Old Covenant is superseded by the New Covenant with the death of Christ. He is the final and perfect sacrifice who fulfills all the sacrificial types.

Oral: In other words, before Christ's sacrifice, all the sacrifices of animals were looking forward to Him.

Ervin: Exactly.

Oral: To the one perfect sacrifice, the offering up of Jesus on the cross.

Ervin: Exactly.

Oral: You would call Jesus, then, the High Priest?

Ervin: He is both High Priest and the perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 5:10, 9:26).

Oral: He was made a sacrifice once and for all (Hebrews 9:25-28).

Ervin: Once and for all. As the High Priest He offers the sacrifice of himself.

Oral: Now in the story of Cornelius we also have this ministry of angels. It's apparent that an angel visits Cornelius and gives him clear instructions. What do you have to say about the ministry of angels?

Ervin: I believe in them, President Roberts. We've had an experience with one in our own family.

Oral: Was it good or bad?

Ervin: Excellent. Let me tell it briefly. It concerns our oldest daughter, Gretchen. When she was three years old she was in an automobile that was struck by a train. She was thrown out of the car alongside the railway right-of-way. A few hours later when her mother and I were standing alongside her crib in the hospital, she told us that a person in white had come to her, but he did not take her with him. I believe this was an angel.

Oral: Yes. An angel instructed Cornelius, didn't he?

Ervin: Yes.

Oral: Now Peter arrives and he has won quite a battle, wouldn't you think?

Ervin: Indeed, first of all over himself.

Oral: How would you classify that battle?

Ervin: Peter, oddly enough, is the one who declared God's universal purpose at Pentecost and yet when he is faced with the call to go to the house of Cornelius, it took a miracle, an angelic visitation really, before he could understand what God's full redemptive purpose for the rest of the world was.

Oral: Are you saying that under the anointing of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost Peter could include everybody in the world, but when he got down to a specific human being it wasn't so easy?

Ervin: I think that's most aptly put.

Oral: Would it compare with a fellow I heard about who said that he had trouble loving individuals so he was just going to love the human race?

Ervin: I think that's aptly put too.

Oral: You think that would be easier?

Ervin: Yes. I think it's always easier to love in the large rather than in the particular.

Oral: How do you account for what happened to Peter in opening his mind so that he made such a great statement, in essence: "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons. I'm never going to call anybody unclean again."

Ervin: My own understanding of this, President Roberts, is that the Holy

Spirit really began to open Peter's understanding. The Holy Spirit had to open Peter's understanding to the meaning of the vision as to its implications for Cornelius and the rest of the human race.

Oral: How would you explain someone today who has been filled with the Holy Spirit but who still has respect of persons and racial biases?

Ervin: Well, certainly if there are such they have not risen to the fullness of the revelation Peter received.

Oral: You see, there are people who have a hard time understanding a so-called spiritually minded person having such biases. They doubt the fact the person has ever known Jesus Christ. My reply is that he has it in his heart, but it may not have reached his head very well yet.

Ervin: As I sometimes have said, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, or the Pentecostal experience, the Pentecostal reality, whatever word we want to call it, is not instant perfection. It is a beginning into what you so aptly call discipleship ... or following Jesus daily and learning to be, and to do, like He is and does.

Oral: How would you look upon people who have this experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and yet withdraw from other Christians... who indicate that they are now superior because they have this gift ... who seem to feel that other people don't have much spiritually because they don't have this baptism?

Ervin: Certainly they missed what the apostle Paul meant when he said, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). Such Christians are making distinctions that the Holy Spirit has obliterated.

Oral: Do you think that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a denomination or an experience?

Ervin: An experience.

Oral: Explain.

Ervin: Well, there are people in all denominations who have the experience but not all denominations have embraced the experience.

Oral: All right. Now we have Peter at Cornelius' house. Cornelius is very glad Peter is there to the extent he wants to fall down and worship him, doesn't he? Cornelius goes back to his training of worshipping Caesar as God, and he always bowed to Caesar.

Ervin: Yes, that's quite true.

Oral: Whatever he thought was divine he would bow to. He is so carried away with the fact that this so-called great man of God is present that he bows to him, isn't that right?

Ervin: Yes, that's quite true.

Oral: But Peter put that away, didn't he, so we bow only to God.

Ervin: Only to God.

Oral: In fact, the Bible says, does it not,

"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Philippians 2:10,11).

Now this sermon that Peter preached to Cornelius appears to be abbreviated here. Do you believe that this is an abbreviation or the entire sermon that Peter preached?

Ervin: In my understanding, this is not an abridgment of the original sermon. What is essential is preserved for us.

Oral: What do you think is important about Peter's having been directed by the angel to go to the Gentiles at this particular instant?

Ervin: In my opinion, the original commission as given by Jesus included Jerusalem, Judaea, and Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth. We have already seen the first three areas begun to be evangelized and now the last part is being fulfilled as the gospel is spreading out into the Gentile world. I think this is one of the reasons why it was crucial for Peter, because of the visitation of the angel, to be willing to step out into the Gentile world.

Later, in Acts 15, where we have the record of the first council of the Church at Jerusalem, it is Peter who helps to resolve the question of the Gentiles coming into the Church by saying that it was at his hands that God first proclaimed the gospel to the Gentiles.

Oral: In Acts 10:36, Peter says, "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all)." He is Lord of all. As far as I know, this is the first place a statement of this kind has appeared in the New Testament.

Ervin: Yes, certainly in the book of Acts. There is one other occasion in the Gospels where Peter recognized Jesus as Lord (Matthew 16:16) but he then immediately backslid from it. Apparently he did not realize what God had

revealed to him.

Oral: In Acts 10:37, Peter says, "That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached." Then there is the key verse: How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him (Acts 10:38).

Why do you think Peter emphasized to Cornelius that it was the anointing of the Holy Ghost on Jesus that had enabled Him to go about healing the oppressed of the devil?

Ervin: Someone has suggested that the name of the book of Acts should really be The Acts of the Holy Spirit. That is, it is the consciousness of the followers of Christ of their utter dependence on the Holy Spirit that emerges, or looms, so large in the book of Acts. Peter is simply saying that without the person and the work of the Holy Spirit, which is indispensable to them, they could not have accomplished what they did. And the work of the Holy Spirit was indispensable for Jesus in the days of His flesh. ^

Oral: From my standpoint of seeing the life of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, it seems to me that it was only after the Holy Spirit was outpoured that these disciples of our Lord were able to have a ministry of healing, a ministry of miracles.

Ervin: That is true. What miracles they did perform in the Gospels before this were by delegated authority.

Oral: Yes.

Ervin: For example, when Jesus sent out the seventy, two and two, to minister (Luke 10:1), they came back rejoicing, saying, "Even the devils are subject unto us through thy name" (Luke 10:17). Apparently they did perform miracles but it was by delegated authority. It was only after the coming of the Holy Spirit that they could do them through Christ working in them. As you have said, the unlimited Christ is now working through them.

Oral: All right. In your opinion when a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, is he more apt to believe that God can miraculously heal or miraculously intervene in his life?

Ervin: Yes, this is my opinion based on Scripture and based on experience.

Oral: Why do you think that is?

Ervin: Because the Holy Spirit's presence in power validates all the promises of Scripture. And one of the promises is, "Greater works than these shall he [you] do" (John 14:12).

Oral: You think the Holy Spirit is actually in the world?

Ervin: Oh, He's right here now.

Oral: In the sense that Jesus Christ was on the earth in the flesh?

Ervin: Luke 4:1 tells us that after the baptism in Jordan, Jesus was led of the Spirit into the wilderness. And Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit. In that sense Jesus is the incarnation of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is now with the Father and the Church is now the incarnation of the Holy Spirit.

Oral: Wasn't there reference to the fact that Jesus had been filled with the Holy Spirit beyond measure?

Ervin: Beyond measure, yes, as only He could be (John 3:34).

Oral: What does that mean?

Ervin: Only Jesus could be filled with the Holy Spirit to that extent, *"for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"* (Colossians 2:9).

Oral: What would the measure be that we would have in being filled with the Holy Spirit?

Ervin: Jesus as God, as the second Person of the triune Godhead, knew the Holy Spirit in unlimited measure. I don't think He ever knew a failure, such as we have known failures, in obedience to the Holy Spirit. Even though the Holy Spirit works through us we know that the Holy Spirit is to some degree limited by our human limitations.

Oral: But aren't there moments when the Holy Spirit is working through us when we achieve some of that limitlessness, that unlimited power?

Ervin: That is certainly true.

Oral: How?

Ervin: Here I must draw again upon my own experience and also something that I remember you saying a number of years ago in a seminar on the ORU campus. When the Holy Spirit drops the seed of miracle-working faith into the heart, there comes with it a knowing that is a knowing, that is a knowing, that is a knowing. I think in my own experience there have been those times

when I've had this experience when the Holy Spirit was invincible through me.

Oral: In other words, there are moments that the Holy Spirit works through us with such force that it's as if our Lord were there doing the work himself. The Holy Spirit appears, does the job, and then we fall back on our limitations. But with our Lord in His unlimited state, He's always unlimited. He never falls back upon a limited state.

Ervin: Exactly.

Oral: Now, let's go just a little further and talk about the last statement that's recorded that Peter said to Cornelius, which is in Acts 10:43. Will you read it, please, Dr. Ervin.

Ervin: "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."

Oral: Now in the very next verse it indicated that the Holy Spirit fell upon them. Why do you think that the Holy Spirit fell directly after Peter's statement about the remission of sins through the name of Jesus?

Ervin: May I call your attention again to Acts 11:14: "He will declare to you a message by which you will be saved and your household." This is the message that Peter declared in Acts 10:43, and then the Holy Spirit fell simultaneously or almost instantaneously. I think this indicates that conversion and the baptism in the Spirit are a unit whole.

Oral: A unit whole. How do you describe a unit whole?

Ervin: Well, let me do it by analogy. After centuries of neglect in which we have separated the initial experience of conversion, the new birth, from the empowering of the Holy Spirit, we are rediscovering that this is of man and not of God. God's purpose is to get us into the kingdom and empower us and begin to use us right away.

Oral: Are you saying then the moment you receive Christ and forgiveness of sins, at that very moment you could receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, the empowerment for service?

Ervin: This is the pattern I see here.

Oral: Now if it doesn't happen like that, could you receive this baptism later on at a different point in time?

Ervin: I think this was my experience as I look back on it, President Roberts. Again, I think it was a lack of understanding. If I had known, things

could have been different.

Oral: If you had UNDERSTOOD.

Ervin: Yes.

Oral: Tell me, Dr. Ervin, what do you think Acts 10 and 11 and Cornelius, the Gentile, receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues says to us today? What's the import of it to us in the now?

Ervin: One very famous scholar has said that what we have in Acts 10 and 11 is a pattern, a normal pattern, for the Christian life and experience in the apostolic age. I would summarize by saying that this ought to be the normal pattern for the Christian in this hour.

Oral: All right, one more thing. It says here that the Holy Spirit fell upon all that heard the Word. Does that indicate Peter was preaching the Word and they were grasping it, understanding it?

Ervin: I would agree that this was what it means.

Oral: All right, what does understanding consist of then? Often we hear words and they don't have any particular meaning for us, but the Bible says that these people heard and they received.

Ervin: In understanding, there are three steps: (1) There is the information, the intellectual data that is supplied. (2) There is the comprehension of that data and (3) there is the application of that data to immediate situations. I think it takes all of these three to result in true understanding.

Oral: Do you think that could happen instantly to someone who has not received the infilling of the Spirit... that as he heard the Word of God he might be filled that moment?

Ervin: Oh, yes, I do believe that. It did not happen to me that way, but I have friends who tell me they can document cases in which it did happen that way.

Oral: Turn now to 1 Corinthians 14:18-20:

I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

Dr. Ervin, help us out a little here with these verses.

Ervin: Paul says in verse 18:

"I thank God that I am speaking in tongues more than you all." I have suggested to those who have been critical of the experience of speaking in tongues, or the prayer language of the Spirit, that they examine carefully what the apostle is saying. He apparently was not ashamed of it, but rather rejoiced in the fact that he knew the prayer language and that he did pray his ten thousand words in a tongue. As a friend of mine has said, "After Paul prayed ten thousand words in a tongue at home he only needed five in a service to get the job done."

Oral: That cut the sermon down considerably, didn't it?

Ervin: Yes. I don't know how accurate that is but I enjoyed the remark when I heard it. I think what Paul is maximizing here is his experience in the prayer language. He recognizes its necessity, its edification, its empowering, all that comes with it, but he's also magnifying his office as a teacher. In the church he uses the vernacular tongue, known by all, because he is concerned that his hearers learn what he has to say, that they are understanding, that they are comprehending.

Oral: Are you saying then that on particular occasions he would not use tongues at all, that he wouldn't use the prayer language?

Ervin: I don't think Paul would use the prayer language in what we would call a public service.

Oral: All right. He's saying, "Yet in the church I'd rather speak five words in my own understanding." In other words, "If I stood up here and used thousands of words in tongues, people wouldn't understand." It's evident at least to me, Dr. Ervin, that Paul was concerned about first his own understanding and, secondly, about the understanding or comprehension of the people. Wouldn't a good witness of Christ have that concern?

Ervin: Exactly.

Oral: I'm interested in what you might say about this verse, 1 Corinthians 14:20:

Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

Ervin: This is unquestionably a difficult passage. This whole next paragraph is a difficult one. There are different interpretations of it. I like to see it in the context of the whole epistle. Paul was dealing with a church that I think was a normal church. I don't think there was anything different in Corinth than

in any other church, although some have tried to say this was his worst church. This was a church that was split at least four different ways by schism and Paul rebukes them for their immaturity. There was a great deal of malice in that schism and it seems to me that Paul is referring to this and what he is saying is that it's time to grow up in your mind.

Oral: He's saying what?

Ervin: It's time to grow up in your mind.

Oral: To grow up in your mind? Now, may I add a little thought?

Ervin: Please do.

Oral: Let's get back to 1 Corinthians 14:14,

"If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful."

For example, because my mind is unfruitful, or because my understanding is not what it should be, I then proceed to pray with my spirit. I pray with my spirit. I revert back to my beginnings as a human being, as God created me, as spirit. I go back now and with my spirit I pray, because as I try to pray and to have a spiritual discussion with God my mind is unfruitful, my understanding can't quite comprehend how to do it. Intellectually I can't quite leap over the boundary of the limitations of my mind.

In the next verse Paul says, "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also." It seems that Paul is emphasizing the necessity first of getting into one's spirit but secondly, going into one's own understanding. I believe Paul is saying that a man's mind must be equal to his spirit in the comprehension of God and the issues of life.

Now take that comment and apply it to 1 Corinthians 14:20 and see if this stimulates your thinking: Brethren, be not children in understanding.

A little child of course has limited comprehensive ability. He doesn't fully understand the issues of life. He feels and certainly has a knowing as he grows, but as a child he doesn't have the understanding that he should have as a normal adult.

Howbeit in malice be ye children.

Isn't this saying that when it comes to maliciousness we should be like a little child who is not malicious. A little child might do something that isn't exactly right, but there is a certain innocence about it. The child doesn't quite

understand what he's doing. We say, "After all, he's only a child. You can't expect a child to understand what he is doing." This is why if a child commits an act that would be considered a crime if an adult did it, the child is not thrown into prison. Because his understanding has not developed.

Isn't Paul saying to us that we should never be malicious at all, as far as our INTENT is concerned, but that we should have a purity of MOTIVE?

Finally Paul says:

In understanding be men ...

That is, have a maturity in your understanding. Now the question is, how can we have such an understanding unless we have the gift of the Holy Spirit which brings us the prayer language to take us into the deeper levels of understanding?

Ervin: May I make this added comment, President Roberts, that I think bears out what you were saying here. You remember the Apostle Paul says that we are to have the mind of Christ. I think the logical deduction from what you are saying is that maturity in the Spirit brings our minds into maturity ... that it is really bringing us into the fullness of the mind of Christ.

Oral: Thank you, Dr. Ervin, I appreciate your helping.

How You Can Use The Prayer Language As An Aid To Your Healing

Let me now indicate something that is burning within me.

It seems terribly complicated to live today. There are problems that are almost insurmountable. Apparently those problems come to us, as individuals, more often than we like to admit. For whenever one gets totally honest and we ask him if he has a problem, almost invariably he will say, "I certainly DO have problems."

Or we may say it this way: "I don't understand... I don't understand why this has happened to me. Why is this thing coming at me like this? Why?"

This leads me to this point: It seems that we need the Holy Spirit today as never before to help us understand we can be healed. We need to understand the way God wants to move and act through us, the way God wants to supply and answer, and the way God wants us to act in the moment of stress, in short, to be healed.

I heard a doctor on the television the other night say that stress has

become so embedded in the human personality that it is not only making people ill, but it is making them virtually incurable. Stress makes man ill and it makes the sickness hang on longer. Stress makes it more difficult for medicine to cure a person or for an operation to be successful. As I sat there I thought he could have said: "It makes it more difficult for prayer to get through." In other words, I felt he was saying, "The whole healing process for the problems we feel is complicated because of stress. And we have stress because we are facing something we can't handle. We don't understand."

The Prayer Language Of The Spirit Is One Of The Healing Methods Of God

Somehow there's a way that God can help you and me at this point. Certainly there are more ways than praying with the prayer language of the Spirit, but I firmly believe this is one of the healing methods of God. Why would Paul talk so much about tongues edifying one's inner man, giving him inner therapy? Why would Paul indicate that this would have an impact upon his intellectual understanding? Why would he indicate that it would open a person up rather than a person remaining closed in and hemmed in by the problem so that he feels there is no way out?

I believe the prayer language of the Spirit can help to open us up, to give us therapy within. While the problem we face may remain and be just as bad, we can now look upon it differently. We see it with a deeper spiritual comprehension. As a matter of fact, I personally believe we will see that the problem is spiritually induced, that all problems originate spiritually and all answers originate spiritually.

The point I'm trying to make is that we must find a way through the power of the Holy Spirit to have a deeper understanding of what is happening in our lives... of what the real problems are... and of what God is trying to do. I believe this will make it possible for us to be healed more quickly, more completely, and to become whole as human beings.

Chapter 8, A Panel Discussion On The Work Of The Holy Spirit

With Oral Roberts, Dr. Howard Ervin, and Dr. Charles Farah

Suggested Scripture reading for this lesson: Acts 19:1-6

Oral: I've asked Dr. Howard Ervin, Professor of Old Testament in the School of Theology at Oral Roberts University, and Dr. Charles Farah, Professor of Theology at ORU, to share with me in this lesson. We will discuss some of the deeper aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit, as related in Acts 19 and in the book of Ephesians. I want to begin by reading Acts 19:1-6:

And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?

And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

Before we discuss this Scripture I'd like to ask you, Dr. Farah, how long have you had the charismatic experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

Farah: About 11 years now.

Oral: How long have you known Christ as your personal Savior?

Farah: More than 30 years.

Oral: Why did you wait so long to receive the charismatic experience?

Farah: I didn't know about it.

Oral: I just read in Acts about some persons such as yourself. For these men had "not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost" (Acts 19:2). Their number was about twelve. You make about thirteen then.

Farah: Yes.

Oral: Dr. Howard Ervin, how long have you been a believer and a Christian?

Ervin: I've been a believer since I was 25. Twenty-one years later I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Oral: Dr. Ervin, are you the fourteenth man then who had not heard about the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

Ervin: Oh, I knew about it. I even preached it. I preached the baptism in the Holy Spirit years before I received it. In fact, one day I boxed myself into a corner. One of the women in my church said, "Now, look, you have preached that when you lay hands on people we can receive the Holy Spirit, what about you?"

Oral: Then what did Howard Ervin do?

Ervin: I went around looking to get what I didn't have.

Oral: Where did you go?

Ervin: I finally wound up in Miami Beach in 1961 at a Full Gospel Businessmen's convention. There I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Really, that's too long a story to get into.

Oral: But, you did receive?

Ervin: Yes, I did receive.

Oral: Why didn't you receive before this time?

Ervin: I think, in part, because I didn't know what response the Holy Spirit wanted from me. If I had known, I could have received long before I did.

Oral: Do you think, in hindsight, that you would have?

Ervin: I'm sure I would.

Oral: You would not have allowed any theological barriers to have arisen?

Ervin: No, because I settled my theological barriers in 1951 through an exegetical study of Acts 1:4,5. I came to an understanding that when our Lord promised the baptism in the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:4,5 that He meant Pentecost. I of course, as an evangelical, had been taught that Pentecost was the birthday of the Church. But when I saw that this experience was subsequent to conversion, though as Dr. Farah has so often aptly said and as you've been pointing out, it is, and can be, and ought to be a unit whole, it was not so in my experience. I think largely because of my past training. But this was the Scripture that cleared it for me.

Oral: Your past denominational experience is a branch of the Baptist faith.

Ervin: Yes, I am a Northern Baptist.

Oral: And your affiliation, Dr. Farah, is Presbyterian?

Farah: That's right.

Oral: I'm glad that you brethren have moved into this experience because it would be really terrible, speaking seriously, to have remained with this group of men in Ephesians who had not so much as heard that there be any baptism in the Holy Spirit. Now, brethren, Paul, in coming to the city of Ephesus, meets these particular disciples, about twelve men in number, who have known the baptism of John, and Paul immediately is concerned. What, in your mind, would have been his concern, Dr. Ervin?

Ervin: Well, the baptism of John was a baptism for repentance. It's really only the first step in conversion. Paul was obviously acquainted with the ministry of John as the forerunner. But these believers had not yet met Jesus Christ in personal encounter. I think here we have a very condensed narrative of all that Paul said. It is significant that he baptized these believers in water. Apparently Paul did not consider John's baptism as the equivalent of Christian baptism. But after introducing them to Jesus, and they responded to the invitation, Paul then felt free to baptize them in what is in all respects Christian baptism.

Oral: Then they received the Holy Spirit and spoke with tongues and prophesied?

Ervin: Yes.

Oral: Now, let's look back to Matthew 3:11. Here John the Baptist says:

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.

Now, Dr. Farah, what application of this statement of John the Baptist would you make as to the condition of these twelve men who had known the baptism of John?

Farah: I think they had that first part. They had the baptism unto repentance but they hadn't yet been baptized in the Spirit. It's obvious here that Paul feels there's a great lack in their lives. They're incomplete. They need to receive Christ, understanding that He is the end of that baptism. Paul took the

next step which was to lay hands on them for the reception of the Spirit and prophecy.

Oral: Let's go back to Matthew 3:11 again, Dr. Ervin, where John the Baptist says that when Christ comes He will have a baptism different from his. John's was a baptism of water unto repentance, was it not?

Ervin: Water unto repentance, yes.

Oral: But he is saying that Jesus Christ will have a different kind of baptism, it'll be a baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Ervin: Yes.

Oral: And with fire. What's your comment on that?

Ervin: The baptism in the Holy Spirit of course is what we read of in Acts 19:1-7 when after water baptism they do receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues. Fire is a controversial point among interpreters. It has been variously interpreted. It is interesting in the context that the writer goes on to say, "whose winnowing fork is in his hand and that he would clear the threshing floor, gather the wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." Some believe, in reference to the fire, that this speaks of the judgment that is a consequence of the coming of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It has often titillated my curiosity just how far our Lord intended that this would be implied.

Oral: Well, didn't Jesus indicate in John 16:8 that when the Holy Spirit would come, He would convict the world of unrighteousness?

Ervin: In righteousness and judgment.

Oral: ... and judgment to come.

Ervin: Yes.

Oral: But it is a clear evidence here from the Bible that when Jesus Christ would appear, He would have a different kind of baptism. Didn't He ask John and James once if they could take His baptism?

Ervin: Yes.

Oral: Didn't He ask them that question specifically? And they said they could. That was James and John. Now here is Paul discovering these twelve men at Ephesus. His concern is to lead them on into a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ and that they might be filled with the Holy Spirit. Do you consider this to be the normal, or the abnormal approach of Paul to a typical group of people

who had never heard of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, Dr. Farah?

Farah: There's no question that it's not only normative but it's quite parallel to what occurred in Paul's own life. We recall that he repented, he began to receive Christ on that Damascus road, but it wasn't until three days later that everything culminated in Paul's being filled with the Holy Spirit. As Dr. Ervin says, it became a unit whole. Further-more what Paul says in this passage is considered to be sort of a classical passage for the normal way of receiving the Spirit in the New Testament. Later on in the book of Hebrews when the writer talks about what you're supposed to know in order to be a full Christian, this is mentioned ... that one should receive laying on of hands for reception of the Spirit. Most commentators refer back to Acts 19:1-6 as being the norm for the New Testament church at this time in Paul's life.

Oral: Do you recall in Acts 10 and 11, which tells the experience of Cornelius receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking with tongues, that Peter was called in question by the elders in Jerusalem over it? In his account and defense of it, Peter stated that when this occurred, when they received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues, he remembered the Word of the Lord. Now the great conjecture in Christendom today is not that men should be filled with the Spirit, but how. How? Should they speak in tongues? Should they not? Is this an integral part, or is it not?

Further, the church at Corinth which is discussed by Paul particularly in regard to tongues in 1 Corinthians 14 is considered by many Christian leaders to be the worst of the early Christian churches. Many people seem to believe the Ephesian church is the best. At the same time Paul describes the fact that most of them spoke in tongues at Corinth, not all, but he wished they all did. Paul indicates that the very beginning of the Ephesian church (supposedly the best of the churches) is through the Holy Spirit and they're speaking in tongues and prophesying. What's your comment on that, Dr. Ervin?

Ervin: I would like to pick up with something you said in your introductory remarks, President Roberts. Many evangelicals in their theological reconstruction of the passage have pointed to the Epistle to the Ephesians as normative for church faith. I think the implication of your opening statement was that this passage of the Ephesian church is normative for experience. If the Ephesian Epistle is normative for doctrine, certainly it is normative for Christian experience and ought to be the norm today. I think the very fact that Paul was so concerned and did not stop until they had received the fullness of the Spirit and spoke in tongues, receiving and using the prayer language of the Spirit, is

profoundly significant. I would like to say a word in defense of the Corinthian Church. I don't think they were as bad as they've been made out to be by those who want to put them down.

Oral: I agree.

Ervin: I think that they were as normal a church as any that Paul founded. However, they wrote to Paul and they asked him some specific questions. Because Paul answered them we know more about the inner life of that church than we do of any other church. A. T. Robertson has said that you can duplicate all of the sins and failings of the Corinthian Church in any large city church anywhere in America.

Oral: Or in the world.

Ervin: I'm inclined to believe this. In the Corinthian Church their problem was their immaturity. The thing for which Paul rebuked them was not that they spoke in tongues but rather that there were divisions among them. I've often said that the divisions in Corinth were not caused by the baptism in the Spirit, or speaking in tongues, but by the teachers, and by the Corinthian Christians' own immaturity.

Oral: Well, in line with what you're saying, there is a statement in 1 Corinthians by Paul that the Corinthians have not come behind in any way. It's always been of particular interest to me that the people who think the Corinthian Church was not a great church and have pointed out that Paul, from their point of view, rebuked them, have left "tongues" out of their own particular experience. I wonder why they would not leave out the other things that Paul said were being misrepresented and mistreated in the Corinthian Church? In other words, why not eliminate the Lord's Supper also?

Ervin: Exactly.

Oral: Paul talked about the Lord's Supper. He makes a severe condemnation upon the way the Corinthians took the Holy Communion. It seems that the rich would bring their food and separate over here and eat it. The poor would take the lower seats and eat their sparse food. The people did not eat together. They didn't take Communion together. So from the rationale that there may have been some abuses on tongues in Corinth, by that same reasoning there was abuse of the Lord's Supper. So if we throw out one, let's just throw everything out. That's why I think this discussion tonight is a very important one.

Farah: I was just going to mention along with this: The judgment for

failure to discern the Lord's Body was a lot more severe than for the misuse of the gifts. We have to reckon that this is a much more serious offense than an overuse or an abuse of tongues, or any of the nine gifts of the Spirit Paul refers to in 1 Corinthians 12.

Oral: Of course. I don't believe Paul condemns speaking in tongues in the book of Corinthians anywhere. The people who take 1 Corinthians 14 to condemn speaking in tongues ought to read it just one time with an open mind. Read it exactly like it is, verse by verse, leaving nothing out. In my view, there's sometimes something wrong with some people who speak in tongues, but speaking in tongues is never condemned in the New Testament. Some of us who use the prayer language, tongues, may need to improve our relationship with Christ and our practice of the Christian faith, to be better disciples. But that could also be said of people who take the Holy Communion and who have not entered into the experience of the prayer language. There isn't anyone I know who could not improve his relationship with our Lord.

Now let's go back to the book of Ephesians. We first hear of Ephesus in Acts 19 where Paul leads these disciples first into a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, then directly on into the baptism in the Holy Spirit. They spoke in tongues and they also manifested some of the gifts of the Spirit, such as the gift of prophecy. They began to bring forth the Word of God. What comment do you have on that, Dr. Farah?

Farah: Well, I think that here we see a beautiful example of an immediate witness. They had received an experience from the Lord which was life-changing. The immediate explosion of that was something which would edify the whole Body and everyone who heard them. There was a demonstration of the fact that this had been a real experience because here was a manifestation of something new.

Oral: You're saying then that when they spoke in tongues it was an individual matter among the twelve men? But when they prophesied, the prophecy would then be to the group?

Farah: Right.

Oral: They edified the group after having personally edified themselves through the prayer language?

Farah: Right.

Oral: I think this is a tremendous point to remember. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with tongues AND to prophesy. The

tongues came first. We know from Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 14:4 that he who speaks in tongues edifies himself. But these people turn right around and prophesy. In 1 Corinthians 14:4 it also says that prophecy edified the group. This is a horizontal ministry, isn't it? Tongues are vertical between my soul and God. But prophecy is from me to you, or you to me. It is horizontal, man to man, human to human. Tongues is man to God: Prophecy is man to man. Would you agree with that, or do you in any way disagree with it?

Ervin: I would agree because in tongues one speaks mysteries to God. He is releasing his inner self and receiving edification. Then the Spirit kindles our spirits in prophecies and this then is addressed, as you pointed out, horizontally to our fellowmen, to those within the community of believers.

Oral: In Ephesians 1:15-17 it says:

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

Dr. Farah, is Paul now beginning to refer to the gifts of the Spirit, the gift of the word of wisdom and the gift of the word of knowledge, etc.?

Farah: Yes, there's no question about it. This revelation too is a gift that the Spirit gives. So he's praying that God will illumine them to understand the tremendous truths that He's going to bring out in this, the queen of New Testament epistles, the book of Ephesians.

Oral: Well, Dr. Ervin, can you reconcile our precious brethren, whom we love in the Lord, who feel that the gifts of the Spirit have no part in our lives today, but rather that only the fruit of the Spirit should be emphasized. The fruit of the Spirit is love. There are nine different manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit but fruit of the Spirit is really talking about love isn't it? Love and its manifestations. These brethren seem to want us to emphasize that and not to emphasize the gifts of the Spirit, such as the gift of the word of wisdom, the gift of the word of knowledge, etc. How can you in your own mind having had at one time a similar background, account for their feeling this way?

Ervin: I don't know that I can really account for it. I do know there's a great deal of theological prejudice against the nine gifts of the Spirit. I don't think these people approach the Scriptures with a wholly open mind. They prejudge. For example, the fruit of the Spirit is a consequence of life. The fruits of the Spirit are attributes of God himself. They become attributes of our new

nature by virtue of our living relationship, our faith relationship, with Christ. So they are a valid part of our Christian discipleship through nurture and growth. On the other hand, the gifts of the Spirit are not what God is, they are what He does.

Oral: Say that again.

Ervin: The fruits of the Spirit are attributes of the divine nature. They are attributes of our new nature by virtue of the fact that we participate in the life of Christ through the new birth. The gifts of the Spirit are what Christ does. The fruits are what He IS...the gifts are what He DOES.

Oral: All right, the fruits of the Spirit are what God IS, His attributes. What He wants us to be. Whereas, the gifts of the Spirit are what God DOES ... what He wants us to DO. One is being and one is doing. Dr. Farah, let me address the same question to you.

Farah: I really think that I had to have what Paul was praying for here, a revelation of the power of the Spirit. For me, the book of Acts was a dead book. I had been taught that the book of Acts was interesting as far as history was concerned but that I was not to expect the great miracles, wonders, and signs of Acts to occur today. I was taught this happened for the launching of the Church ... when it was just beginning. So when I read the book of Acts I never expected these things to happen.

Oral: Would you say this is an analogy of getting the baby born, but after that, the baby doesn't need anything?

Farah: I would say so. I would say that anyone who thinks the Church doesn't need the miracle gifts hasn't really looked at the Church and its needs and problems in today's world.

Oral: Would you go so far as to say that the direct influence of the Church on the world and its conditions is infantile?

Farah: I would say that. I would say, in fact, that American Christianity by and large is an expression of babyhood Christianity.

Oral: If you believe that, notice what Paul said in Ephesians 4:11-13:

He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Isn't Paul indicating here that the Church has not yet reached any great maturity, even after having received the baptism in the Holy Spirit... even after having the gifts of the Spirit as well as the fruits of the Spirit? Isn't he saying that there's still room for maturity and growth? In other words, they hadn't arrived. And we've not arrived. Look at the world. Look at the needs of the world. Look how faint our voice appears to be. What would your comment on that be, Dr. Ervin?

Ervin: Certainly we are faced with needs in the world such as I don't think the world has ever seen before in regard to magnitude, scope, intensity. And the church does seem impotent. Before I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit this made me very pessimistic.

Oral: You were a pessimistic Christian?!

Ervin: Very pessimistic! But receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit changed my whole outlook, because I do firmly believe that this present Pentecostal renewal is God's answer to the need of the world. I believe this is the one hope that the world has. It's either Pentecost or chaos.

Oral: Pentecost or chaos. Dr. Farah, would you want to comment on that?

Farah: I think that's a true statement and it's becoming increasingly true.

Oral: How?

Farah: At the time I received the baptism in the Spirit one of the statements made about me was, "Chuck is off on a bypass. He's off on a sidwinding. He got off the main stream," but, praise God, that bypass has become an eight-lane highway. I mean, God is really doing something. It's becoming increasingly clear that either the Holy Spirit has to be honored and His gifts honored or we have no hope. I just wanted to say in response to Dr. Ervin that I, too, used to have a pessimistic outlook. I thought there were going to be only a few Christians left, that the end was going to come, that we couldn't look for a revival to come. This ministry of yours, President Roberts, has had a very positive effect on my own life in giving me great expectations for the Spirit to be poured out upon all flesh.

Ervin: May I interject this? The first sermon I ever heard President Roberts preach was on the radio. You remember the time the tent was destroyed in Amarillo?

Oral: I don't want to remember when the tent was destroyed, but I do remember that it was. I was almost destroyed with it. That was in 1950.

Ervin: Well, I remember it because the message you preached after this happened had a profound effect on me. I'll never forget it. You preached on "You Can't Go Under For Going Over." Am I right?

Oral: I preached a sermon in that crusade, "You Can't Go Under For Going Over." Soon a big wind came and blew the tent down while 7,000 of us were in there. The next day there lay the tent all cut to pieces by the fire department because they feared someone might be under it, dead. Thank God, no one was. While I was out there surveying the wreckage and wondering if my ministry was through, someone ran up with a telegram. The telegram was from partners of ours in Colorado, the McLaughlins. It said, "Dear Oral Roberts, you can't go under for going over." That was a great experience for me, standing there in the wreckage and reading words that I had just preached.

Ervin: I remember you retelling that over the air and I thought to myself, if this man can be optimistic in the midst of chaos, why am I so pessimistic? I knew you had something that I didn't have.

Oral: A little interesting background on the destruction of the tent is, at that time they had not been able to build a tent that could survive a wind of nearly 100 miles an hour. Ours was one of the tents that could not survive. Apparently the Lord intended that I would be the testing point. Our tent went down but then we got with a group of engineers and we came up with a new plan for a tent. It was much larger than we'd ever used before. From that time in 1950 to 1965, when I stopped using the tent, we had tents that would seat up to 12,000 people. We were in other winds that were just as strong, and in one place a wind we understood was stronger, but it never bothered the tent. The tent was not blown down. Out of that experience in Amarillo came the seed of an equivalent benefit. Out of it came a faith in my heart that what I was doing was indestructible. Not only was it indestructible, it could not be decreased. It would be increased.

Farah: You went from defeat to a future victory.

Oral: That's true. Lee Braxton, my associate who has been with me all these years, flew from North Carolina to Amarillo, Texas. He had known me for about a year. He flew to my side, put his arm around me, and said, "Oral, this ministry has in it the seeds of a worldwide revival. It's going to be bigger and stronger."

I ask a lot of questions, so I said to him, "Lee, what do you base that on?"

He said, "I base it upon the fact that when I attended your crusade in

Miami, Florida, I saw a navy captain healed of cancer. I saw a little child healed. I saw more people converted in one night than I'd seen converted in my whole life. I base it upon the power of God that this ministry is going to go."

One more little sideline and I'll stop on that. The next morning, the Amarillo daily newspaper carried this headline on the front page: SAVING OF 7,000 CALLED MIRACLE. Not one person lost his life. Only a few were hurt, none seriously. My second son, Richard, was about a year and a half old at that time. During this storm Evelyn had him under the platform with her. I was hunting for her during all the wind and rain. I found her with Richard under the platform. She was safe. So I began to help the people.

Here came a man in a wheelchair. Someone was behind him pushing him, trying to get him through and he was upset and somebody ran up to him and said, "In the name of Jesus, rise up and walk." I tell you he came out of that wheelchair and I've not seen him since. He came up out of the wheelchair and away he went. Now someone thought the storm brought him up. I don't know, but I prefer to think that the name of Jesus brought him up out of there. Now, how did we get off on the storm at Amarillo?

Ervin: I'm guilty.

Oral: Where were we when we jumped to the storm?

Ervin: We were talking about the Ephesian Church, the weaknesses of the Church in the world today, and how we account for it.

Oral: Let's change now and talk about the strength of the Church in the world today. Notice that Paul in the Ephesian letter is extremely positive. In Ephesians 5:16-19 he says:

Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. [He recognized the evil conditions.

Then he says,] Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine [or alcohol], wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

Now does that sound like a pessimistic statement, Dr. Farah?

Farah: Look at the contrast: Do not give way to drunkenness and dissipation.

There must have been some things that looked uncomfortably close to that. We know that when a person drinks he's more relaxed. He tends to be more

joyful. He seems to be more outgoing and friendly and this corresponds to the Day of Pentecost when some said that they were drunk and so it says:

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.

Oral: I take exception, Dr. Farah, to what you did not say about drunkenness. You say that when a man is drunk, he's joyful, he's relaxed. There were about four different characteristics that you gave to him.

Are you speaking from personal experience? (laughter) All right, would you tell the other side of drunkenness. Paul does.

Farah: Well, of course, that other side is that you are not in control of your faculties.

Oral: With wine where there is excess there is a condition that's undesirable. It reminds me of a man I heard about. A fellow said to him, "Where are you going?" And he said, "I'm going to get drunk and, Lord, how I dread it."

Farah: I think that's true for a lot of people.

Oral: Instead, Paul said "to be filled with the Spirit." Being filled with the Spirit is to do this: to speak to yourselves in psalms and hymns, spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Here Paul is talking about praying in the Spirit. He's talking about singing in the Spirit. He's talking about tongues coming up out of your spirit rather than from your intellect. He is saying that the opposite of getting drunk with alcohol in order to relax and be joyful, and all of those things, is to be filled with the Holy Spirit which is much better. Then follow it up by praying with the Spirit and singing with the Spirit. Would you comment on that, Dr. Ervin?

Ervin: Yes. May I couple this verse with a verse that's found in 1 Corinthians 12:13:

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Mrs. Montgomery, in her translation of the New Testament a number of years ago, translated Ephesians 5:18, "But drink deeply of the Spirit."

Oral: Yes. Now let's skip over to Ephesians 6, which is the last chapter, and notice how Paul tells us of the warfare that we Christians face. A student came to me here today and said that when he went away from campus it was much easier to witness for Christ than it was here on the campus. I said to him,

"That is true. Because it is harder, more difficult, to witness to someone you know, and who knows you, than to go out among strangers. Therefore, your witness must begin where you are. It must begin in a place of hardness so you can develop as a Christian. So when you do leave the campus and you are out there among strangers, your witness will have greater impact because when your witness is opposed it tends to make you stronger. Nothing can become strong without opposition. Unless something is pressing against it."

Notice in verses 10-12 of the sixth chapter of Ephesians, Paul says:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood ...

This means people. We are wrestling or fighting not with people but with evil spirits, demons, that oppress or possess people. We may think the person himself is the one we are against or who is against us but it's only that evil spirit that may be motivating the person that we are wrestling with. And we must, in my view, make a clear distinction here.

God hates sin but He loves the sinner.

He hates backsliding but He loves the backslider.

He hates the wrong in the person but He loves the person.

Sometimes I think we Christians show a bad spirit in opposing something in a person who is not spiritual because it comes across as though we are opposing the individual... that we don't love the person. The person is turned off because he doesn't feel our love, he only feels our opposition to what he represents or to what he does. I know I have trouble with this. Comment?

Farah: I think it would help us to speak the truth in love if we could understand that we are speaking the truth not against the person but to instruct him against his sin. We are for the person; we are against his sin. Oral, I wanted to say that I think what you said about witnessing where it's hard is so essential. To me, Acts 1:8 is a perfect example of this. Where did Jesus send His disciples first? To Jerusalem ... the place of their personal failure ... where they had failed Jesus.

Oral: When I began this ministry in 1947 and wanted to have my first public service for healing, I was advised by close friends not to have it in Enid, Oklahoma, where I was so well known because the opposition would be too severe. In other words, people would say, "Oh, this is Oral Roberts; we know him. We are familiar with him. What can he do?"

So my friends said, "Go off to where you are not known and then come back to Enid."

I said, "No, if God is not with me enough so that I can start at home then what can I do somewhere else?" So I made it a test before the Lord. Right there where it was the hardest I had my first public healing meeting and I'll never be sorry. I did have opposition and it was great for me. It made me pray more. It made me know myself better. It made me examine my motives and ask, "Do you really know you are called of God? Is this what God wants you to do, or is it not?" You see, it made me stand up and say, "I'm going to face it. I'm going to do it right here where I'm known." The first healing of that meeting, the first person I touched and prayed for, was a woman who had had a crippled hand for 38 years. She was German and could speak only broken English. When she was healed, she opened and closed the hand and just cried to the top of her voice. She was healed and it was obvious that she was healed. Soon several men came to me and said, "We want to get saved. We want to accept Christ." Well, I helped them get saved right there. Each man said, "I saw this miracle and it touched my heart. I want to accept Christ."

I believe if I hadn't stayed right there in my own hometown at that time, I could not have had the strength from which I still draw. Nobody can ever take away from me that day when I started. I stood up by God's help and He gave me the victory. I think that we ought to welcome the hard part of our witness more than we do the easy, because whenever it's easy we may think it has a great impact, but it doesn't.

Farah: Oral, one miracle can do more than ten books on apologetics. Acts 4:29 confirms what you just said. Healing brought those people to Christ when maybe they had already heard twenty or thirty sermons. Acts 4:29, 30 says:

*Grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,
By stretching forth thine hand to heal.*

So the healing hand of the Lord confirmed the boldness of the witness.

Oral: Tie that to the anointed preaching of the Word of God that brings forth the people's faith and you really have something.

Chapter 9, Get On The Stairway And Start Climbing

Suggested Scripture reading for this lesson: Matthew 26:36-41

Let's go now to Matthew 26 and look at the life of Jesus and His experience in Gethsemane and take an application from it that is so fresh, so up-to-date, so much in the NOW, to me it is like He did it this morning. In a sense, what Jesus did there, we are doing every day of our lives.

Gethsemane was a garden full of old olive trees. Apparently it was one of the favorite retreats of Jesus. On this night He and the disciples have just had the Lord's Supper. Judas has left to betray Jesus. Soon Judas would be bringing the enemy to arrest Jesus and to try Him. On the morrow Jesus would be nailed to the cross.

Every Hard Situation We Face Is A Form Of Death

The cross is a form of death. And every hard situation we face is a form of death. It's something that's hard to handle. It isn't always physical death. There are so many ways that people feel death. We feel opposition. We feel sinister forces reaching out to touch us in a negative way.

Now Jesus Christ shows us two sides of himself. It's very important to remember that He who was God was also man. The intellect cannot comprehend that. There's no need to try because spiritual things must be spiritually discerned (grasped or understood). Only the spirit of man can grasp the fact that God became flesh, which is the incarnation... God in the flesh. Jesus was total God and yet total man. Only the soul can understand that. The mind cannot.

On this occasion the human part, the man part, of Jesus came to the front. When I say the human and man part came to the front, that's exactly what I mean. In this instance Jesus began to respond to this problem as a human being.

- It would be His physical body that they would nail to the cross ...
- It would be His physical body that they would strip naked and leave to the multitude ...
- It would be His physical body from which blood would flow ...
- It would be His own mind that would feel the excruciating rejection of the human race ...
- It would be His own spirit that would be in the forefront of having to say yes or no to God ...

In that, Jesus was exactly like you and I. He asked for a little help. He asked His close disciples to go with Him. He wanted to pray. He asked them to sit down and sort of watch. He knew the enemy would be coming in soon and He said, "Keep your eyes open. You sit here and breathe a little prayer and watch while I go a little farther and pray."

When Jesus got to the real point of His prayer it got very difficult, just as it does in every person's life when he comes eyeball to eyeball with the problem. He can think about it and know it's coming but he cannot really feel it until he experiences it... until it becomes real, or existential... in his life. So Jesus, as a man, knelt to pray and it dawned upon Him that the will of God was involved, and it inescapably involved Him.

The Will Of God Seems To Cut Across The Will Of Man

The will of God seems to be diametrically opposed to the will of any human being.

It's apparent that even in the humanity of Jesus He had His own personal will, which in this instance was opposed to the higher will of God. Now that's hard to grasp about our Lord Jesus Christ, but He was really torn.

On the one hand Jesus is about 33 years of age, in the very peak of His powers, and He's going to be snatched up and given the most ignominious death that's ever been devised by man. He, who has been able to walk on the waters, calm the sea, and save others, would not be able to save himself. I mean, it's tough.

Inherent in the cross would be the fact that Jesus would take the place of every sinner and every sick person and every person with any kind of problem who's ever lived. All of that would be poured out upon Him and He would, in a sense, become sin. He who was never sinful himself, would become SIN. He who was never ill himself, would become ILL. All of that would strike Him. In that condition He would be estranged from God. God would turn His back upon Him. He would be left as one human being in the universe without one human friend and with God's own back turned to Him. His Father would repudiate Him because for the Father to look upon Jesus as He took the place of the sinner, God would have had to wipe Him out, to destroy Him. So God had to turn away.

Now imagine facing that.

Jesus cried, "If it's possible, Father, let this cup of death pass. Don't

require Me to do it.” He was saying that His flesh did not welcome nails being driven into it any more than you would welcome being hit by somebody’s fist or cut with a knife. He was saying, "If it is at all possible, don’t ask Me to go to the cross because I really don’t want to do it.” As He struggled with it He began to sweat.

You know how you are when you get in a tight situation, you begin to sweat profusely. Even if the room is cold, you’re warm. But Jesus’ struggle was so deep that the blood in His veins seeped through and His sweat was bloody (Luke 22:44). This shows the terror that a man feels when he has to give up his own will and surrender to the unknown. God is Someone you can’t see and the will of God is often something you can’t figure out with your intellect. You just know inside yourself what is God’s way for you.

To obey God you have to obey what you feel inside, but the intellect cannot put it together. The mind says a flat no. Now you face it, and I face it, each in our own way. Our Lord faced it because He had to sit where you sit and feel what you feel in order to become your Savior.

Jesus had a tremendous problem with His intellect because He knew something that nobody else knew. He knew that He could call multitudes of angels down to His side and they could destroy every person who was trying to kill Him.

He had the power, the authority, to call these legions of angels down. You see, He had the knowledge of it. We often say, "Well, I know what I can do in this situation . . . In this experience Jesus indicates that if He were to get into His intellect, He would do something that would turn out to be wrong. Just because He could, didn’t make it right. Just because I can, doesn’t mean I should do it.

The Will Of God Has Both A Yes And A No

There are some things to which we have to say no.

And that no becomes the most important word in the English language.

"No, I will not call the angels down. I will not strike these people. I will do God’s will.”

Finally, Jesus says, "Not My will, but God’s be done.” And He crossed over. In order to do that He had to begin within His spirit.

When Jesus came back He found that the disciples were not watching or praying. They were asleep. He awakened them and asked them why couldn’t they watch with Him for a little while. Then He asked them one more time to

watch and pray and He said, "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." That is to say:

We Must Face Life Through Our Strength And Not Through Our Weaknesses

The weak part of us is our intellect and body. However strong the body or the mind may feel, they're the weaker parts of us. The strong part of us is the spirit. It becomes almost limitless when it is born again of the Holy Spirit . . . when it is filled with the Holy Spirit. Then the spirit really becomes strong. The spirit has such power that it can cause the intellect to have understanding.

Now it's one thing to know; it's another thing to understand. For example, here's a little child who knows how to count to 20 but doesn't understand what it's doing. The child can count: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8, 9, 10 because it's been given that knowledge. But it doesn't know what those figures mean. It doesn't have the understanding of what 1 or 2 means or that 2 and 2 make 4. The little child doesn't have that understanding. In the same way, we can have knowledge of something without having understanding. And without understanding we can never know who we are or what we are.

I want to make another point...

STRICTLY FROM THE HUMAN STANDPOINT, FOR A SLIGHT PERIOD OF TIME THERE IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE, JESUS DID NOT KNOW WHO OR WHAT HE WAS ...

I do not mean to be sacrilegious in saying that. I hope you understand that. You can only understand what I'm saying by getting in your spirit and realizing that Jesus Christ was a man. He was a human being. He was born of a woman and He had to face the same things that you and I face. As He was struggling to say yes to God and no to self, He was having a hard time doing it. He was having a hard time the same way that you and I have a hard time.

He was terribly human at this point. When He said, "If it be possible for this cup to pass," He didn't know who He was. He did not know what He was, for in those few moments that which is intellect was struggling and clouding His spirit, and His response at that point was from His intellect, not from His spirit. And Jesus the man didn't know ... He didn't understand.

On other occasions Jesus had clearly indicated that He had come to do the will of the Father. Jesus knew that He came into this world to go to the cross and die for the sins of many. But it's awfully easy sometimes to get confused and

mixed up and forget who we are and what we are in the crises.

Every person knows right from wrong. Particularly is that true of us who have been born of the Spirit of God. There has been a new spirit given us. There's been a renewing of our conscience, of our mind. Yet you will admit with me, there are times when we have a terrible struggle over how to do right rather than wrong. How to say no rather than say yes ... or how to say yes rather than say no. Isn't that a fact? There are areas of our lives where at some moment we don't know. We simply are grasping, we are struggling, we are fighting for our existence.

THERE ARE TIMES WE FEEL SO CLOSED IN THAT WE FEEL LIKE A NOBODY, A NONENTITY. WE DON'T KNOW WHO WE ARE OR WHAT WE ARE.

I'm glad our Lord was willing to go through this, because there isn't a day that passes that you and I don't go through some part of what He went through. The purpose of Jesus' life was to plant His life as a seed. He was "the seed of David" (1 Kings 11:39, Jeremiah 33:22, John 7:42, Romans 1:3, 2 Timothy 2:8). He was God's seed to plant in this world that would reproduce life for humanity. Our life is also to be given as a seed. We are to plant our love and concern and creative ability in this world. We are to replenish the earth.

You see what the earth is doing to us because we have not replenished it. It's rising up to bite us. The air and the water are no longer pure. The resources of earth are being depleted and we are facing a terrible energy crisis now. Why? Because we have disobeyed God. God created man and said, "Replenish the earth." We have depleted the earth and it's rising up to bite us.

God told us to love one another. Instead, there are times when, if we could get away with it, we would kill each other. Sometimes we commit murder. God said that a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave only unto his wife and they shall bring forth children. The most terrible thing that's going on in our society today is the breakup of marriage, the family, and the home. Now that brings me to another matter.

How I Dealt With A Woman Whose Marriage Was About To End In Divorce

I once counseled with a couple of women in New York whom my wife and I have known for some time. They were staying in the same hotel and happened to see me in the lobby. They asked if they could say a word to me and

one of them, the wife of quite an important businessman in that part of the world and the mother of six children, having had a successful marriage for 18 years, was almost the picture of death. I said to her, calling her by her first name, "What's wrong?!"

And she said, "My husband and I are about to get a divorce."

And I said, "Oh, no! Oh, no!"

One reason I said it like that was because several years ago they were converted in one of the great evangelistic meetings in this country. They gave their testimony on national television of how they were brought back together in a beautiful relationship. The love that they had had was restored. But now deterioration had set in. Here were two born-again people, two Christian people who have six children, who now had come to the point that they could not endure each other. Never mind what the Bible teaches about marriage, they just simply couldn't endure each other.

She indicated that she had walked out and told her husband that he could go he knew where. She said, "I'm terribly ashamed of what I said and what I did, but that's the way I felt. What shall I do?"

I said, "Have you tried prayer?"

She said, "Yes. But I don't know what to pray for as I ought."

She had inadvertently quoted a scripture in the Bible so I said, "Do you know where that verse is?" She said, "I think so."

But she didn't quite know so I said, "It's Romans 8:26,27":

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

I said, "What happened is that you have not gone on into the Holy Spirit so that you could respond to life first through your spirit. You are responding through your intellect. You are mad in your mind." She said, "I sure am."

This was not a funny scene; this was terribly serious. I said, "How about deep down inside you?"

She said, "I have to admit I still love him."

I said, "You love him in your heart, but up here in your mind you can't

stand him. I want to share with you some of the things I've been sharing in the Holy Spirit course at ORU about the way God made you." She nodded and said, "Yes, I know that scripture."

I said, "What is that scripture?"

She said, "Well, God made us in His own likeness" (Genesis 1:26).

I said, "That's right. He made you a spiritual being. He made you a spirit. You have a mind to use and you have a body to use but you are neither mind nor body.

You are a spirit and you have to get back in your spirit."

"Well, what about him, my husband?"

I said, "The same is true of him. It's not impossible. It's not hopeless but let's start with you."

She said, "Tell me something... my husband and I are charismatic. That is, we believe in speaking in tongues, but what is that anyway?"

I said, "I can tell you in perhaps sixty seconds if you will listen with an open mind. Speaking in tongues is your spirit talking to God instead of your mind talking to God. It is talking to God with your spirit first and then pausing a few moments so that the Spirit will let you interpret back to yourself, either what you have said by your spirit or what God is saying back to you. Then you can say it through your intellect and you'll have understanding. You will be able to pray with your understanding as you first prayed with your spirit."

I gave her the scripture in 1 Corinthians 14:15:

I will pray with the spirit [or in tongues], and I will pray with the understanding also.

I said, "Paul is actually saying that his response to life begins in his spirit and then he works through his intellect and it becomes an understanding. If you will be willing and open, it can happen right here."

She said, "Right here in this hotel?"

I said, "It's not the place, it's the attitude that's important."

"Oh," she said, "not here!"

"Well," I said, "How serious is the problem?"

She said, "So serious that I think when I get there I'll have no home."

I said, "Think a moment ... if this hotel were on fire and one of your

children were upstairs, as a mother, what would you do? Would you say this is not the place for me to go up and rescue my child? I'm not pressing you, I'm just asking you a question. You are trying to save your marriage and according to you, its 99 percent gone. It would be bad enough if you didn't know Christ, but since you both are really lovers of our Lord and trying to follow Him, isn't it ten thousand times worse ... if it's possible for it to be worse ... for Christians than it is for non-Christians?" Then she said, "Well, do say a prayer for us." So the three of us took hands and prayed a little prayer together. Then she said, "I've never really understood praying in the Spirit."

I had used the term "prayer language." We were surrounded now by quite a lot of people, not listening to us but milling about. I said, "All right, I don't do this for exhibition, but because you need help I will pray in the Spirit very quietly and you listen. Then I'll pray in my own understanding." And I did. As I prayed in my understanding the Holy Spirit spoke back to me what their real problem was, and as I prayed in my own tongue, or understanding, I talked about the real problem of their marriage.

When I finished she said, "How did you know? I didn't tell you."

I said, "You've demonstrated the point. I did not know. Only the Holy Spirit knows. His communication is with us first of all in our spirit."

We laid the problem bare and she said, "For the first time I have some hope that I can go home and save my marriage."

You Can Pray As You Ought!

This is the real practicality of the Holy Spirit in our lives. I tell you with all my heart, be filled with His Spirit, learn to pray in the prayer language, but don't stop there. Don't stop there. Get into your intellect and pray with your own language. Believe that after you pray in the prayer language you can pray now with understanding. You can pray in English with understanding. Instead of saying, "I don't know what to pray for as I ought," know that you can pray for things as you should. You can pray as you ought. Know that you can get into a prayer that will lead you either to a solution of your problem or give you an ability to live victoriously no matter what the outcome is.

I've said many times that the prayer language does not cause problems to vanish but it gives you and me a different perspective. We look at the problem differently. We look at it from God's eyes. We look at it from inside ourselves. It is like our inner self now is seeing like our human eyes see. The difference is our spiritual eyes can perceive that which is hidden from the human eye. In a real

sense we can pick up the deeper problems of life once we get in our spirit. We can see those problems in a way that the intellect would never permit us to see them because the intellect is a limited part of us. Only the spiritual part of us is unlimited.

I titled this chapter "Get on the Stairway and Start Climbing" because a friend said that to me last week. He's a businessman facing normal harassing problems. I had talked with him a little like I'm talking with you now and he said, "Do you know what you are saying to me?"

I said, "Well, maybe not exactly."

He said, "You are saying to me that a Christian should get on the stairway and start climbing. You are saying that the problem may not disappear. You are saying that the struggle may remain a struggle, but we can take a step at a time. We can be on the stairway. We can be climbing. We may never reach the very top before the Lord calls us away but we can be climbing."

I said, "I never heard it put that way before but I can echo it 100 percent because it's true."

Then I said, "I was at a game the other night, a basketball game. The team had to take the ball out of bounds. One boy had the ball and he was standing there with it. The referee blew the whistle and that meant play was to resume. The boy had to throw the ball in bounds. If he hadn't thrown the ball in, if he hadn't taken the first step, play would not have been resumed. You have got to take a step, you've got to put the ball in play. You've got to start. You've got to get on the stairway. To get on the stairway you've got to get on that first step, then the second step."

I tell you, our Christian experience is not being catapulted by some electronic force from one spot to the end of the Christian life in one moment of time. It is a series of steps ... a series of decisions. It's facing test after test, problem after problem, need after need.

It's responding to life through our spirit and working out through our intellect and our body... it is seeking to have a total personality response so that through it God can give us good success ... God can meet the needs that we need to have met and our attitude in life will be a plus attitude.

That doesn't mean we will not be down some. It doesn't mean we'll not be sorrowful, for our Lord was sorrowful. It doesn't mean there won't be times we don't know who we are and what we are, because there are times none of us know who we are or what we are. There are some experiences so bitter and so

terrible that for a brief period of time we scarcely know our name.

It does mean:

God Is More Real And God Is More Powerful Than Any Negative Force We Shall Ever Face

It means the Holy Spirit is in us and if we will respond to life through our spirit first, something wonderful will happen to our intellect. Our intellect will become sharper, smarter, more capable, more able to learn. Our bodies will feel the effect of it and our bodies can be strong enough for the occasion. We will feel a force within us that will make us feel strong all over. It means through the power of the Holy Spirit our response to life can be a response of our total personality... a whole man approach.

Chapter 10, How The Holy Spirit Has Changed My Life

(And The Lives Of My Husband And Children) by Shirley (Mrs. Pat) Boone With a PANEL DISCUSSION including Evelyn Roberts and Pat, Shirley, and Cherry Boone

Introduction by Evelyn Roberts: Oral and I met Pat Boone some time before we met his wife and family. When we did become acquainted with them, they had just received the infilling of the Holy Spirit. We have been in the Boones' home and have seen how Pat and Shirley and their four lovely daughters love Jesus and pray in the Spirit each day. It is a beautiful experience to be in their home. We've asked Shirley (Mrs. Pat Boone) to share her testimony and then Pat and their daughter Cherry will share with Shirley and me in a panel discussion.

Shirley Boone: I am the daughter of the late Red Foley, a country-western artist. My mother and he both sang. They reared me to love God. We weren't really an extremely church-going family but as Daddy put it, "It's what is in your heart that really matters."

When Pat and I first married we loved Jesus and we were serving Him. We would ask Him to use us. We felt we just could not outgive God. He just kept blessing us and blessing us. When we got to the top professionally it was as if we said, "Well, now that I'm up here I've got to figure out how to stay up here so I can help God out in my spare time. 'Cause after all, I'm one of the few who has this position."

And, boy, it just didn't work out that way!

Pat And I Drifted Away From Each Other

Pat became involved with the Hollywood scene and the movie making industry and I became very involved with our children and our home. I don't think either one of us thought what we were doing was really wrong, but as we began to pursue our own interests we sort of drifted away from each other. I was very comfortable in my home with my children. I loved doing for them, taking them places, etc. I didn't realize some of the temptations that Pat was facing.

I did know that Pat had begun to feel that he was losing some of his popularity. I guess he felt that the momentum of his career had peaked and he wasn't going up anymore. So he began to use his own wisdom and to listen to

his associates in the movie industry. They said they thought it was time for a change. They wanted to put a black leather jacket on him and a cigarette in his mouth and get him into some films that would be a little controversial.

Pat and I began to voice our opinions to one another ... sometimes quite frequently.. . sometimes quite loudly. We could feel we were losing something in our relationship ... something we once had.

When Pat started going to Las Vegas and places like that, with my own wisdom I would say, "I don't think you should go. You once said you would never play Vegas and I think it is going to bring trouble. What would the Brotherhood think?"

The children were beginning to grow up and I would say to Pat, "Honey, the girls are getting older and I just don't have all the answers for them. We need to sit down and talk. We need to read the Bible more. We need to have some answers."

In the meantime Pat was reading the works of Mark Twain and wondering if there was a God. With his own intelligence he was really beginning to say, "Look, you know there isn't a reality in our Christian experience. It really doesn't relate to what life is all about."

While Pat was asking his questions about the existence of God I was trying to figure out what was happening to our marriage. I began to do things from a purely human standpoint. I would ask my closest friends, "What should I do? I feel an obligation to be with my children. Yet I feel like Pat and I are having some problems."

They would say, "You need to go with Pat. You need to do the things that he does. Don't be such a prude."

So I began not to be a prude. I began to go to some of the parties. I began to try to be what I thought I was supposed to be in order to win back my husband. But, as in all cases when we are using our own wisdom, I began to destroy the very things that were the foundation and basis of our marriage.

I thought when I had a really vital relationship with Jesus that I could not fail, that there was no temptation I would fall under. But I found out I was human. I was full of self-righteousness. I was judgmental toward people who sinned. I know there was a way of escape but I think because of my self-pity, my jealousy, and my grief I gave in to temptation. I discovered there was a definite weakness in me. I found in myself the same potential for sin I had judged in others... a potential to walk away from the Lord in ways I hadn't dreamed were

possible.

I have a very high guilt level. It didn't matter whether anybody else thought what I was doing was wrong or not, I knew what I was feeling inside. I really didn't think God could help me get rid of this guilt. When Pat was out of town I would get on my knees at night and I would just cry out to Jesus. I would ask Him to help me. I didn't want to do the things that I was doing. I wasn't happy.

I thought the only answer was to change ... that if I was going to walk with Jesus I would just have to leave Pat. Then I began to get into the Word and as I studied I realized that I had been so busy seeing all of Pat's faults that I hadn't had time to see my own. As I prayed and read the Bible I began to know that if I was really trying to learn to walk with the Lord again I would have to take all the marriage vows seriously. I can remember kneeling in my bedroom one night and saying, "Lord, I'm not trying to fool anybody. You know that my feelings for Pat are gone."

You see, in trying so desperately to hang on to those feelings of love for my husband, and trying so hard in my own wisdom and the wisdom of my friends to do the things that I thought would bring us close together again, I had destroyed the very feelings I was so longing for. Not only in him but also in my own heart. Our love had become so distorted I didn't even know what to call it anymore.

So I prayed, "Jesus, You know I don't love Pat anymore but I know You love him. So please love him through me." I began to ask, "Lord, what made me love my children? Why do I love my children like I do?" I knew the answer. It was because I gave to them and expected nothing in return. I had so much of myself invested in them that I couldn't afford not to love them. So in the same way I began to invest myself in my relationship with Pat.

I began to treat Pat as one Christian should treat another Christian no matter what their relationship is. The more I did, the more I saw my own failings. I began to see where I had let him down so miserably, why he may have walked the way he walked. I saw that he had not had the kind of helpmate he should have had. I made a new commitment to Christ and I began to keep that vow . . . till death do us part... for better or for worse."

I Knew I Needed More Of God

It's amazing that when you begin to walk with the Lord He supplies everything you need. I knew now I needed more of God in order to be able to

walk this way. I loved God before, yet I had fallen on my face. So I asked the Lord to really show me how I could keep this walk no matter what happened. It was so beautiful because the scripture just seemed to jump out at me that the Holy Spirit was the teacher of all truth (John 16:13). For the first time I prayed, "O Holy Spirit, if You are the teacher of all truth, You are what I want. I'm so confused at what men have taught me. I'm terribly confused but I want to walk in truth. Please help me. I need Your power to walk this life."

A few weeks later we had guests in our home. They said to me, "Have you received the Holy Spirit, Shirley?"

I said, "What do you mean?"

They said, "Have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit? Have you asked Jesus to baptize you?"

I said, "No." Then they read one scripture to me in particular that made me know the Lord was showing me this was what I needed. It was this:

Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high (Luke 24:49).

I knew this was what I needed. I wanted to be a bold witness for Jesus. Then my guests said, "I feel we're supposed to leave you alone."

I couldn't wait for them to leave so I could go to my bedroom and pray. There in my bedroom, completely alone, I began to pray. I had never been in a Pentecostal church in my life. I had never heard anyone speak in tongues. Since I have received the Holy Spirit I have heard all the different arguments against this experience. All I can say is, you can rationalize and explain away my experience or you can open up and share in it.

That day I met Jesus in a more powerful way than I had ever known Him before. I felt His presence so strongly, I just don't know how to explain it. It was as if love poured all over me. At that point I needed so desperately to know that I was loved and that the Lord would continue to use me in spite of my failings.

As I knelt there in prayer I simply said, "If I ask for bread You are not going to give me a stone. God, I want all of Jesus I can get. I need all of Him You have for me. If this speaking in tongues is from You, then I want it. I don't care how foolish it may sound but You are going to have to let me know it is from You."

Life Just Rolled Out Of Me From My Innermost

Being

Within seconds I began to speak words that I knew did not come from my own mind. Literally life just rolled out of me from my innermost being. My hands flew up in the air in praise to God. I didn't even know what it was all about until later. My faith didn't go down, it went up. Tears were streaming down my face. It was a cleansing process. New spiritual knowledge flowed into me and I received a new dimension of Jesus in my life.

People often say, "What is the sign that you have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit?" I heard someone answer this by saying, "Problems." Well, we've had those. I believe the minute you receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit the testing comes so that you will build your faith and build up those spiritual muscles.

About six weeks after I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, my father died. My oldest daughter Cherry met me to break the news to me. I was speaking at a boys' home when she walked in to tell me that Daddy Red had died. I brushed the tears away from her cheeks and said, "Cherry, we haven't walked this far with the Lord to leave Him now." The man in charge of the home wanted to drive us home but I said, "No, I have to drive home myself."

You would have to know the weakling that Shirley Boone is to know that there was new strength within me. There was a new power there to fight the battles of life. I called my two sisters immediately. They had begun to seek more of Jesus in their lives and we began praying together about the funeral. We all went back to Nashville for the funeral.

Just before we went into the church for the service we joined hands and prayed. I said, "Lord, I have a lump in my stomach, and my heart is ready to burst (I was trying so hard to hold the tears back) but Your yoke is easy and Your burden is light. Please lift this from me and I will give You all the glory."

In that instant His presence so filled me that I was shocked. The pain that had been there, the knot that had been there, the tension in my neck, the tears, all disappeared. In an instant I was at peace. I had peace that went beyond my own understanding, even to this day. I looked at my two sisters, Julie and Jennie, who had been praying with me and I said, "I feel God's presence. Do you feel Him with us?" They both just looked at me and smiled.

For the next two hours we were inside the service and at the graveside with smiles on our faces that we could not get off. All for the glory of Jesus.

I couldn't wait to go home and tell everybody. I thought everybody was going to be happy to hear from Shirley Boone that God still lives, that there's a power to keep you in all the pains and hurts of life. I was shocked when they said, "Oh, you've just had a psychological experience."

The real battle began when I saw they wouldn't receive what I was saying, but I knew one thing, the people closest to me were seeing a change. Within the next six months my husband was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then my four girls were filled with the Holy Spirit. This didn't happen because they saw a woman who was trying to walk with God. It happened because they saw the power of the Holy Spirit in my life in the image of Jesus. They saw the same woman, the same body, the same flesh, who had fallen on her face months before but who was now being conformed to the image of her Savior.

The one thing that makes me really know that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is from God is that you can't keep the Boone family from telling the world about Jesus. Nothing from the devil could make us glorify Jesus. So it can't be from Satan. And I do know what God has done in our family.

God is teaching me submission to my husband and it's not easy. I remember on one occasion I felt led to fast and pray for a young boy who had cancer. For several days I fasted and prayed. On New Year's Eve we had to do a recording session and my husband said, "I really think you should eat, Shirley, because you've got the responsibility of the family. We're going to be up late tonight."

I said, "But, Pat, you don't understand. The Holy Spirit has told me to fast."

Pat said, "I really think you need to have some nutrition. You are the mother and you have a lot of responsibilities."

I went to the Lord and I said, "Lord, what should I do?"

And He said, "You must be obedient."

Oh, praise the Lord. Obedience is better than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22). I no sooner said that obedience is better than sacrifice than I realized that my place of obedience to the Lord was to be obedient to my husband ... that the sacrifice of fasting for this young man wasn't nearly as important to the Lord as my finding my lordship in my husband ... so I ate.

I made a prayer before the Lord because I knew how close I was to my children. I asked Him to help me first of all to learn submission to my husband, and, secondly, to help me to turn loose of my girls when the time came. Well, my

husband began making the decisions and sometimes our girls were allowed to do things I disagreed with. So you see how the Lord is teaching me. I'm learning submission to Him as Pat helps the girls to cut those cords.

Jesus is doing a great work in our home. He's teaching us how to grow up. I love what Bob Mumford says, "When we don't learn our lessons it's just like the children of Israel out in the wilderness: We just don't go into the Promised Land. We take another lap around the mountain." Well, I find that we're taking another lap around the mountain often but each of us is learning.

Evelyn: Thank you, Shirley, you were just great. Don't ever tell me again that you cannot speak because I will not believe you.

Shirley: Well, praise the Lord.

Evelyn: You can always do more than you think you can do in the strength of the Lord.

Shirley: That's my favorite scripture: "I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me" (Philippians 4:13).

Evelyn: Pat, I think you would like to introduce your daughter.

Pat: Shirley and I both are proud of our girls. Cherry is our firstborn. We were just barely 20 ourselves when she was born. We can't tell you (you parents who have had a similar experience and have seen your kids filled with the Spirit know) what it means to have your own children filled with the Holy Spirit. As we've said so often, "There's no such thing in today's world as isolation ... there's only insulation."

The indwelling Holy Spirit in your kids, especially if they are four pretty girls in Hollywood, California, is of incalculable value. There's no way to estimate the value of it. Cherry is studious. She has a good mind and has trained that mind but she also is spiritual. I just wonder if she has a word in the spirit for you.

Cherry: (Speaks in Hebrew.)

Pat: The Apostle Paul says if you speak in an unknown language that you should give the interpretation. Can you give us the interpretation of what you just said?

Cherry: Yes. I said, "Greetings to all of you, or we bring peace to all of you. I'm very happy that we are here in this school. My parents and I want to see the peace and the joy of the Son of God in this place tonight."

Pat: That's in Hebrew ... in Jesus' own language. One that Cherry is in the process of learning at the University of Southern California at Los Angeles. I think this illustrates rather graphically that any language you don't know sounds peculiar to you. I don't know how many people would have known that Cherry was speaking in Hebrew, or in any intelligible language, because it's just so foreign to us. It is unknown to us so we might have thought that she was just speaking gibberish. But she was speaking a language known to God and to anybody who understands Hebrew. This is something she had learned with her mind. It strikes me that if we were able to do this naturally, how easy it is for God to do something like this supernaturally. He gives us a language through which we can praise Him, and in which our minds are not fettered. It doesn't nullify the use of our mind, it just sort of puts it in neutral.

Evelyn: We have some students who I'm sure would like to question you or Shirley, or who may have comments about what she said. Let's ask Darby to come to the microphone. Give us a comment or a question.

Darby: I would like to direct this question to Mrs. Boone. You mentioned that when a person is saved and receives Jesus into his life the Holy Spirit comes in. Why, then, does he need to have the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

Shirley: I knew Jesus as my Savior and I found that I got into areas where I needed more power to walk and live for Jesus. We were put into an area that's unique to the Christian walk. When we went to Hollywood there weren't too many committed Christians there. I can't speak for other people but I know the difference the baptism in the Holy Spirit has made in my life. It has literally given me a deeper relationship with the Lord, more power to be a witness for Him in my speech and in just wanting to lead other people to the Lord.

I think the most important thing that has happened to me is a knowing, a real knowing, deep inside of me that God is willing to use me in unique ways... that I really am a child of the King. That awareness became so relevant to me after I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I think our focus is so narrow sometimes. We need to realize that when we are born again, that is only part of it. There is a growth process going on and there's always more of Jesus.

Pat: I'm holding in my hand a book called The Peter Principle. It's been a best seller on why things always go wrong. I think this is at least another good answer to why a Christian needs to have the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Lawrence Peter wrote this whole book and he put this principle right on the cover, which is a bold and unusual thing to do. Here is his principle: "In a hierarchy (that is, any man-made system) every employee tends to rise to his

level of incompetence.” Then Lawrence writes the book to establish his principle.

It’s true that in every system, and this can be true of housewives, businessmen, politicians, no matter what, that under his own steam a man can rise from one level to the next until eventually and inevitably he will be promoted to a level where he’s not really competent. He will try to camouflage that for as long as he can. He will try to hide the fact that he really can’t hack it at that level.

Now this is also true in the Christian walk. A Christian goes along and tries to do what he thinks he ought to do. But inevitably he comes to the stage where he cannot do all he needs, or wants, to do as a Christian. The Apostle Peter did that. That’s the other Peter Principle. The first I just mentioned is the Lawrence Peter Principle but here is the Apostle Peter Principle. He arrived at his level of incompetence after three years in Jesus’ own personal seminary. He had heard Jesus speak. He believed Him. Peter himself performed miracles. The power of God had worked through Peter and yet when he was really tested he swore before a teenage girl that he didn’t even know Jesus. Peter denied Jesus. Peter walked away, and went out and wept bitterly because he didn’t have the resources to do what he wanted to do. When Jesus rose from the tomb He said, "Go tell Peter I’m alive, I’ve risen” (Mark 16:7).

I can just imagine Peter was all ready to go out again and impulsively tell the people, "Jesus is risen.” But Jesus said, "Now look, you’ve already risen to your level of incompetence; wait until you receive power.” (See Luke 24:29.)

On the Day of Pentecost the same man who swore before a teenage girl that he didn’t know Jesus, that same man after he received the baptism in the Holy Spirit stood up before thousands and said, "Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words” (Acts 2:14). Then he preached the first gospel sermon and three thousand people were added to the Church that day.

That’s the Apostle Peter Principle as opposed to the Lawrence Peter Principle. I think that’s really why every Christian needs the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Evelyn: Would you say, Shirley and Pat, that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is really the beginning rather than an end ... that it is a real walk with the Lord?

Pat: It’s the gasoline to get where we need to go.

Evelyn: Say, we really need that today, don't we?

Pat: Yes, there is an energy crisis in the Christian walk.

Shirley: Let Cherry share with you something she experienced when she was first filled with the Holy Spirit. I think the Lord gave her a revelation or knowledge when she was sharing with a precious Jewish girl. Cherry didn't have an answer for her until she found it coming out of her mouth.

Cherry: The question that this Jewish girl asked me was, "What is the Trinity? I cannot conceive of there being three in one because, of course, the Jewish religion centers on the one God."

I said, "I'm not contradicting you, I believe in one God but I believe there's God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit."

She said, "I don't understand."

So I said, "Wait a minute, let me think." Immediately, I didn't have to think very long, the Lord gave me this image. It was an analogy of the Trinity being like the universe in that the three components make up one whole. That is ...

You can think of the Father as being light...

You can think of Jesus as being mass ...

And you can think of the Holy Spirit as being energy.

Just as the three, light, mass, and energy, make up the whole universe so, together, the three spiritual aspects, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, make up the Trinity. Then my friend said, "I think I understand it now."

Pat: Jesus said,

"Ye shall receive power [energy], after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8).

Cherry: The difference with the material energy we have and the spiritual energy that the Holy Spirit offers is that right now we are having a crisis because there isn't enough material energy, but with the Holy Spirit you never have to worry because there's enough to go around for everybody.

Evelyn: Randy, do you have a question or a comment for us?

Randy: I'd like to direct my question to Mrs. Boone. In your talk you referred to the time when you were filled with the Holy Spirit. You said, "It was

as if life were rolling out of me.” Could you explain that to us, please?

Shirley: I had come to the point where life had so little meaning that I really didn't feel I had a purpose for living. In fact, I had wished to die. I think that's where a lot of people are today. People are seeking for reason to live, not just reason to die. People say, "I'll give my life for this but, boy, it really is something when you have a reason to LIVE."

At that particular time it was as if I received new life. In fact, the first impression that came to me, and I'm sure it was the Holy Spirit, was that I must share this experience I was having with my husband and one of my sisters. I called my husband immediately and told him but I felt led to wait until I could tell my sister face-to-face.

It just so happened that though my sister lived only a few miles from me, we didn't see each other until my father died. Of course then our minds were on the funeral. The day after my father died we were in Nashville and a very dear friend of ours from past years was having a Bible study class. My sister Julie was going to the Bible study and I asked her if I could go along. I had not told anybody else of this experience I had received, but now they asked me to teach the class.

As the class went on that morning I began to feel more and more that this was the time I should share it. I prayed, "Lord, close my mouth if this isn't what You want me to do." Just as I began to share, a young girl jumped up and said, "Oh, I forgot all about my car pool," and she went flying out of the room. I was scared. I thought that was my sign that I was not to tell of my experience so I was silent after she left, wondering where I was going to go from there. Then one of the young girls said, "Go on with what you were getting ready to tell us, Shirley. Have you received? Do you speak in tongues?"

She just flat out said it and she was Julie's close friend. Well, my sister Julie knew nothing of this. Here her closest friend is looking me in the eye saying, "Shirley, do you speak in tongues?" I think the Lord wanted this young girl out of there because she was not ready to receive yet. Everybody else in the group was ready to receive. His timing is so perfect. Julie said had she learned under any other circumstances she would have been much more skeptical. But because the people in that room were so open to what God was doing and she was there receiving all this in their presence, it made her more open. Then of course she had seen a change in my life.

Randy: I was very intrigued by that statement; it really was good. You think then that the life within you became more evident from that time on ... the

life of Christ?

Shirley: Oh, very definitely.

Pat: I'd like to add that it might be harder for Shirley to tell you about the difference in her after she received the baptism in the Holy Spirit than for somebody who was observing her. It was six months after Shirley received her baptism of love before I did. I am a much more rational person and I don't have as much common sense as Shirley does. I insist on approaching things on an intellectual level. I want to know the why's and the wherefores', especially when it comes to spiritual things. I want to know what the Bible says. I want to know I've got authority for this.

I had a lot of doctrinal hang-ups about speaking in tongues and about anything miraculous or supernatural. I had been taught that God went out of the miracle business in the first century. I was taught that miracles happened just like the Bible said they did but only for the purpose of confirming the Word, that once the Word was confirmed that was it... God put away His "miracle box" for the rest of civilization. I thought I had good authority for that.

Although I had asked God for the baptism in the Holy Spirit, I had asked Him to force me to speak this language if it was really from Him. Of course nothing happened. Then one day when I was down in Texas on a trip Shirley called me and said, "It's happened; it's real."

I could tell right there on the phone that something had happened. There was life coming from Shirley. She told me what had happened and then I said, "Well, Honey, pray for me. I'm sure it's going to happen to me." But it was six months before it did.

During that six months I watched Shirley and I saw her change. I saw her transformed before my eyes. I had gotten so used to this girl with her insecurities, her volatile nature, way up one minute and way down the next. I saw those highs and lows level off to a relatively steady stream. She seemed to be equal to anything. I knew she was not sure that she loved me and not even sure she loved the kids. Then suddenly I saw love and life and peace and joy beginning to blossom in her.

Shirley's dad died and instead of being reduced to an emotional wreck as I would have expected her to be, she had strength and joy right there in the funeral home. I was blubbering like a baby but Shirley was smiling. Everybody saw it. It was written up on the front page of the Nashville Banner the next day. These things were happening and I saw the fruit, the consequences of her

experience. I saw the transformation in Shirley, my own wife.

The greatest miracle of all was that I saw something in Shirley's eyes when she looked at me that not only had disappeared but that I had lost the right ever to see again. She was seeing me through the eyes of love. To me, this is one of the greatest miracles of all. It made me want what she had.

Gradually as I studied the Word I saw that this experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit was for me. It was simply a matter of beginning to step out and exercise my faith like Peter did when he stepped on the water... to offer my voice ... to praise the Lord ... to get my focus off myself and onto Him.

As I offered Him my voice it happened to me in the form of a song, maybe appropriately. There was a new song flowing out of me that I knew I was not fashioning. It was directed to Him and suddenly my consciousness was not on myself but on Jesus and that wonderful baptism happened to me. Later it happened to each of our kids. But it happened because we saw life flowing out of Shirley.

Evelyn: Did you write a book entitled A New Song, Pat?

Pat: It seems I did.

Evelyn: In closing, I'd like to ask each of you to name the greatest single benefit of receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Pat: I was asked this recently in Nashville by a young Baptist seminarian. He had read my book and he didn't quite understand about the baptism in the Holy Spirit or speaking in tongues. He finally said, "What good do you think it's done you? Why should you or I or anybody else want this?"

In a flash the answer came. I hadn't really thought about it before, but I almost wept as I looked at him because it was occurring to me, it was being revealed to me, as I was saying it. I said, "I believe that the greatest benefit for me in receiving the baptism in the fullness of the Holy Spirit and having this prayer language, or avenue to God, is that it has made me more childlike."

Jesus said, "Except ye... become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). That is, you will never know what it's like, you will never know what it's about.

For a guy who has become an actor, an entertainer, a businessman, it's very hard to become like a child again. To the mind this prayer language seems so foolish and yet when you have experienced it, it is so beautiful and makes so much sense. It's an avenue of communication to God, an avenue of praise. I

don't have many words of praise with my own natural mind but in the Spirit I can praise God for long periods of time and just enjoy that time at His feet like a little child.

So for me, a Phi Beta Kappa, magna cum laude graduate from Columbia University, who studied Greek because I wanted to answer everybody's doctrinal questions, to get to be a little child again and spontaneously respond to God like a baby is precious.

Evelyn: Now, Pat, you don't mean childish, you mean childlike.

Pat: Childlike, right. Although I don't care if I am childish.

Shirley: I think God meets you at the point of your need. Pat needed to become a little child to be able to walk with Jesus and have His image formed in him.

I think what happened to me in the baptism of the Holy Spirit that I appreciate so much is what Pat mentioned. I had emotional highs and lows, I guess, because of my emotional makeup and my childhood. My mother was quite ill from the time I was ten until she died, when I was seventeen. I lived with fear and different sorts of emotional traumas because of her illness. Other traumatic things happened throughout my life that made me a very emotional person. I would have deep, deep depressions and I would have high highs. I believe the baptism in the Holy Spirit stabilized me. It has given me more stable emotions.

I remember we were at a fellowship at our church and one of the elders, who was a doctor, took Pat aside and said, "Pat, not only as your elder but as a doctor and as your friend, I must tell you that Shirley is headed for a nervous breakdown if you continue on in this walk."

Well, it's been six years now and I am more stable than I was then and I praise the Lord for it.

Pat: That evening I said to the doctor, "Why do you think Shirley is headed for a nervous breakdown? I've seen all these changes occur for the good. I'm amazed at this wonderful transformation."

He said, "Shirley's gotten very calm and it's not natural."

I said, "Praise the Lord, it sure isn't... it's supernatural."

Shirley: I think the earthquake that occurred recently in California was a perfect example. For about five years I had been trying to get Pat to move back to Nashville because I was so afraid of earthquakes coming to Los Angeles. The

fears I had were incredible. The earthquake hit when Pat was out of town. It was six o'clock in the morning and I was in bed and my four children were each in different bedrooms.

When an earthquake hits, it sounds like a train going beneath your bed. It's an incredible experience. The minute the earthquake hit, my feet hit the floor. I was looking for my children, which I think is the innate sense of a mother. But no sooner did my feet hit the floor than my hands went up in the air and I was saying, "Praise You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus."

I got into the hall just in time to catch my chandelier before it hit the floor. I said to my girls, "It's OK, it's only an earthquake."

If no one else knew my reaction was a miracle, I knew it because I knew what would have happened before I had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I told the girls to come into my room. We jumped on the bed together and began singing praises to God in the midst of the earthquake. I read Psalm 91 to them about how God is our refuge, a very present help in time of trouble... that even though the seas roar and the mountain shakes we need fear no evil.

Later I read in the newspapers that psychiatrists said the fear the children saw in the parents did more damage to them than the earthquake itself. In our home that morning there was no fear manifested at all. We actually began to call down the presence of God. God is love and perfect love casteth out fear so there was no fear (1 John 4:18). It was a beautiful experience.

Evelyn: Tell us, Cherry, what's the one thing the baptism in the Holy Spirit has done in your life.

Cherry: Mine might not be as obvious as it should have been. About five years ago your husband (Oral) was at our house. You were there too. He prayed over each one of us and the Lord told me, through him, that my gift would be joy. For the past five or six years, however long it's been, I've been saying, "But, Lord, if I'm supposed to get joy, when is it going to come?" It suddenly dawned on me not too long ago that by joy, God didn't mean eternal happiness, you know, a carefree life with no problems, but more and more He's showing me that no matter how many times I fall, no matter how many times I goof, no matter how upset I get, He is always there. Now I realize His joy means the peace and security of knowing that He is going to pick me up every time.

Evelyn: Thank you, Shirley, Pat, and Cherry, for sharing with us. It has been a real joy to have you.

This is Volume III in the series, "The Holy Spirit in the Now," by Oral

Roberts. Copies of the other two volumes can be obtained by writing:
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