

ESSENTIALS OF EVANGELISM

The Bob Jones University Lectures on Evangelism for 1958

by

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CHAPTER THREE

THE HOLY SPIRIT

TEXT: “. . . **there standeth one among you, whom ye know not**” (John 1:26).

READ JOHN 1:15-30

In this first chapter of John we read, “. . . **there standeth one among you, whom ye know not.**” We know that this verse speaks of Jesus Christ. It was prophesied in the Old Testament that John would come as a forerunner of Jesus. The Bible says that before Jesus would be born as a babe in Bethlehem there would come another great character who would preach with great power, great crowds would hear him, he would be like a voice in the wilderness. John and his ministry fulfilled these Old Testament passages. Now when the people came to John and said, “*Are you Christ or is He yet to come? Are you the One of whom the prophets in the Old Testament spake concerning One Who Would come as the Saviour of the world?*” John replied, “**I am not he.**” Then he said this, “*There standeth one among you whom ye know not. He has come; He has been in your midst; you have heard Him speak; you have seen Him perform miracles; you have watched Him at work, and yet you do not know Him.*”

Now John spake this of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I want to change the meaning of that text a little bit today. I shall no do injury to the truth; I shall do it very reverently, and, I believe, with the Holy Spirit of God leading. I want us to take that statement today, “. . . **there standeth one among you, whom ye know not,**” and apply it to the Holy Spirit of God.

There was no excuse for people not to know Jesus when He came! The Bible had given much detail about how He would come, when He would come, and where He would be born, and what would attend his ministry. There was absolutely no excuse for the people in Jesus' day not to recognize Him and know that He was the Christ of God, the Saviour of the world. But they didn't. John was truthful when he said, “. . . **there standeth one among you, whom ye know not.**”

The same Bible tells us how the Holy Spirit would come, when He would come, what He would do, the miracle signs and wonders that would attend His coming. Yet, my friends, there are so many people today who do not actually know in a real, vital, wonderful way that blessed member of the trinity, the Holy Spirit of God.

Now I will tell you why I know that what I am saying today is necessary and important and why we should give thought to it. Ever year on a day called Good Friday (and there is nothing said in the Bible about it) we observe the death on the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ! For three hours the stores close, for three hours the radio stations give time to councils of churches and ministerial groups; and all over the world people commemorate the death of Jesus on the cross one day out of the year. There are some things about it, of course, that are unscriptural. Every day we should thank God that Jesus died, but we say so much of Calvary and of the day He died, Good Friday so-called. Three days later we observe what we call Easter, and of all the days in the year that is the day when the highest number of people in the fifty-two weeks out of the year attend the house of God, the day we observe the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are three things that the New Testament is taken up with: the death of Jesus on the cross the resurrection of Jesus from the grave, and the coming into the world of the Holy Spirit of God.

We have our Good Fridays, we have our Easters, but to show you the low standard of Christianity and the lack of knowledge on the part of many people about the coming and ministry and work of the Holy Spirit I ask you, "How often have you heard of believers observing the anniversary of Pentecost?" How little emphasis is given today to the fact that the Holy Spirit of God came into the world on the day of Pentecost, baptized believers into the body of Christ and dwells in this body until this very hour. ". . . **there standeth one among you whom ye know not.**"

I do not know of any subject I could speak on today or any subject we could think about on which there is more misunderstanding than the work of the Holy Spirit of God. There is much misunderstanding about Him; for instance, some people refer to Him as an "It." They think of Him merely as an influence. Let me tell you, do you know this morning if you are a child of God that the Holy Spirit is with you and He is in your body. The Holy Spirit is a real Person, just as real as Jesus, just as real as God the Father.

The Bible tells us of all His wonderful characteristics. He walks; He loves; He can be grieved; He can be quenched. You can't grieve an influence. You can't grieve an object. You can only grieve a person.

Mrs. Malone came home from a service some months ago and told me this wonderful story. I have thought of it many times since she told it to me. She said she heard a preacher tell this story of something that happened in the life of a man and his wife. This woman had a mental illness. She had been to doctors and she had been in hospitals. They had done everything in the world they could for her. Finally, the doctor said to the husband, "I know of but one thing else that I want you to do. I want you to take your wife back to the house where she was before she got sick. I want you to take her walking in the garden like she used to walk. I want you to have her in the very surroundings where she used to be. I want you to do as nearly as you can the very things that you did together before she got sick."

The man took her back to the old home place. They walked in the surroundings, the yard and the old familiar scenes and out in the garden. One day as they walked together in the garden holding hands, she gripped his hand and all of a sudden looked at him and said, "Why, you are here."

“Oh yes,” he replied, “I am here.”

She asked, “Where have you been?”

“Why, Darling, I have been by your side all the time. I’ve never left you; I’ve never forsaken you; I have been right with you every moment, but you just didn’t realize my presence.”

She could hardly believe that there was one who had not left her for a moment. How true this is of the Holy Spirit. Maybe your heart is saying this morning, “Where is He? Where is He?” If you are a Christian, He is by your side. The Bible says, **“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with price.”** The Holy Spirit is with every Christian.

You say, “But I am not a very good Christian.” I don’t feel that I am either, and you feel that you are, that shows you are not. You say, “I am not very old Christian; I’m not a very strong Christian.” The Bible does not teach that the Holy Spirit dwells with just the strong and mature, but the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit makes His abode in the bodies of every single child of God, young or old, weak or strong.

The fullness of the Holy Spirit is another thing, and usefulness in the hands of the Holy Spirit is another thing, but the indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit is something that is a possession of every Christian in this room today.

There are a lot of folks who misunderstand about the Holy Spirit. There are people, a lot of good people, who read into the Bible some things that the Bible does not teach. On the other hand, there are many wonderful truths concerning the outworking of the Holy Spirit through us which are so sadly ignored. This probably accounts for the fact that so many preachers, so many Christians, and so many churches are not seeing people saved today and are not getting the job done.

The more I read the Bible, the more I study the great commission to the Church, the more time I spend in prayer and meditation about this matter of the fullness of the Holy Spirit and His endowment and power, the more I believe that the primary and fundament reason that God gives the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit is that people might win souls to Jesus Christ. Some covet this fullness and power, they say, that they might speak in tongues. Others covet this power that they might be joyful and happy and sometimes very noisy and generous with their “Amens” and “Hallelujahs.”

The early church got the job done and was successful in church evangelism because they were Spirit-empowered for soul winning. Some covet the power of the Spirit, they say, in order to heal the sick. I believe that God can heal the sick in answer to prayer, but to magnify “healing” above the “Healer,” the Lord Jesus, is not the result of the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

You know people get all excited and all concerned and they start to saying that the work of the Holy Spirit is something that the Bible does not teach that it is at all.

Here is the most wonderful thing to me about the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian. Jesus said, **“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come . . . he shall not speak of himself . . . He shall glorify me.”** If you want to know where there is a Christian who is full of the Holy Spirit, you find a Christian who is magnifying and exalting and lifting up the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will find one full of the Holy Spirit. If you want to find a church that is full of the Holy Spirit, find one that is making Jesus known to sinners who are lost and without God. I wouldn't give you a nickel for a so-called Spirit-filled life that never won a soul to Christ.

You know it is so easy to get off on the wrong track on the ministry of the Holy Spirit. There are a number of symbols in the Bible which typify the Holy Spirit. I believe that a practical approach to the interpretation of these types of the Holy Spirit will help us toward an intelligent understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in and through the believer. Every important work of the Holy Spirit is prefigured in the types and symbols which refer to Him.

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A FIRE

The Holy Spirit is a fire. In Acts 2 the Bible says that when the Holy Spirit came, He came symbolized by fire. In the Old Testament you remember that when God called the Children of Israel out of bondage and set them on their way to the land of Canaan, God told them they were going to need divine leadership more than human leadership. God told them He would lead them by night by a pillar of fire in the heavens. That fire in the heavens was symbolical of the Holy Spirit of God. Fire does a number of things.

Fire refines. There is nothing in the world that will clean a dirty piece of metal like a refining fire.

Fire warms. Thank God that where the Holy Spirit is there is a warmth.

Fire illuminates. The Holy Spirit of God illuminates.

Fire does something else. Fire cleanses.

There is nothing in the world that will clean a Christian so much as the fullness of the Holy Spirit of God. Yonder in the city of London years ago when the Black Plague was killing literally thousands of people, those people asked, “How are we ever going to stop all this disease?” They did not know as much about medicine as medical science knows today. People were dying. The black plague was spreading and killing people everywhere. They didn't know how in the world to stop it. Do you know the thing that actually stopped it? One day there took place a great fire like the Chicago fire, and that fire swept through the most diseased part of that city and stopped the black plague. I don't know a thing in the World that will arrest and put an end to worldliness and uncleanness and sin in the life of a Christian like getting down on his knees and confessing his sin and praying through the Holy Spirit that indwells his body and emptying himself and asking the Holy Spirit to come in all His fulness and all of His refining power and sweep out all the things that grieve the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you know Him as a fire?

A careful study of the word “fire” as it is used in the Word of; God will show it symbolizes a number of wonderful things.

For instance, when Moses saw the bush on fire at the back side of the desert, it no doubt symbolized the presence of God, and Moses was told, **“Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground”** (Exodus 3:5). Fire, as it is sometimes used in the Bible no doubt speaks of the Lord’s approval or good pleasure. When God approved of His mighty prophet Elijah as he challenged; the modernistic preachers of wicked Ahab, we read, **“Then the fire of the Lord fell . . .”** (I Kings 18:38). Fire in the Old Testament evidently spoke of God’s protection, for God said of Israel, **“I will be unto her a wall of fire round about”** (Zechariah 2:5). God will give to the Spirit-filled winner of souls His wonderful Presence, His approval; and blessing and His protection as we take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

John said, **“There standeth one among you whom ye know not.”** Do you know the blessed Holy Spirit as a cleansing, warming, illuminating, directing and convicting fire?

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT AS WATER

Do you know Him as water? The Bible speaks of Him as water. Now notice something. John 7:37-39 reads: **“In the last day, that great day of the feast, 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 was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”** Here is the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. It is like an artesian well—the out-flowing, the fruitful life, the reaching, the blessing, the touching of others for God.

A week or two ago Mrs. Malone and I saw something that we have thought of a good many times. I never saw anything more wonderful. In a meeting down in Detroit in a church pastored by one of our seminar students, there was a seventy-year-old lady, stone blind, who couldn’t walk as you and I can, who couldn’t get in that door unless somebody helped her, who could not find a seat unless somebody led her. In one week in one small church, she brought ninety-five people who had never been before—a blind woman.

That woman lived in an apartment building. Down below her was an apartment; up above her was an apartment; on this side was a neighbor; on that side was a neighbor; across the street in front was a neighbor; across the street in back was neighbor, and in one night she had every last one of them in the house of God.

She said, “I want to introduce you to my neighbor that lives on this side; I want to introduce you to my neighbor that lives on that side; I want to introduce you to my neighbor that lives upstairs; I want to introduce you to my neighbor that lives downstairs.” She brought ninety-five people in one week, and we beg people who have been saved twenty years to get one person in the house of God.

Stone blind! Do you know why many a Christian can’t influence anybody? They don’t have the outflowing life. They live in their own little world. They live for “me and my home and my family” and let the rest of the world go to hell!

When I saw that woman, who was staring off into space stand and present eighteen people that she had in one service when I was there, I said, *“Oh God, I am not worthy to have two good eyes; I’m not worthy to have two good hands, a strong pair of legs and a healthy body. I don’t feel worthy of it, and if You will help me, dear God, I am going to reach people for Jesus Christ.”* Let me tell you, if a blind woman with the outflowing of the Holy Spirit of God can reach ninety-five people in seven days, don’t you sit in this audience and say, “I can’t reach anybody or I can’t win any souls to Jesus.” Do you know the Holy Spirit as water? **“There standeth one among you, whom ye know not.”**

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A RUSHING WIND

Do you know the Holy Spirit as a rushing wind? On the day of Pentecost there came a mighty rushing wind. That speaks of His power, the power of the Holy Spirit of God. I will say this here and now, there is no power for a Christian to win souls except by the breath of God, the Holy Spirit. Jesus very plainly taught that the work of regeneration in the human heart is only accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, **“The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the spirit”** (John 3:8). Just as the wind is powerful, invisible and immaterial so is the wonderful work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration.

I have seen that wonderful power come upon humble people with little or no speaking ability. You know Moses tried to get out of accepting a job of leadership from God on the grounds that he was a poor speaker. God met this frail excuse by promising to send Aaron; along with Moses to do the talking. Aaron went along all right, but when Moses got on fire for God, he had no trouble with his speaking and Aaron rarely ever got a chance to say a word! You do not have to have the “gift of gab” or be an expert conversationalist in order to be a soul winner. Some of the best soul winners I have ever known were actually very timid people.

I have seen that power come upon people of little or no education! I have actually known a few of the dear saints of God along the way who could barely read and write and who never made a public speech or sang a solo but who were great soul winners because of the power of the Spirit of God in their lives.

I have seen that wonderful power come upon people with little or no talent. Talent is a wonderful thing, but I sometimes think its importance is very much over played. Consecrated talent is a wonderful thing, but I learned long ago that if we wait to get talented people to do the work of God, we may never get the job done. I have known some very talented and capable people who did not win souls and seemed to have no compassion, no tears, and no broken heart.

Give me the man or woman clothed upon with that mighty power which filled the upper room where the one hundred and twenty prayed and it will be incidental with me whether or not they are talented or handsome! God wants the glory to belong to Him and He wants people to know that it is not by human might or power but by His Spirit. He sometimes chooses very weak and uncomely vessels to bear His gospel to the ends of the earth. Oh, my friend, covet the best gift! Be sure you are energized and motivated by the blessed Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is also symbolized in the Bible by oil. He is set forth in Ephesians 1:13 as a seal, but I wish to pass over these in order to emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit as symbolized in the Word of God as a dove.

“There standeth one among you, whom ye know not.”

IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A HEAVENLY DOVE

Do you know Him as a dove? When the Lord Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan, the Holy Spirit came upon Him in the form of a dove. There is a lot that can be said about this. A dove is the purest animal in the world.

- A dove never has but one mate. A dove will die before she will ever be untrue to her mate.
- A dove is a mournful bird; it rarely sings a happy song. It broods.
- The dove is a symbol of peace.

Noah sent a dove and a raven out of the ark. The raven never came back, for out there were the old decayed bodies and all the filth of a world destroyed with the flood. That satisfied him that he never came back. The clean little dove went out the window to an olive tree, picked off an olive branch which speaks of peace and came back into the ark. The Holy Spirit in the life of a believer speaks of love, of brooding over the souls of men, of a pure life. The Holy Spirit is with you today; He is in your heart if you are a Christian.

Sometime ago I read of a Christian lady on a boat who was alone as far as anyone could see. There was a would-be attacker on that boat that would rob her and bother her. He stood at a distance as the boat cruised on the Hudson River in New York and he watched her. Just before she got off the boat, he said to her, “Are you alone or do you have a companion?”

She replied, “I am not alone; I have a companion.”

The boat docked and she walked off the boat and went down the street. This would-be attacker followed her a few feet behind. Finally, she came to the door of her home and reached in her purse and took out the key to open the door. He rushed up as if he would rob and harm her and said, “You told me a lie. You said you had a companion and you were not alone. You lied to me.”

She smiled as she said, “I didn’t lie to you. I told you I was not alone but that I had a companion.”

He said, “I don’t see anybody.”

“I know you don’t,” she said, “because you are blind. You can’t see Him. You see, Sir, I am a Christian; I am saved; and since the day that the sweet Holy Spirit of God came into my heart, I have never been alone.”

She unlocked the door and went in as he muttered something like, “I don’t want that kind of company,” and went on his way.

I’m not alone, thank God, and I never will be for right here in this body of mine lives the Holy Spirit.

Do you know Him today as a burning flame, an ever flowing well, a mighty rushing wind?
“**There standeth one among you, whom ye know not.**”

~ end of chapter 3 ~

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