

RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

How Obtained - How Maintained

STUDIES SETTING FORTH THE BELIEVER'S POSSESSIONS IN CHRIST

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Chapter Six -

THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

We have seen that GOD's wonderful plan of salvation is absolutely perfect. But we must admit that the vast majority of Christians are living on the carnal plane. So the question arises, "Is GOD's plan practical?" Is it possible for the average Christian to live his life on the highest plane? Perhaps some of you are saying, "The truth regarding life on the highest plane is Biblical and logical, but it does not match my experience nor that of many Christians of my acquaintance. Is not GOD's plan of salvation too perfect to be practical in a world like this? Is such fullness of CHRIST's life possible for each of us?"

Everything in GOD's Word proves its practicability and possibility for every Christian. Whoever has CHRIST's life in any measure may have it in its fullness.

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

"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power" (Colossians 2:9-10).

John the Baptist, in two wonderful proclamations, declared the entire scope of CHRIST's work when he said, **"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,"** and **"He that sent me to baptize with water... the same is he which baptizeth in the Holy Ghost."**

CHRIST's twofold work was to take away sin and to baptize in the Spirit. Part of CHRIST's work was to bring every Christian into as definite a relationship to the HOLY SPIRIT as he has to Himself, although it was to be a different one.

CHRIST corroborated John's statement in two invitations which He gave to sinners to come unto Him and drink of the Water of life.

"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall BE IN HIM a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14).

"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" (John 7:37-38).

CHRIST promised to bestow a gift upon the one who received Him as Saviour, which would bring perfect satisfaction and sufficiency to him and then through him overflow in rich blessing into other lives. CHRIST's offer to the Samaritan woman was a gift which would change her source of supplies from a water-pot to a well, and then convert her life into a channel through which rivers of Living Water should flow.

The HOLY SPIRIT - CHRIST's Gift to the Believer

What the gift was we are told explicitly.

"(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 7:39).

Please note that in this verse Jesus tells us three things:

- (1) What the gift was - **"The Spirit."**
- (2) To whom given - **"They that believe on him."**
- (3) When bestowed - **"When Jesus was glorified."**

His work as Sin-bearer must be accomplished first: then as the glorified Lord He would bestow this wondrous gift.

Further light was thrown upon the nature of the gift in CHRIST's last conversation with the disciples before His exodus. He told them that He was to live in them as an abiding spiritual Presence; that there would be a divine inflow of Life supernatural in quality and a divine outflow of Life supernatural in power. They were to live as He lived and to work as He worked. To provide power for such a life He promised that **"another Comforter"** would come to take up His permanent abode in them.

When CHRIST returned to glory, then He fulfilled His promise and sent back the Spirit. On the day of Pentecost the disciples in the upper room were baptized in the Spirit. From that day everyone who has been organically and vitally united by faith with the living Lord has received the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT.

"And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:15,17).

The moment one receives the Sin-bearer as his Saviour he is in the Spirit and the Spirit is in him. It is impossible to accept the Son and to refuse the Spirit.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.

Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans 8:9).

The Spirit-filled Life

In the divine plan there is as definite a purpose in the gift of the Spirit as in the gift of the SON.

- Through the SON the sinner has life; through the Spirit the believer has life more abundant.
- Through the SON the sinner leaves the sphere of the natural and enters the sphere of the spiritual;
- through the Spirit the believer is lifted to the highest heights of life on the spiritual plane.

It is GOD's purpose that every Christian should live a life of deep, growing spirituality. The HOLY SPIRIT lives within us to accomplish this in three ways. He reveals through the Word the fullness to be had in the glorified CHRIST; He creates in our hearts a desire for this fullness; then He acts as the channel for its transmission from Him to us.

Romans 7 is the picture of the carnal Christian; Romans 8 of the spiritual. In ten verses in Romans 7 "I" is used twenty-five times and the HOLY SPIRIT is not mentioned once. In Romans 8, "I" is used only twice, where it is needed, and the HOLY SPIRIT is mentioned sixteen times, thus we are compelled to believe that fullness of life in CHRIST means some advance in our relationship to the HOLY SPIRIT and we are constrained to ask GOD what it is.

In one terse command GOD shows us the highest point the believer can reach in relationship to the HOLY SPIRIT.

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18).

"Be filled with the Spirit." You have Him dwelling in you. But that is not enough. Give the Spirit full right of way, let Him fill you from center to circumference. Permit Him to energize you with His mighty power through filling you with Himself.

"Be filled with the Spirit." This is every Christian's birthright. By virtue of the new birth he has the right to such fullness. It is not the privilege of a few but the prerogative of all. Are you despising your birthright, as Esau did his, and selling it for a mess of pottage? Do you care more for pleasure or money or position than you do for the fullness of the HOLY SPIRIT?

"Be filled with the Spirit." This is every Christian's need. No one can live a truly spiritual life without the Spirit's fullness. One hundred and twenty were filled at Pentecost, only eleven of them were apostles. Some were women who went back home to cook, to sew, to care for a family; others were men who returned to the field and the shop. The names of only a very few are recorded in the Bible, but I have no doubt that the rivers of living water flowed from their lives into other lives. Do not think you are too young to be filled with the Spirit. It will save you from the years of wilderness wandering of many older Christians. Do not say that you are too old, that the hold of sinful habits is too strong upon you. Give the Spirit a chance. Only admit that to be filled with Him is your greatest need and submit your life to Him and He will do the rest.

"Be filled with the Spirit." This is every Christian's responsibility. **"Be not drunk with wine."** Do you obey this command? Surely you do. **"Be filled with the Spirit."** Do you obey this command? Why not, is it not equally binding upon you? Suppose, your pastor were habitually dead drunk. Would your church take any action regarding such conduct? Well, suppose he is not filled with the HOLY SPIRIT and never has experienced such fullness. What is done about it? Is not one command just as binding as the other? And is not GOD dishonored through disobedience to one just as much as to the other?

As no Christian is refused the blessing of such an experience, so none will be exempt from its responsibility. As refusal of life in CHRIST is the greatest sin of the unbeliever, so refusal of the abundant life through the Spirit is the greatest sin of the believer.

The fullness of the HOLY SPIRIT is not optional but obligatory. **"They were ALL filled with the Holy Ghost."**

"Filled" - "Full" - "Fullness."

"Be filled with the Spirit" - A Crisis.

"Full of the Holy Ghost" - A State.

"Filled with all the fulness" - A Process.

The apostles were with CHRIST for three years, but they were not filled with the HOLY SPIRIT until the day of Pentecost. This was a crisis.

But they were filled more than once, until we read of Stephen and of Paul that they were **"full of the Holy Ghost."** This was a state.

But there was an inexhaustible, infinite fullness from which they might draw according to their receptive capacity, so there was a continuous infilling. This was a process.

There should be a definite time when we are **"filled"** for the first time. But there should be repeated infillings that we may be habitually full and yet ever taking in more and more of the fullness of GOD. To be spiritual one must be filled and kept filled.

The Threefold Manifestation of the HOLY SPIRIT's Fullness

Sometimes there is great confusion here because one expects a spectacular manifestation of so wonderful an experience. There is also much unscriptural teaching on this subject which is leading many astray. Scripture clearly teaches a threefold manifestation.

The Realization of CHRIST's Abiding Presence

"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love" (Ephesians 3:16-17).

The lives of the early Christians seemed fairly surcharged with a vivid, joyous consciousness of the presence of their glorified Lord. He was very real to them. Is the spiritual presence of the living Lord such an intense reality to you? This is one of the rich rewards of a Spirit-filled life.

The Reproduction of CHRIST's Holy Life

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22, 23).

Compressed into these nine exquisite graces is a marvellous word-picture of the character of JESUS CHRIST in its essential beauty, symmetry and perfection. Such character is not the product of human nature but the fruit of the divine nature. When the HOLY SPIRIT fills us, He reproduces CHRIST's life within us.

The Re-Enactment of CHRIST's Supernatural Power

"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 Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

As He sent His disciples forth to do a supernatural task, He promised to endue them with a supernatural power. All power belongs unto CHRIST, but He delegates His power to us through the HOLY SPIRIT. Have you this power?

Wherever He is in fullness He manifests Himself in power.

The fullness of the HOLY SPIRIT is the only thing that will change a carnal Christian into a spiritual one. On the day of Pentecost the apostles were filled with the HOLY SPIRIT, and a casual comparison of their lives before and after Pentecost reveals a marvellous change.

They had had daily companionship with CHRIST; He had taught them deep truths and shared His prayer life with them; they had lived for three years under the spell of His matchless personality. Yet witness the failure, defeat and sin, jealousy, ambition, selfishness, pride, cowardice, self-will, self-love, self-seeking—all were there largely as before. But at Pentecost self was dethroned and CHRIST was enthroned and became the Life of their life.

The result was sevenfold. They became men of perception, purity, passion, prayer, power, persecution and praise. They knew their Lord and apprehended the deep truths of salvation.

They became men of pure heart.

- Pride was displaced by humility;
- selfishness by love;
- cowardice by courage;
- and worldliness by heavenly-mindedness.

Within their renewed, satisfied spirits was kindled a passionate desire to win others to the Lord

who had saved and transformed them. This sent them to GOD in Prayer which became their chief delight and constant occupation. Prayer released power and rivers of living water began coursing through these purified channels into Jerusalem, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth. Such manifest power drew down upon them fierce persecution, but even prison cells could not restrain their songs of praise. Pentecost had changed them from carnal into spiritual Christians. Has it so changed you?

"In him a well." - the HOLY SPIRIT, a well of Living Water, a continuously upspringing fountain, is in every Christian. There is then no need of dearth. The promise is you **"shall never thirst."**

Did you come to this conference with a water-pot hoping to take home a sufficient supply for the coming year but expecting that to grow less and less until driven by excessive thirst you would come next year to be revived again? Why not leave the waterpot here and carry away the well? The Spirit-filled life is one of satisfaction and sufficiency.

"Out of his belly shall flow rivers." Satisfaction in CHRIST means the overflow of CHRIST. If there is a divine inflow, there is always a divine outflow.

Is such a life yours? If not, do you desire it?

It is for you if you truly thirst. **"If any man thirst"** - this is the simple condition. **"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."**

Drink until you are satisfied, until you are full, yea, until you overflow. The fullness of the HOLY SPIRIT is for every one who thirsts and who drinks of the Water of Life.

~ end of chapter 6 ~
