

LEST YE FAINT

by

S. Franklin Logsdon

Pastor, Moody Memorial Church, Chicago, Illinois

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CHAPTER THREE

THE STRANGER IN THE TEMPLE

“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?” (I Corinthians 6:19).

THE ANIMATED SURPRISE of the Apostle in our text was not due to the lack of intellectual awareness on the part of the Corinthian believers, but to the absence of experiential assurance. It was not theoretical ignorance which concerned him, but a practical deficiency.

Second only to the matchless miracle of the incarnation of Christ is the descent of Deity to tabernacle in the bodily tents of men and women, there to cohabit with the spirits of born again people. In the former operation, God was providing the rich and abundant gift of divine life; in the latter, He is proffering the superabundant supplies of infinite grace. Indifference to the provisions of the Saviour results in a catastrophic hopelessness, while inattention to the presence of the Spirit issues in colossal helplessness.

In a parabolic explanation of human reactions to divine agents, the Lord Jesus related how a proprietor leased his vineyard to tillers (Matthew 21:33). When the vintage time approached, the owner sought his share. The lessees took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned the third. Others were sent and received like treatment. Finally he sent his son, believing they would honour him; but when the workers saw the son, they said, **“Come, let us kill him and get hold of his inheritance.”**

How pictorially true this was of the prophets who were stoned and beaten and sawn asunder, and of the Father’s own Son who was nailed by wicked hands to the cruel cross. We assure ourselves that we never would have participated in such evil deeds. Would we have plucked the beard from His blessed face or crushed the festering thorns upon His brow? Would we have offered him vinegar and gall to drink? Would we have joined with the stampeding bulls of Bashan at the base of the cross to hurl blasphemous jeers and taunts at the suffering Saviour? Even the thought is repulsive.

Yet, if it could be proved that our treatment of the Spirit falls into the same category as that which befell the Saviour, it would be a sad and serious indictment.

One thing ought to register in our minds indelibly. The Holy Spirit is none-the-less God than was the precious Saviour of men. Even as the Lord Jesus was intent upon doing the will of the Father and of finishing His work, just so is the blessed Holy Spirit desirous of pursuing His ministry to its fruition. But what did He come to do? To delineate definite reasons for His indwelling the believer should make it decidedly easy for us to determine whether or not He is the stranger in the temple.

The Holy Spirit Takes Up His Abode in the Body of the Believer to Make Objective Truth an Inward Reality

No one can experience the spiritual impact of Truth or enjoy its vitality until the Divine Teacher introduces one to its unfathomable depths and its incalculable worth. **“The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God”** (I Corinthians 2:11).

It is, therefore, the contact of God’s Spirit with man’s which paves the way for an intelligent appreciation and an effectual appropriation of the transforming revelations of the Infinite. It becomes the Spirit to give dignity to the dialect of heaven; it behooves the saint to grant Him the opportunity. But how is this ministration accomplished by the Divine Indweller?

THE HOLY SPIRIT POINTS OUT THE WAY

“He will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13).

He is One who shows the way—a conductor. A guide is necessary when the way is not known, or when immensity or complexity (or both) characterizes the objective to be surveyed. And where can the human mind discover a broader, more profound field of investigation? The Book of books is a mine of wealth incomputable, an ocean of wisdom unfathomable, and a sphere of wonder incomparable. Because He searches the deep things of God, and is Himself omniscient, the gracious Holy Spirit can “*paraclete*” us into the highways of prophecy, the boulevards of doctrine, the avenues of inspiration and the bypaths of biography.

With His patient, potent assistance, one has the blessed privilege of ascending the mountain – climbs to the fastnesses of revealed grandeur, where the azure blue of heavenly atmosphere suffuses one with the glory of the Divine Presence.

THE HOLY SPIRIT PROVIDES THE ABILITY

In that intimate, affectionate letter of the Father to His little children, He states; **“The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you”** (I John 2:27).

The anointing (“*chrism*”) of the Spirit is an holy endowment to furnish one with qualities to grasp the Truth—the faculties which facilitate an appropriation of Scripture. How amazingly wonderful is the completeness of divine equipment for the believer.

Surely the man of God is fully furnished unto all good works (II Timothy 3:17). No detail is overlooked; hence no excuse exists for our lack of Bible knowledge.

The work of the Holy Spirit as guide is not for the purpose of taking us on an excursion. No, it is not an excursion at all; it is an incursion—He guides into all truth. Nor is it for pastime, but rather for profit. The reason the Lord Jesus could not sin is that He had no affinity for sin (John 14:30) — Satan had nothing in Him. The reason we can know the Truth of God is because it has something in us, even the Author. He has an affinity for the Word, and, being resident in us (the believers) reaches out for its quickening, constraining and commanding force. In this way, and through this medium, we are furnished with the pervasive refreshment and the practical potency of the living qualities of divine Truth.

THE HOLY SPIRIT PROMOTES THE UNDERSTANDING

Paul, by divine unction, sounded an important note when He insisted that “**the things of the Spirit of God . . . are spiritually discerned**” (I Corinthians 2:14).

Without the help of the Spirit, men may see the words and read the statements of Scripture; they may know the grammar and the rhetoric, but it is more than the grammatical and the rhetorical principles we want. His words are spirit and His words are life. How can we get the spirit or the vitality of the divine statements apart from the heaven-sent Teacher?

The blind man of Bethsaida said, upon the restoration of his sight, “**I see men as trees walking**” (Mark 8:24). He could detect objects but could only differentiate between men and trees because of human mobility. This is not clear discernment.

When it comes to an heart appreciation of the mind of Christ as revealed in His Word, doubtless many of God’s dear people only see “**men as trees walking.**” This pathetic condition ought not to exist since the Spirit dwells within. Mark it well, if His presence is unrecognized, then are our eyes unopened, our minds unaffected, our hearts unstirred and our feet unfed. In all candid truthfulness, is the Holy Spirit not the stranger in the temple?

The Holy Spirit Takes Up His Abode in the Body of the Believer to Exalt Christ in the Life

We ought to tread softly when we venture into the attributes and operations of the Holy Godhead. Yet, it is a granted privilege, not too eminently appreciated by many believers, that we may know something of the very precious desires of the Infinite. For instance, the Holy Spirit came, not to speak of Himself (John 16:13), but to take the things of Christ and make them plain to us; and why? Need we be in doubt a moment? He desires to exalt the Son in whom the Father is well pleased. How can He accomplish this end if not through the believer in whom He abides? The sobering fact is, that the believer may either help or hinder this deep desire of the Spirit of God.

What do we mean by the exaltation of Christ from the human point of view?

It is that state or quality in the believer which willingly and wholeheartedly ascribes unto the Lord His rightful place in the daily life as regards adoration, authority and acknowledged accomplishment. Since without divine assistance we are utterly unable to do anything (John 15:5), it ought to be admitted by any discerning mind that this sacred emphasis in the Christian will be sadly lacking if the presence and power of the Spirit are not recognized in the life.

TO EXALT CHRIST IS TO REVEAL ADORATION IN OUR ATTITUDES

Love has a language all its own. It need not be vocal to be vital. Indeed there may be expression without experience. One may sing lustily, “My Jesus, I love Thee; I know Thou art mine” without the least stirring of the deeper emotions. Perhaps this is but one illustration of the “**vain repetition of words**” against which our Saviour warned (Matthew 6:7).

It is ever inspiring to hear people sing, “Love the world through me, Lord,” but this holy desire will fall short of fulfillment unless we allow the Spirit to love the Lord through us. Love not only begets love, but He Who is love longs for affection. Surely the Holy Spirit strives to impress this fact upon our spirits and awaits, as the Royal Resident within, to encourage the flow of our evermore pure and changeless affection toward the heart that bled and broke for us.

TO EXALT CHRIST IS TO RESPECT HIS AUTHORITY FOR OUR ACTIONS

What is servant obedience but an humble, volitional resignation to the Sovereign Voice. It is a sweet blending of our confidence, trustfulness and assurance, respectfully, in His claims, directions and wisdom. It is the suing of the soul for that coveted status of a good man whose “**steps are ordered by the Lord**” (Psalm 37:23).

Respecting the authority of Christ in any and all of our dedicated endeavors is giving precedence and transcendence to His holy will. It is our attestation to the rightness of His way and our confession that it is the only way, at least for us. It is the joy of knowing that we are under omniscient direction, hence being advanced in the proper course.

It involves a forfeiture of all personal preference and a refusal of all contra-persuasion, giving the Lord an absolute priority in the life. Without the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, indifference, obstinacy and rebellion would, in varying degrees, begin to characterize the actions of God’s people. Indeed, this is precisely what is developing because the Spirit of God is unrecognized generally as the present Indweller of the believer.

TO EXALT CHRIST IS TO REVEL IN THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

More than three thousand years have faded into history since General Moses and his wearied soldiers were miraculously snatched from the pursuing horsemen of Egypt and delivered joyfully on the opposite side of the Red Sea. Yet, his song of rejoicing is just as stirring and just as inspiring as though it were the keynote of a present-day victory celebration. Why? The living qualities of the Spirit-preserved Word, of course, make this true, but apart from this fact, Moses had the right perspective.

One of the highest notes which he struck in his song of redemption was, “**I will sing unto the Lord for He hath triumphed gloriously**” (Exodus 15:1).

No room here for self-glorification, no basis for boasting. In fact, there was no disposition to indulge in either.

- It was by no clever military maneuver the Israelites escaped by the skin of their teeth.
- It was not human ingenuity that opened the channel through the sea.
- It was not the prowess of man which wrought the decisive defeat of this preponderant foe.

No, the triumph was the Lord's. Moses extolled the Most High for what He had done. He said: “**I will exalt the Lord.**”

- Only the Holy Spirit can give us the right perspective.
- Only the Spirit can stimulate our hearts to praise Him who alone is worthy.
- Only He can help us to celebrate the Name of our Mighty Conqueror.

- It was not our moral development which brought us salvation.
- It was not our excellent training which effected the new birth.
- It was not our careful deportment which wrote our names in the Lamb's Book of Life.
- It was not our beneficent character or our philanthropic deeds which made us heirs and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

No, pre-figured by the flight of the Israelites, we were hemmed in, cut off and doomed to die; then a Strong Arm intervened. When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for us. It was *His* triumph.

Of course, we enjoy it, and will continue to enjoy it increasingly world without end, but it was His triumph. He won the fight; He defeated the foe; He planted our feet on victory ground. The Holy Spirit is ever desirous of helping us to revel in our Lord's accomplishments for us. The question is, do we exalt the Lord?

If not, there's a stranger in the temple.

The Holy Spirit Takes Up His Abode in the Body of the Believer to Attest Our Relationship to God

Steal up to the side of the Apostle Paul and ask him seriously how we may know that we are vitally related to the Infinite. Without hesitation, the beloved servant of the Lord would answer, “**The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God**” (Romans 8:16).

Blind unbelief and careless inattention to Truth will complicate the clear profundity of this heaven-sent assurance.

What is the witness of the Spirit? Simply what this verse states—nothing added, nothing subtracted. It is a ministry of the Holy Spirit. Whether we understand it or not, He pursues it. Whether we appreciate it or not, He performs it. Whether we acknowledge it or not, He promotes it. **“If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself”** (II Timothy 2:13).

His is an unchangeable faithfulness.

To witness is to attest the truth of a person, place or thing. The Greek word in this instance (*summartureo*) means “*to witness with*”. Thus, the Holy Spirit takes up His abode within our bodies to witness with our spirits. It is a communication of confidence to the children of the King. Consider what this means under certain circumstances.

THE SPIRIT BEARS WITNESS WITH OUR SPIRIT IN MOMENTS OF DOUBT AND DISCOURAGEMENT

Few of God’s people, down through the eras of time, have sought to run with patience the race before them without being crowded off the course by handicaps apparently too high to hurdle. Few of God’s people have basked in the sun-lit glow of continual victory without being forced at some time into the shadows. Someone has suggested that discouragement is the Devil’s darning needle which he employs promiscuously to prick unsuspecting folk.

Whatever imagery we may advance to characterize this rather effective stratagem of Satan, observe the meaning and value of the Spirit’s witnessing ministry at such a time. To our spirit He whispers, “You are a child of God.” Should that not be helpful? It will be helpful if we are conscious of His presence and witness within. If we are not so conscious, there’s a stranger in the temple.

THE SPIRIT BEARS WITNESS WITH OUR SPIRIT IN THE HOUR OF TEMPTATION

The blessed Indweller stands guard for every emergency. He wants us to commit our case to Him always. He can outwit Satan. Besides, it is His battle and not ours (II Chronicles 20:15). And when the pitfalls are digged and the collaborating cohorts of evil seek subtly to entice the Christian the Divine Witness works with his spirit. He whispers, “Thou art a child of God.”

Is that not sufficient?

“What more can He say
Than to you He hath said;
To you who for refuge
To Jesus have fled?”

This ought to be enough. If, in his cunning craftiness, Satan has for the time blinded the believer’s mind to his oneness with the Father above, the faithful Holy Spirit is there, even within, to remind him that He is God’s dear child. Such a reminder should be enough to enable him to detect the danger, detest the temptation and depart from the tempter.

Jesus one day said to dear old lovable Peter, “**Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee . . . but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not**” (Luke 22:31).

This undergirding support is our constant blessing through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. If, in the hour of temptation, we do not hear the witness of the Spirit, then there is a stranger in the temple.

THE SPIRIT BEARS WITNESS WITH OUR SPIRIT IN THE DAY OF SORROW

Prior to our Lord’s glorious ascension, He sought to encourage His disciples by saying, “**It is expedient for you that I go away**” (John 16:7).

Has the reader ever seriously sought reasons why His departure was to our advantage? If not, here is a precious one. He went to send the Comforter to us. And He is come! He abides with tender graciousness within.

When the severe and merciless strokes of sorrow cut into the quick of our innermost being, and the heart is rent by the blasts of bereavement’s stinging blows, ah, then, the heaven-sent Comforter is there to succour. He is there to whisper, “Thou art God’s dear child.”

- This means we need not sorrow as others who have no hope (I Thessalonians 4:13).
- This means His grace is sufficient (II Corinthians 12:9).
- It means that, as our day, so shall our strength be (Deuteronomy 33:25).

If, in the hour of sorrow, you are not conscious of the Comforter’s consoling presence, then there is a stranger in the temple.

The Holy Spirit Takes Up His Abode in the Body of the Believer to Promote Communion at the Throne of Grace

If the Spirit’s ministry in its entirety were not essential and indispensable, we might, at times, contend that we could fare just as well without certain phases of His divine operations. This, however, could never be said by any discerning person with regard to His part in the sacred exercise of prayer.

And let us not disagree with the Holy Spirit’s judgment when He tells us that our inability to pray as we ought is the paramount infirmity of our Christian experience.

THE HOLY SPIRIT FURNISHES INTELLIGENCE REGARDING OUR PRAYER NEEDS

No dilemma could be so disconcerting as being weighted down with inward burdens and not knowing the what or how in coming before the Throne of Grace. Yet this is decidedly and statedly our weakness. “**We know not what we should pray for as we ought**” (Romans 8:26).

Here again the Divine Indweller rushes to our aid and meets our need.

- We know not, but He knows.
- He knows whereof we have need even before we ask.
- He knows the kind and extent.
- He knows the degree of urgency.
- He knows the neglect which the pressing need may suffer.

There He is within, just when we need Him. He is there to detect and direct; to prompt and promote. He makes heavenly help most inviting to the saint who learns the plague of his own heart.

THE HOLY SPIRIT CLOTHES OUR INEXPRESSIBLE SUPPLICATIONS WITH UNUTTERABLE GROANINGS

That is, **“the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”**

When we get this far in such a solemn and sacred consideration, we have plunged ourselves into the fathomless depths of divine wonders. We have moved into the unspeakable, the incomprehensible, but not into the incredible.

This second part of the verse is but the progressive result of the first, and the Holy Spirit goes beyond our reach into the sublime stages of prayer operation. All true prayer originates from God. It is only our recognition of His presence and our resignation to His patient promotion which carries prayer into this inexpressible status. It is as though the Holy Spirit says, “You can trust Me where you cannot trace Me.”

Then, he carries the interests of the yielded soul before the dispensing throne of Grace, there to have every need met in the sufficiency of an assured answer. What irreparable loss we must suffer when we treat this precious Prayer-Promoter as a stranger in the Temple.

**The Holy Spirit Takes Up His Abode in the Body of the Believer
to Establish a Divine Partnership**

We cannot escape the fact that God uses men to fulfil His purpose. He has heavenly hosts innumerable, but He uses men.

- He could speak, and the world-creating force of His voice would cause men everywhere to fall tremblingly at His feet, but He uses men.
- He could manifest in the twinkling of an eye sufficient power to transform every hardened sinner on this terrestrial ball, but He uses men.
- He could send legions of scintillating angels to demonstrate the brightness of His glory, but He chooses men to declare the greatness of His grace.

The blueprints of Omniscience call for the Spirit of God to work through quickened mortals who have found His favour through faith.

THE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SPIRIT IS SUGGESTED

In the generally-known and oft-repeated benediction of Second Corinthians 13:13, the statement, “**and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all,**” supplies us with a delightful thought.

The word translated “**communion**” (*koy-nohn-ee-ah*) is recorded as “**partners**” in Luke 5:10. “**James and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon.**”

It is given also as “**fellowship**” and as “**sharers with**”. Thus, we have fellowship with the Holy Spirit in a practical way. We are sharers with Him in the dissemination of the Word of Life; we are partners in the work of the Lord.

THE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SPIRIT IS STATED

The reason Paul could not speak to the Corinthian believers as unto spiritual, was due to the fact that they were not spiritual (I Corinthians 3:1).

They maintained the status of “**babes in Christ.**” Babes neither recognize nor assume responsibility. Thus it requires something of an object lesson to reach the matter at hand—an illustrative approach consisting of a tiller, an irrigator and a harvester. Then the Apostle came to the point: “**For we are labourers together with God**” (II Corinthians 3:9).

This is astounding information, but it is just as authoritative as it is astounding. We are linked with the Infinite in a practical procedure, and, of course, the Holy Spirit is in view. He is the Lord of the Harvest. He directs the operations.

It is incumbent upon us to submit willingly to His gracious directions. Any indifference to His tender instructions is not only an offense to Deity but grievous in the extreme to the divine Administrator. Grief is an injury to love, and Paul definitely warned against this when he urged, “**Grieve not the Holy Spirit**” (Ephesians 4:30).

THE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ESSENTIAL

In its simplest form a partnership is said to exist when two persons offer their resources to accomplish a particular end, each contributing what the other lacks, that together they may be fitted for the pursuance of their common purpose.

But what do we have which the Holy Spirit does not have that He would deign to enter into such an unusual relationship with us?

- We do not have the knowledge, but He does.
- We do not have the wisdom, but He does.
- We do not have the power, but He does.

Then, what do we have which He does not possess? A body—just a body.

He has no earthly body such as was prepared for the Lord Jesus (Hebrews 10:5), no feet to carry the message of redeeming love to lost men and women, no lips to deliver the sweetest invitation heaven can offer, no hand to place tenderly upon the shoulder of a weary, sin-worn man who thinks no one cares for his soul.

Thus, the Holy Spirit wants your body; indeed, must have it if He, against the rush of time, is to translate hopeless ones from the kingdom of darkness and place them in the kingdom of God's dear son. That is why Paul pleaded, **"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service"** (Romans 12:1).

- Have you refused His request?
- Have you hesitated and neglected to enter into such a hallowed relationship for so noble a purpose?
- Do you treat the Spirit as a stranger?

In an eastern town, two men of our acquaintance decided to enter the grocery business together, one furnishing the capital and the other contributing his experience and ability. Their names appeared in gold letters on the store window. Hardly a year later, one name was removed. Upon inquiry, we were informed tersely that the one "became tired of being treated as a silent partner."

We cannot but wonder if this does not characterize our treatment of Him Who dwells within to establish with us a Divine Partnership. It is eminently essential that we seriously and solemnly consider the Holy Spirit's relationship to us, that we remember His residence within, and that we recognize and respect His holy presence.

Is there a stranger in the temple?

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