

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

by Given O. Blakely

“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are HELPERS OF YOUR JOY: for by faith ye stand. (2 Cor 1:21-24)

Lesson 1 of 34

INTRODUCTION

The Epistles were letters: 1—to the churches (Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae, Thessalonica), 2—to clusters of brethren (“strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia”) – First Peter; the scattered twelve tribes – James; the seven churches of Asia – Revelation), 3—all who have obtained like precious faith (Second Peter), 4—all who are sanctified (Jude), or 5—specific brethren in Christ Timothy, Titus, Philemon, the elect lady (Second John), Gaius (Third John).

These Epistles assist us in identifying the nature of spiritual life. In them we find matters that drive a wedge between men and God – issues that must be resolved. The proper focus of spiritual life is also declared. Exhortations and admonitions are given to stimulate the saints to avail themselves of the benefits of the New Covenant, and avoid the various ensnarements that lurk in the dark place of this present evil world.

The Epistles identify both areas of vulnerability and of advantage, of good and of evil. They commend what is good and condemn what is evil. They also provide a proper assessment of the various churches.

All of this might seem quite apparent – and, indeed, on a scholastic level, it is very evident. However, the power of spiritual life is not found on the scholastic or pedant level. If you are familiar with the general content of the Epistles – which is addressed to believers, or those who are in Christ – you know they are in sharp conflict with the thrust of most of Christendom. The things that are held in high regard by the “growing church” are not even mentioned in God’s word to the churches—i.e. what the Spirit is saying “to the churches” (Rev 2:7, 11,17,29; 3:6,13,22). Ponder what is NOT mentioned in the Epistles.

CONSPICUOUSLY ABSENT

1. Reference to the size of any of the churches.
2. Reference to the “church staff.”
3. Any reference to the involvement of the churches in the community in which they were found.
4. Reference to the property held by the church.
5. Any reference to specialized “ministries” of the church.

6. Reference to the church's involvement governmental affairs.
7. Any reference to the facilities of any of the churches.
8. Reference to any special literature used by any of the churches.
9. The mention of any special programs for youth, seniors, etc.
10. Reference to any special outreach programs.

More could be added to this list. However, this will suffice for the point I wish to make. I am by no means suggesting that any of these things are unlawful or to be criticized. Rather, I want to point out that these are generally the sole means through which modern churches are evaluated, commended, or criticized. If you were to remove these things from your consideration of the average church, what would be left to say? Those of us who have been around for a while find this to be a most arresting consideration.

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Lesson 2 of 34

Ponder what IS said of the churches in the Scripture.

CONSISTENT REFERENCES

1. WHO WE ARE in Christ Jesus – The called of Jesus Christ (Rom 1:6;8:18), beloved of God (Rom 1:7), saints (1 Cor 14:33), heirs (Rom 8:17; Gal 3:29), joint heirs with Christ (Rom 8:17), sanctified in Christ (1 Cor 1:2), partakers of the heavenly calling (Heb 3:1), brethren (Eph 6:23; 1 Thess 5:26; 1 Pet 1:22), fellow citizens (Eph 2:19, etc.).
2. General Kingdom RESPONSIBILITIES – Put off the old man, put on the new man (Eph 4:22-23; Col 3:9-10), run the race with patience (Heb 12:1-2), fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life (1 Tim 6:12), make your calling and election sure (2 Pet 1:10), walk as dear children (Eph 5:1), quench not the spirit (1 Thess 5:19), grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet 3:18), etc.).
3. What GOD HAS DONE – Delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son (Col 1:13), called us to glory and virtue (2 Pet 1:3), accepted us in the Beloved (Eph 1:6), made Christ to be sin for us (2 Cor 5:21), called us to peace (1 Cor 7:15), called us to holiness (1 Thess 4:7), etc.).
4. WHAT JESUS HAS DONE for us – Redeemed us from the curse of the Law (Gal 3:13), made us free (Gal 5:1), given us an understanding (1 John 5:20), made peace (Col 1:20), washed us from our sins (Rev 1:5), is interceding for us (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25), is mediating the New covenant (Heb 8:6), is shepherding the sheep (Heb 13:20), etc.).

5. THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT – The earnest of our inheritance (2 Cor 5:5), strengthens the inner man (Eph 3:16), leads us in the crucifixion of the flesh (Rom 8:13-14), causes us to abound in hope (Rom 15:13), produces fruit within us (Gal 5:22-23), brings joy (Rom 14:17), intercedes for us (Rom 8:26-27), etc.).

6. PIVOTAL CONSIDERATIONS – The coming of the Lord (2 Thess 1:10; 2 Tim 4:1; Heb 9:28; 10:37; James 5:7-8; 1 Pet 3:10-13;), the passing of this world (1 Cor 7:31; 1 John 2:17), the day of judgment (Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10; Heb 9:27; 2 Pet 2:9; 3:7; 1 John 4:17), the inheritance reserved for us (Col 1:12; 3:24; Rev 21:7), reaping what we sow (Rom 2:6-9; 2 Cor 9:6; Gal 6:7), obtaining a reward (1 Cor 3:8; Col 3:24; Heb 10:35), the earnest of our inheritance (Eph 1:14), etc.).

The point is that there is certain thrust in the words that are spoken to the churches.

AN OBVIOUS THRUST

1. It comes across that provision has been made for believers to ready themselves for the coming of the Lord, the day of judgment, the obtaining of the inheritance, and the receiving of rewards.
2. In view of this, sin is totally unacceptable, and must be dealt with to the glory of God.
3. Salvation makes no provision for a lack of involvement on the part of the ones being saved.
4. Divine provisions are to be received and maintained.
5. Gifts have been given to the church that are designed to implement the purposes of God.

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

Whatever interferes with the development of these things is to be eliminated in individual believers, and cast out of the church. Individuals are to wage war against such intrusions. Whatever assists in the maturation of the saints in these matters is to be received and cultured.

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WHY SAY THESE THINGS?

Why is it necessary to say these things concerning doctrinal thrust and emphasis? Why is it so important to remind the people of God what He is doing in Christ Jesus, and where all of His work in us is leading? They are very obvious to the intellect. However, you will be hard pressed to find a group of “Christian” people having an emphasis that remotely resembles these thrusts. Churches that accentuate such things – faith, standing, being anointed, joy, and hope – are not

generally held out as noble examples of success. There is simply too much stress being placed upon the social and domestic life related to this world. Try as men may, there is not a person among the sons of Adam that can successfully defend that kind of accentuation. That such things do build careers and institutions cannot be denied. But that such is in any way related to what the Living God is doing in Christ Jesus is emphatically denied!

The text before us will speak of things that are relatively unknown in the average church. It will address the following matters:

1. **SPIRITUAL ESTABLISHMENT** – “He which ESTABLISHETH us with you in Christ” (1:21a). This speaks of maturation, growing up into Christ in all things, being stable, and able to distinguish good and evil.
2. **ANOINTING** – “He . . . hath ANOINTED us” (1:21b). This addresses something that God Himself does – something that must be experienced if one is to be included in the family of God.
3. **SEALING** – “Who also hath SEALED us” (1:22a). This has to do with our identity from heaven’s point of view. It is what makes us discernible to angelic hosts that camp round about the people of God.
4. **THE EARNEST OF THE SPIRIT** – “Who hath . . . given us the EARNEST OF THE SPIRIT in our hearts” (1:22b). This has to do with experiencing now, in this world, the firstfruits of an eternal inheritance. It is what enables us to survive, and have worked within us what leads to glorious compatibility with the Living God.
5. **HELPING OUR JOY** – “Not that we would have dominion over your faith, but are HELPERS OF YOUR JOY” (1:24a). This has to do with spiritual stability and consistency. Rejoicing in the Lord is a vital aspect of spiritual life, and is inextricably associated with both faith and hope.
6. **STANDING BY FAITH** – “for BY FAITH YE STAND” (1:24b). This has to do with the maintenance of spiritual life. It relates to resisting the attacks of the evil one, discerning what must be done, and remaining separate from the world.

All of these have relevancy within the context of Divine purpose, which drives everything that God is doing through Jesus Christ (Rom 8:28; Rom 9:11; Eph 1:9,11; 3:11; Tim 1:9) . None of them have relevancy in an institutional environment. Men cannot capitalize on any of them, nor can any of them accrue to the glory of man or the implementation of purely human objectives. Yet all of them are absolutely essential to being saved. Therefore I ask:

1. Who can conceive of a salvation that does not provide for spiritual establishment and solidity in a temporal and erratic world?
2. Of what value is a salvation that does not include the favor of God that is evident in His anointing?
3. Who is there among us who would desire a salvation that did not include a down payment of the inheritance to which we have been called?
4. Is there a person who does not see the need for our joy being helped – since it is our “strength” (Neh 8:10)?
5. Is there an insightful person who does not see the need for standing firm, and not being moved away from the hope of the Gospel?

Yet, there are a significant number of assemblies who never hear so much as a syllable concerning these Kingdom realities! There are some who would charge you with being sectarian if you suggested there was an “anointing” to be had from God, or that the Holy Spirit is given to us as a pledge of the glory to come. There are preachers, elders, and other leaders without number who do not have the faintest idea what these things are about. There are youth leaders who never acquaint young people with them. There are entire congregations that only have a smattering of people who have even heard of such matters.

I realize these things are not pleasant to say, and that some might object to pointing them out. But there will be no such objections on the day of judgment. At that time there will not be a solitary person who has come to comprehend these things that will be sorry they did. There will also be multitudes who will weep and lament that they lived in ignorance of them, for they are what would have prepared them for glory. O, the dread that will be among those who sing the doleful dirge, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved” (Jer 8:20). Make no mistake about this, these are things that are intended to be experienced now, while we are living by faith.

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STABILITY IS AN ESSENTIALITY

“Now HE WHICH STABLISHETH US with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God . . .” (2 Cor 1:21-24)

I want to impress upon you that we are speaking of something that GOD IS DOING through Jesus Christ – ESTABLISHING US! Other version read, “stand firm in Christ” (NIV), “makes us steadfast and establishes us” (AMPLIFIED), “makes our faith strong” (BBE). The word from which “stablisheth” is translated means “to make firm, establish, confirm, make sure” (THAYER), “Strengthen inwardly, make unwavering, establish” (FRIBERG). THIS IS WHAT GOD IS DOING WITHIN THOSE IN CHRIST. Yet, if there is one thing that is glaringly absent in the nominal church, it is stability, standing firm, and being unwavering. Churches of significant size have all manner of programs designed to recover and strengthen their members. Instability and a lack of being established is the reason for all sectarianism, unfaithfulness, wavering, and falling – things that are abounding in professed Christendom. A stable, established, firm, and mature believer stands out in the average “church” like a sore thumb. Such are a kind of oddity. The reason for this is that God is not working as is described in our text – and the reason for that is that the appointed means through which He works is largely absent:—i.e. the comprehension of the Gospel of Christ (Eph 3:18), living by every word of God (Luke 4:4), living in fellowship with Christ (1 Cor 1:9), not quenching or grieving the Spirit (Eph 4:20; 1 Thess 5:19), growing up into Christ (Eph 4:15), seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt 6:33), affection being set on things above (Col 3:1-2), crucifying the flesh (Gal 5:24) . . . etc., etc. The “programs” the average church has adopted have managed to stifle the work of God! If that was not so, then God would be doing what our text affirms He does.

IT IS GOD who has “sealed” us, and IT IS GOD who has “given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” IT IS GOD who enabled Paul to be a helper of the joy of His people. IT IS GOD who has determined that we will stand by faith. If this work is not being done, then there is an environment where it cannot be done!

It is essential that those who come in the name of the Lord join with Him in this work. If we are, in fact, “laborers together with God” (1 Cor 3:9), we cannot afford to be at variance with Him in His revealed agenda. Let it be clear in your mind, if what we are doing is not in strict harmony with what God is said to be doing, our labor is in vain – totally and completely pointless! Not only that, we will be judged for daring to have adopted an agenda that He has neither revealed nor approved. God has revealed what He is doing in Jesus Christ, and it is to be taken seriously. His objective is not simply to turn people from darkness, but to turn them to the light. It is not only to deliver them from the power of Satan, but to turn them to God. His purpose is not only for them to obtain the forgiveness of sins, but to also secure the inheritance that is reserved for those who are sanctified by faith (Acts 26:18).

I say these things because of their absolute importance. There is not the slightest indication that God has ever given gifts to the church that specialize in a single part of what He is doing, to the neglect of other parts. For example, there were no Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, or teachers, who turned people from darkness, but left it to others to turn them to the light. No spiritual endowment is calculated to turn people from the power of Satan, leaving it to someone else to turn them to God. No ordained office brings people to the point where they can receive remission of sins, but fails to enable them to obtain the inheritance.

While this may sound a bit radical, the very text with which we are dealing confirms this is the case. The same Apostle who turned them from darkness, exercised himself to turn them to the light.

1. This is why, after they had turned the Gentiles to the Lord, Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do” (Acts 15:36).
2. It is why Paul, after leaving Ephesus, “went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples” (Acts 18:23).
3. This is also a work in which Barnabas continued to be engaged with Paul: “And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:21-22).
4. Judas and Silas did the same: “And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them” (Acts 15:32).

There simply is no justifiable reason for the consistent absence of spiritual solidity in the churches – any churches.

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EDIFICATION AND FEEDING IS HELPING

“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God” (Verse 21, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

This is what the Epistles are all about: strengthening, confirming, establishing, and edifying the body of Christ. This is what Jesus meant when He said to Peter, “Feed My lambs . . . Feed My sheep . . . Feed My sheep” (John 21:15-17). It is why Jesus, after sending His disciples to “preach the Gospel to every creature,” said, “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matt 28:20). When Jesus “gave gifts unto men” (apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors/teachers), they were all given “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: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may GROW UP INTO HIM in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom THE WHOLE BODY fitly joined together and compacted by that which EVERY JOINT supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of EVERY PART, maketh increase of the body unto the EDIFYING OF ITSELF in love” (Eph 4:16).

Any departure from that path is simply wrong, regardless of how successful it may appear to those who do not traffic in heavenly realms (Col 3:1-2).

It simply is not acceptable that the modern church has not done well in this area. Stable and consistent believers are the exception, and rarely, if ever, the rule. The remarkable success of false teachers, erroneous emphases, and institutional gurus, confirm this to be the case.

But God will have none of this miserable failure. He has said too much on the subject. Terms such as “sanctification” (1 Thess 4:3-4), “heirs” (Tit 3:7), “joint heirs” (Rom 8:17b), “heirs of God” (Rom 8:17a), “salt of the earth” (Matt 5:13), “light of the world” (Matt 5:14), and “laborers together with God” (1 Cor 3:9) indicate a condition that is not being accentuated in the modern church.

Furthermore, the purpose for which we are being cultured in Christ Jesus demands a change “from glory unto glory, even as by the Spirit of our God” – that is, an ever increasing stage-to-stage process through which men are conformed to the image of Christ (2 Cor 3:18; Rom 8:29-30). We have been “delivered from the law” (Rom 7:6), and “from this present evil world” (Gal 1:4), in order that we might be “married” to Christ, and “bring forth fruit unto God” (Rom 7:4). That is why we have been freed from the grip of “the law of sin and death” (Rom 8:2).

The appointed future of the saints involves reigning with Christ (2 Tim 2:12), and “the world to come” being put into their care (Heb 2:5-8). The kingdom of God will be given to “the saints of the Most High God” (Dan 7:22; 27). They will “reign with” Christ (2 Tim 2:12), being “joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom 8:17). None of these conditions justify a weak, uncommitted, and uninformed people. In the vestibule of spiritual life there are certain characteristics that necessarily attend being “babes.” However, these traits are NOT to continue. Rather, we are to “grow up into Christ in all things” (Eph 4:15). God has provided thorough and effective means through which this maturity is sure to take place. The ONLY way those objectives will not be met is for the appointed means to be neglected – and such neglect is serious beyond human comprehension!

Where spiritual infancy is perpetual, and due growth is not realized, there is only one explanation for the condition. The Word has neither been desired nor ingested (1 Pet 2:2). It is even possible that it has not been preached (2 Tim 4:2). The Holy Spirit has been both grieved and quenched (Eph 4:30; 1 Thess 5:19). The fellowship of Christ, into which we have been called (1 Cor 1:9), has been spurned in favor of other things. The individual has been pulled away by “the cares of this world,” “the deceitfulness of riches,” or the “lusts of other things,” and thus the Word of God has been choked and become “unfruitful” (Mark 4:19).

This is true because salvation is calculated to produce growth and spiritual maturation. The Holy Spirit has been sent into the hearts of believers to assist in this process. The fellowship of Jesus lends itself to spiritual development. The Word of Christ, when dwelling richly within us (Col 3:16), moves us toward spiritual manhood, where we “put away childish things” (1 Cor 13:11).

I realize these words are strong. However, we are living in a time that requires strong words. There is a sort of spiritual stupor that has enveloped the professing church, so that there is hardly any awareness of God, Christ, or the Spirit. The purpose of God is virtually unknown, and the uninformed appear to constitute the majority of most congregations. These conditions have opened the door for charlatans and religious pretenders.

Our text will confirm the seriousness of this condition. It is simply not an acceptable one, and is attended by great and unavoidable jeopardy. We do give God thanks and praise for everyone and every place where intended spiritual growth is taking place.

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Lesson 6 of 34

ESTABLISHED IN CHRIST

“Now He which STABLISHETH us with you IN CHRIST, and hath anointed us, is God.” (Verse 1, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

Paul now engages in some sanctified reasoning. He will bring to mind Kingdom realities that bear directly upon “the newness of life” (Rom 6:4; 7:6). He will first affirm what IS. Only then will he come to grips with what SHOULD BE. That is a Divine manner of teaching: first the

proclamation of a condition that exists, and second the circumstance it is intended to produce.

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“Now HE which . . .” When establishing the verities of life in Christ Jesus, the emphasis is not what is done, but WHO has done it. It ought to be noted that NONE of these verities have been accomplished, or can be accomplished, by men. Neither, indeed, can they be realized by means of a routine or regimen, I will comment further on this later.

ESTABLISHMENT

“ . . . stablisheth us . . .” Other versions read, “stand firm” (NIV), “makes our faith strong” (BBE), “confirmeth us” (DOUAY), “gives us security” (NAB), “a sure place” (NJB), and “the ability to stand firm” (NLT).

The word “establish” comes from a unique Greek word – (beb-ai-on) – which means to “make firm, establish, confirm, and make sure.” Combined with “in Christ,” the word means “causing us to be steadfast in our fellowship with Christ” (THAYER). The word used here is also translated “confirm” (Mk 16:21; Rom 15:8; 1 Cor 1:6,8; Heb 2:3). In English, to “confirm” means to “make firm or firmer: strengthen” (MERRIAM-WEBSTER). Texts in which the Greek word used here is translated “confirm” are as follows.

1. **THE WORD CONFIRMED.** “And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and CONFIRMING the word with signs following. Amen” (Mark 16:20). Here the word does not have to do with stability, but with ratifying the reality of God’s already stable word. That word was made firm in the minds of men.
2. **THE PROMISES CONFIRMED.** “Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to CONFIRM the promises made unto the fathers” (Rom 15:8). The promises were not made more stable, but were confirmed, or corroborated to the ones for whom they were intended. The promises became more firm in the minds of men.
3. **THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CONFIRMED.** “Even as the testimony of Christ was CONFIRMED in you” (1 Cor 1:6). Here the Gospel, or testimony of Christ, was confirmed to be true in the lives of those who embraced it. That is, its truth was made known through their conduct – their manner of life. It was actually lived out.
4. **THE SAINTS CONFIRMED.** “Who shall also CONFIRM you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 1:8). Here the point is not the establishment itself, but its duration – “unto the end,” or the coming of the Lord.
5. **THE WORD OF SALVATION CONFIRMED.** “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was CONFIRMED unto us by them that heard him” (Heb 2:3). This parallels the text in Mark that declares God confirmed the word spoken by the Apostles with appropriate “signs.”

The Greek word used here is translated “establish” in some other texts.

1. “Rooted and built up in Him, and ESTABLISHED in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving” (Col 2:7). Here, the people themselves are the point. They

are the ones who are made firm in Christ, established, or made strong.

2. “Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be ESTABLISHED with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein” (Heb 13:9). Once again, the saved themselves are the point. It is their hearts that are made firm, dependable, and unmoveable.

THE NECESSITY OF ESTABLISHMENT

Here is a fact that is so little acknowledged that it is mind-boggling! The percentage of unstable Christians is at such a staggering level, none even dares to attempt its estimation. Of all the boasts that are being made within the Christian community, you will not hear many concerning stability, being constant, or being firm and dependable in the faith. Erratic and inconsistent living are common, together with the stumbling and errors that accompany such a life. However, establishment is a priority with the Living God, and where establishment is NOT found, “falling” is sitting on the front steps. God has made no provision for a salvation that can be maintained in a weakened and unstable state. Salvation itself is designed to produce growth, maturity, stability, steadfastness, dependability, constancy, and spiritual adulthood. Thus the saved are exhorted, “Brethren, BE NOT CHILDREN in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding BE MEN” (1 Cor 4:20). Spiritual childishness is a state in which spiritual vulnerability exists. That is why we read of the gracious intent of the gifts that have been given to the church: “That we henceforth be NO MORE CHILDREN, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may GROW UP into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ” (Eph 4:14-15).

I will leave it up to you to reason out, and arrive at some kind of conclusion, concerning the response of both God and Christ to any people who proceed in their lives just as though this text had not been given to us. Further, the state of the nominal church confirms that men have reasoned in such a manner. What has led them to do so? What has influenced any rational person to imagine they can REMAIN in a state of spiritual infancy and still be saved? Where has the Living God ever said anything that could possibly lead to that conclusion?

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THE PARABLE OF THE SEED

“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. “ (Verse 21, Cor 1:21-24)

We are addressing the matter of spiritual stability – being mature, grounded and settled, having understanding, comprehending, and producing fruit. These are all facets of salvation. Jesus taught that those who are not rooted, and do not bear fruit, are ultimately rejected by God.

The parable of the sower presents four classes of people who are exposed to the Gospel. Only one group is accepted.

1. **THOSE WHO HEAR BUT DO NOT UNDERSTAND.** “When ANY ONE heareth the word of the kingdom, and UNDERSTANDETH IT NOT, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side” (Matt 13:19). Luke writes, “Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved” (Luke 8:12).
2. **THOSE WHO HEAR, RECEIVE THE WORD WITH JOY, BUT OBTAIN NO ROOT, AND THUS FALL AWAY.** “But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; YET HATH HE NOT ROOT IN HIMSELF, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended” (Matt 13:21). Luke writes, “They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away” (Luke 8:13).
3. **THOSE WHO HEAR, YET ARE OVERCOME BY COMPETING INTERESTS.** “He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, CHOKE THE WORD, and he becometh unfruitful” (Matt 13:22). Luke writes, “And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection” (Luke 8:14).
4. **THOSE WHO HEAR, UNDERSTAND, AND PRODUCE FRUIT.** “But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.(Matt 13:23). Luke writes, “But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience”(Luke 8:15).

What was the difference in these four categories. If you consider it from the conclusion of the matter, the first three were all in the same category: None of them brought forth fruit – which was the real reason for sowing the seed in the first place. It was not enough to merely occupy, or be in, the field, as anyone familiar with agriculture knows. People of God are not like flowers, grown to be seen. They are like branches on a vine, or branches grafted into a tree, to bring forth fruit (Rom 7:4). If you look at this from the standpoint of the people themselves, the first three classes were not established, and the last one was. Three groups were not firm, and one was firm. For this reason, three of them did not produce fruit, and only one did.

The four classes represent four generations that are in place until the end of the world. At that time, those who were fruitless, whatever they may have professed, will be thrust from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power (2 Thess 1:8-9).

Those who are content with spiritual anonymity and fruitlessness are in a condition that is serious beyond all human comprehension. If lives are spiritually shallow, hearts are knit to the world, and fruit is not being produced for God . . . well, you must resolve not to be in that category! Those who have no root, or depth, finally “wither away” (Matt 13:6; Mk 4:6).

Believers are to be “ROOTED and grounded in love” (Eph 3:17). The Divinely appointed

objective is, “Rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith” (Col 2:7). The presentation of a people to the Lord as “unblameable and unproveable in His sight,” is contingent upon this condition: “If ye continue in the faith GROUNDED AND SETTLED, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel” (Col 1:21-23).

Every believer is allotted sufficient time to mature in Christ, be stable, grounded, and settled. If they do not make this advancement, it will not be overlooked by the Lord. God will say to them, “For when FOR THE TIME YE OUGHT TO BE TEACHERS, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe” (Heb 5:12-13). OTHER VERSIONS READ: “by this time you ought to be teachers” (New King James), “You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others” (New Living Translation), and “For even though by this time you ought to be teaching others” (Amplified Bible).

If you are in this category, you have to get out of it! There is not anything in salvation that contributes to, or allows for such a state. To remain in a condition of spiritual juvenileness requires an extraordinary effort, including the following: Resisting the Spirit (Acts 7:51), Grieving the Spirit (Eph 4:30), quenching the Spirit (1 Thess 5:19), not keeping oneself in the love of God (Jude 21), not perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Cor 7:1-2), not resisting the devil (James 4:7), allowing the development of an evil heart of unbelief (Heb 3:12), allowing priorities that caused one to not seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt 6:33), and much more.

If one views those omissions as really “doing nothing,” consider this. In Christ there is an inner drawing (John 12:32). There is the convincing ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-10). There is the leading of the Spirit (Rom 8:13-14). The Spirit also changes one from one increasing stage of glory to another as they behold the glory of the Lord (2 Cor 3:18). The grace of God not only brings salvation, but teaches us to reject ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this world (Tit 2:11-12). When these ministries are not being realized, it is because there has been resistance on the could-be participant. The choice of lesser things has been made. The world has been pursued, and the person is now being dominated by the wicked one (Eph 2:1-3). This required a consistent and indefatigable effort. Energy was spent in pursuing other things. A choice was made to fill the heart and mind with other things. A lot of deliberate effort is expended in failing to be rooted and grounded.

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are HELPERS OF YOUR JOY: for by faith ye stand. (2 Cor 1:21-24)

Lesson 8 of 34

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

The necessity of establishment in Christ is not a vague point in Scripture. There can be no justification for the prevailing ignorance of this necessity within the professed church. The gravity of the subject is confirmed in the book of Hebrews, written to a spiritually retrogressing people who needed to have the position and superiority of the Lord Jesus declared once again with power. They had drifted into an area where Jesus was not the prominent Person.

After affirming the marvelous High Priesthood of Christ, the Spirit chides the people for their lethargic ways. “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat” (Heb 5:12). Any insightful and honest believer knows that this condition exists all around us. Churches are filled with people who are in this status – still needing to be taught the elemental principles of the Kingdom. Satan has even fabricated distorted messages that declare the church is really a place for sinners, not saints. Within this emphasis messages are tailored for the uninformed in such a way as to keep them in that state.

However, the Spirit addresses this matter in quite another way. “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection” (Heb 6:1). He states the case in such a way as to provoke fear and trembling in those who insist on remaining near the shoreline, or in the entrance way to eternal life. “And this will we do, IF GOD PERMIT” (Heb 6:3). That is, if the people had not remained too long in an undeveloped state. Like it or not, there really is no guarantee of recovery held out to those who are content to remain babes.

The Spirit then provides the reason for such strong words. “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame” (Heb 6:6). Further, if God says “IT IS IMPOSSIBLE,” that is a precise statement of the fact.

Those who were actually “added to the church” (Acts 2:47) – all of them – started with remarkable advantages, as stated in the above text.

1. They were “enlightened” – enabled to see their condition, their need of a Savior, and the very real salvation that was obtainable in Him.
2. They received “the heavenly gift,” which I take to refer to “the gift of righteousness,” conferred upon those who believe the record God has given of His Son (Rom 5:17; Phil 3:9).
3. They were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, as He was sent into their hearts because they were sons (Gal 4:6).
4. They have tasted of the Word of God itself (Lk 4:4), by which they were begotten, and by which men live (James 1:18).
5. Heavenly influences were brought to bear upon them, as they tasted of “the powers of the world to come.” From angelic hosts to “the spirits of just men made perfect,” advantages have been given to the believer that transcend all human thought.

Precisely what is there about these five realities that could possibly produce anything but

spiritual stability? Every one of them not only was effectual in the beginning of spiritual life, but were designed to carry that life forward to maturity.

If, however, men choose NOT to “go on to perfection,” there is only one alternative – FALLING AWAY. It is not that the person who is NOT moving on to maturity might fall away. The argument is that he will, in fact, do so. The only way to avoid that dreadful and cursed condition is to “go on to perfection”– or, in the words of our text, be “established.”

Now, I do not believe the average churchman has any idea of this requirement. It also appears, by judging from the drivel that drips from the pulpits of the land, that countless preachers are also ignorant of this need. But there is no excuse for any of this. God has not only said much on the subject, He has provided the means through which establishment can be realized.

Does anyone still doubt the need for establishment? Let the Word of God speak to your heart.

1. “For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, TO THE END YE MAY BE ESTABLISHED” (Rom 1:11).
2. “And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlaborer in the gospel of Christ, TO ESTABLISH YOU, and to comfort you concerning your faith” (1 Thess 3:2).
3. “Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be ESTABLISHED WITH GRACE; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein” (Heb 13:9).
4. “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being ROOTED AND GROUNDED in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height” (Eph 3:18).
5. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in Him, and STABLISHED in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving” (Col 2:6-7).
6. “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in His sight: IF ye continue in the faith GROUNDED AND SETTLED, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard . . .” (Col 1:23).

It is sufficiently clear that establishment is not a mere option. It is a necessity. We have also been given spiritual advantages to assist us in fulfilling this requirement. There is no justifiable reason for people continuing in a state of spiritual infancy. In fact, there are stern warnings against it (1 Cor 14:20; Eph 4:14; Heb 6:1-6). It is time to cease coddling spiritual toddlers, and begin aggressively ministering in such a manner that will move them forward to establishment in the faith, and spiritual maturity.

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 9 of 34

WITH YOU

“Now He which stablisheth us WITH YOU in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God.” (Verse 21, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

“ . . . with you . . . ” What Paul is writing about is not an Apostolic requirement, or one that is intended only for certain leaders within the body of Christ. Be clear about this in your mind. God is not establishing only Apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor/teachers. Establishment is a common need that all of the saints have, and thus is a common work to be fulfilled in them all. With the advent of a clergy-laity system, this perspective has been so clouded that few are able to see it. An institutional hierarchy has been foisted upon the church that has been a thief and a robber. That system is largely responsible for the current condition of the church.

Recall that Peter spoke similarly when he wrote to those who had “obtained LIKE PRECIOUS FAITH” (2 Pet 1:1). That is, those to whom he wrote had obtained the same faith that he himself possessed. Other versions read, “a faith of the same kind as ours” (New American Standard), “a faith of equal standing with ours” (Revised Standard Version), “with us have a part in the same holy faith” (Basic Bible English), “obtained equal faith with us” (Douay), “a faith of equal value” (New American Bible), and “who share the same precious faith we have” (New Living Translation).

When it comes to covenantal benefits, they are for all of the people of God. The Apostles had a different ministry, but they did not have a different salvation. They were a part of Christ’s body (1 Cor 12:18,28), and not separate from it. They were classed with other gifts given to the church, which included evangelists, and pastor/teachers. They are “first” (1 Cor 12:28), but not “only.” When those at the house of Cornelius heard the Gospel, the same thing happened to them that had happened to the early disciples on the day of Pentecost. Moved by the Holy Spirit, Luke writes of that event, “And they of the circumcision 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” (Acts 10:45). Those with Peter who made up the “us” of reference, were not apostles, for Peter reported the event later to the other apostles. When reporting that occasion to the brethren in Jerusalem, Peter said, “And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, AS ON US AT THE BEGINNING. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but YE SHALL BE BAPTIZED WITH THE HOLY GHOST. 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 point to be seen here is that the apostles sought for the same spiritual advantages to be given to the rest of “the body of Christ” as were given to them. They had a different ministry, or placement in the body of Christ, but the other members of the body required spiritual enablement to fulfill their ministry as well – which is the whole point of the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians. John wrote of his readers having “fellowship with us” (1 John 1:3). In letters to the churches, the readers were classed with the writers in frequent references to “us” (Rom 6:3; 8:4,18,26,31-39; 12:6-7; 13:12-13; 15:7; 1 Cor 6:14, etc., etc).

Maturity is required in us, as well as it was in the apostles. That is why we have the epistles. In them, apostles shared what they had been given to see, in order that the saints might have fellowship with them (1 John 1:3), and “walk in the truth” with them (3 John 1:3). Faith kept

them as well as it keeps us (1 Pet 1:5).

The desire of the apostles was that the people would see what they saw and thus “be established” in the truth (Rom 1:11; Heb 13:9; 2 Pet 1:12). Thus Paul writes to the Corinthians, “Now He which STABLISHETH US WITH YOU in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” Other versions read, “Now He who makes our faith strong together with you” (Basic Bible English), “it is God who sets both us and you in firm union with the Messiah” (Complete Jewish Bible), “Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ” (NIV), “and He who is confirming you with us into Christ, and did anoint us, *is* God” (Young’s Literal).

From this perspective, maturity involves coming to the point where what the apostles proclaimed is discerned, embraced, and becomes an environment in which we rejoice.

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 10 of 34

IN CHRIST

“Now He which stablisheth us with you IN CHRIST, and hath anointed us, is God . . . (Verse, 21, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

“ . . . in Christ . . . ” The spiritual environment in which we are established is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. God has nothing to give that does not come to us through Him, or as we abide in Christ. No Divine requirement can be met outside of Him. It is ever true, as Jesus said, “for without Me, ye can do nothing” (John 15:5).

PERTINENT AFFIRMATIONS

The Holy Spirit is very precise concerning this matter of being “in Christ.” I have noted over the years, and throughout church history, that a religious institution or organization does not EMPHASIZE being “in Christ.” This is because such an emphasis – being “in Christ” – will not contribute to the support or growth of a humanly developed institution. An organization can only be buttressed by some other EMPHASIS:—i.e. a particular ordinance, the family, reaching the lost, church government, what is represented as lofty spiritual experiences, etc. etc. Neither can you build a school of higher learning upon the Lord Jesus Christ. He simply is not that kind of “foundation.” The Lord Jesus has His own building program (Matt 16:118), and it has absolutely nothing to do with an institution or organization that will not transport into glory.

We were “baptized into Christ” (Gal 3:27), and into His death (Rom 6:3). We were “risen” with Christ” (Col 2:12). We are “joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom 8:17), “crucified with Christ” (Gal 2:20), “quicken together with Christ” (Eph 2:5), and our life is “hid with Christ in God” (Col 3:3). Redemption is “in Christ Jesus” (Rom 3:24), the love of God is “in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8:39), we are “sanctified in Christ Jesus” (1 Cor 1:2), “triumph” is realized “in Christ” (2 Cor 2:14), any person “in Christ” is “a new creature” (2 Cor 5:17), the liberty we have is “in Christ

Jesus” (Gal 2:4), God has “blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Eph 1:3), God has raised us up and made us sit together with Christ in heavenly places (Eph 1:3), the saints are God’s own “workmanship created in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:10), and “the prize of the high calling of God” is “in Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:14).

What can possibly justify any other emphasis? Any other focus? How can any person or any group hope to remain in Divine favor who does not place the stress on Jesus Christ - as God Himself does?

CALLED INTO CHRIST’S FELLOWSHIP

The newness of life was accompanied by a call into fellowship with Jesus – a call that comes from God Himself. It is written, “God is faithful, BY WHOM ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor 1:9). When writing to the retrogressing church in Galatian, Paul referred to this calling: “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel” (Gal 1:6). The nature of salvation requires this fellowship – a fellowship that is participation, partnership, and personal involvement with Jesus Christ. There are many professing “Christians” who have never once heard this point declared and expounded. It simply is not conducive to the furtherance of religious programs men have adopted.

This “fellowship” is not a mere formal identity – like being put on a sort of sectarian roster. This is a vital union in which we become “one spirit” with God’s Son. As it is written, “But he that is joined unto the Lord is ONE SPIRIT” (1 Cor 6:17). That means we participate in His nature (2 Pet 1:4; Heb 3:14), His mind (1 Cor 2:16), His joy (John 15:11), and His peace (John 14:27). We share in His death (Rom 6:3), His burial (Rom 6:4), and His resurrection (Col 3:1). We participate in His sufferings (Phil 3:10a) and the power of His resurrection (Phil 3:10b). We are “joint heirs” with Him (Rom 8:17), will “reign” with Him (2 Tim 2:12), and will be glorified together with Him (Rom 8:17).

It is not surprising, therefore, that we are established in Christ Jesus. He is the locus in which stability and maturity are realized. If this is the case – and there is no question that it is – then those who are not being established are not realizing fellowship with Christ Jesus. If this is denied, then it is necessary to prove that God does NOT, in fact, work in some who walk with Jesus and live in Him. A person who espouses such a thing is a fool – and that is a gross understatement!

It is not possible to believe on the Son of God, fellowship with Him, and walk in the light as He is in the light, without becoming established in the faith. There can be no doubt about this! The means of grace, when embraced, cannot possibly fail in their appointed ministry. They will accomplish what they have been given to do! God will finish the work He commences in Christ. He will perform that work until the day of Jesus Christ, when He returns to gather His people to Himself (Phil 1:6). All of that work, however, is realized within the experiential context of Jesus Christ. That is where God Himself placed the one who is justified: “But of Him [God] are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor 1:30). The New Living Translation reads, “God has united you with Christ

Jesus” (NLT). If anyone abides in Christ, remaining where God has placed him (John 15:4,7; 1 John 2:27-28), the work will be completed to the glory of God –but only so.

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 11 of 34

ANOINTED

“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and HATH ANOINTED US, is God . . . ”
(Verse 21, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

Not only are we established in Christ, we are also “anointed” in Him. This is something that accompanies being “in Christ.” It falls into the category of “things that accompany salvation” (Heb 6:9). The “us” of reference refers to all those who are in Christ Jesus – not just the apostles, who themselves are members of the body of Christ with us (1 Cor 12:18,28).

ANOINTED

“ . . . and hath anointed us . . . ” Other versions read, “He anointed us” (NIV), “has commissioned us” (RSV/NLT), “and has given us of His grace” (BBE), “did anoint us” (YLT), “has consecrated and anointed us [enduing us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit]” (AMPLIFIED), and “given us of His grace” (BBE). The word “anointed” is translated from a Greek word {khree'-o} meaning, “to anoint” (THAYER/FRIBERG/LOUW-NIDA/GINGRICH). Some lexicons give an interpretive meaning of the word that is reflected in some of the versions (RSV/NLT/BBE), but the lexical meaning is “anoint.”

Interpretively, the word “anoint” means “to consecrate, furnish with necessary power, endue Christians with the gifts of the Holy Spirit” (STRONG’S). Other interpretive meanings are, “to appoint, assign, give a task” (FRIBERG). Most of the versions use the word “anoint.”

The primary use of this word relates to sanctification, or being set apart to God. It was introduced and defined under the Law, where people and things employed by God were formally set apart to Him. Thus the High Priest was anointed (Ex 29:29; Lev 4:3), priests were anointed (Num 3:3), the sacred vessels of the tabernacle were anointed (Ex 30:26), the altar was anointed (Ex 29:36), the tabernacle itself was anointed (Ex 30:26), and the laver was anointed (Ex 40:11). Kings were anointed (1 Sam 15:1; 1 Kgs 1:34), together with prophets (1Kgs 19:16).

Jesus said He was “anointed . . . to preach the Gospel to the poor” (Lk 4:18). The early church prayed, referring to Jesus as the One whom God had “anointed” (Acts 4:27). Peter told those at the house of Cornelius that God had “anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power” (Acts 10:38). John wrote to believers, informing them of “the anointing” they had received (1 John 2:27).

Until Jesus was enthroned in heaven, only special individuals within the chosen people were anointed, the chief of which was Jesus Christ Himself. Now, however, in Christ Jesus, and

within the framework of the New Covenant, all of the saved are “anointed.”

To confirm the importance of anointing, the anointing oil of the tabernacle was a very special compound. It is outlined in Exodus 30:23-25, and was called “the holy anointing oil.” That oil was comprised of specific measures of myrrh, sweet cinnamon, calamus, cassia, and olive oil (Ex 30:23-24). It was compounded “after the art of the apothecary,” or, in our parlance, a pharmacist (Ex 20:25).

The importance of this oil can be seen from at least two perspectives. First, the centrality of serving the Lord was established. It was something attended with the greatest sobriety, and thus was initiated by a holy anointing, or consecration. Second, the anointing would serve as a type of the still greater anointing that would take place in Christ Jesus – the anointing to which our text refers.

This anointing is common to all believers: “Now He which stablisheth US with YOU in Christ, and hath anointed US is God” (2 Cor 1:21). This is not a special benefit for some of the children of God, but a grace given to all of them. It is not something that is obtained by special prayers, or the laying on of hands. If that was the case, which it emphatically is not, this line of reasoning would be wholly inappropriate. Paul is addressing all of the saints, reasoning with them as “the saints” (2 Cor 1:1). He has already told them that God’s comfort and consolation are for them all, just as surely as they share in Christ’s sufferings (1:7). Now He reminds them that God is establishing them, as well as himself, and has anointed them. It is critical that the people of God know of this anointing.

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 12 of 34

THE UNCTION

“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath ANOINTED US, is God.” (Verse 21, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

The Apostle John makes a special point of this anointing, affirming it to be the means by which we remain in Christ Jesus – which equates to being “established” in Him. “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things” (1 John 2:20). Other versions read, “But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things” (American Standard Version). This is not a special anointing for some of the members of the body of Christ, but a common one. It is not one that CAN occur, but that has already occurred for those who are in Christ.

Other versions read, “But you have been anointed by [you hold a sacred appointment from, you have been given an unction from] the Holy One, and you all know [the Truth] or you know all things” (Amplified), “But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge” (English Standard Version), “But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth” (New International Version), “But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and all of you have knowledge” (New Revised Standard). And “But you are not like that,

for the Holy One has given you His Spirit, and all of you know the truth” (New Living Translation).

This affirmation immediately follows a statement about certain false teachers: “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, EVEN NOW are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us” (1 John 2:18-19). While making the general condition of the saints known, John is also accounting for the failure of these false teachers to unduly influence those to whom he is writing. The statement he makes, however, speaks of an “anointing” that is common to all of the saints of God.

KNOW ALL THINGS

“ . . . and ye know all things.” The statement is arresting, to say the least. However, as is characteristic of everything revealed by the Holy Spirit, the statement is the unvarnished truth, and describes a very real circumstance.

This, of course, does not suggest that believers are omniscient. Rather, the idea is that they have access to all knowledge pertinent to our identity with the Lord. It is something like living with the Teacher.

Through the Spirit, John elaborates on this anointing in verse twenty-seven: “But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him”(1 John 2:27). Notice the poignant statements in this remarkable verse.

1. The anointing has been received by those in the Son.
2. It has been received from the Architect of our salvation.
3. There is no need for any man to teach us.

The reference to having no need for any man to teach us is speaking particularly of the implications of the truth. This teaching has to do with the “how-to” aspect of spiritual life – something with which many believers have great struggles. Much of this struggle is owing to the Christian academic community, who has exploited man’s propensity to live by routine and discipline.

Let us be clear about this. Although detailed instructions on how to live were a part of the First Covenant, that is NOT the case under the New Covenant. The Old Covenant told men what to eat and what not to eat (Deut 14:3-21), what to touch and what not to touch (Lev 5:2-3; Num 4:15; Deut 14:8), how make garments (Lev 19:19; 22:11), how to plow fields (Deut 22:10), how to reap fields (Lev 19:9; 23:10,22), etc. etc.

BUT THIS IS NOT THE MANNER OF THE NEW COVENANT! For example, husbands are commanded to love their wives (Eph 5:25; Col 3:19), but are not told HOW to do it. Rather they

are admonished to love their wives “as Christ also love the church” – and that involves discretion not a listing. Wives are commanded to submit to and obey their husbands (Eph 5:22; Col 3:8), but are not told HOW to do it – only to do so “as unto the Lord,” and “as it is fit in the Lord” – again, something that requires understanding. Believers are commanded “touch not the unclean thing” (2 Cor 6:17), but are NOT provided a list of unclean things as was provided under the Law. Those in Christ are admonished, “perfect holiness in the eyes of the Lord” (2 Cor 7:1-2), but are not provided a routine that spells out how that is to be done. There are other examples, but this should suffice to establish the point.

For believers, their condition in Christ is vastly different than the condition of those under the Old Covenant. The impact of these circumstances is most arresting to consider.

1. They have been “joined unto the Lord” (2 Cor 6:17).
2. They have been called into fellowship with Jesus Christ Himself (1 Cor 1:9).
3. They have access to God (Eph 3:12).
4. They have access into grace (Rom 5:2).
5. They can come to the throne of all grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need (Heb 4:15-16).
6. They have been “given” the Holy Spirit” (2 Cor 5:5; 1 Thess 4:8; 1 John 3:24; 4:13).
7. They can be “filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Col 1:9).
8. They can be “led” by the Spirit to “mortify the deeds of the body” (Rom 8:13-14) . . . etc., etc.

Knowing “all things” has to do with this inner direction that is the appointed means of learning the details of godliness – what is to be avoided, and what is to be cultured. Acceptable traits are not achieved by following a routine, but are “the fruit of the Spirit” (Gal 5:22-23; Eph 5:9).

SOME OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. The “anointing” is not a sensation, or a fleshly feeling. It involves being taught “of,” or “about all things” – “As for you, the anointing you received from Him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as His anointing teaches you about all things and as that Anointing is real, not counterfeit – just as it has taught you, remain in Him” (NIV).
2. The teaching brought to us by “the anointing” is “truth, and is no lie.” It will stand the test of life, repel the powers of darkness, and establish the heart.
3. The objective of the teaching accomplished by “the anointing” meets the objective of God and need of man: “you WILL abide in Him” (NKJV).

This “anointing” is the ministry of the Holy Spirit. His role is to facilitate the salvation of God within the believer. He sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts (Rom 5:5). He causes us to abound in hope (Rom 15:13). He produces the joy that is integral to the kingdom of God (Rom 14:17). He intercedes for us in needful matters concerning which we are ignorant (Rom 8:26-27). He leads us in the mortification of “the deeds of the body” (Rom 8:13). There is also “the fruit of

the Spirit,” the evidence that we do, indeed, “participate in the Divine nature” [NIV] (2 Pet 1:3).

In all of these things, the saints of God are being taught – “taught by God” (John 6:45). This involves THE Lord directing (2 Thess 3:5), leading (Rom 8:14; Gal 5:18), strengthening (Eph 3:16; Col 1:11; 1 Pet 5:10), and teaching (John 6:45; Eph 4:21; 1 Thess 4:9; 1 John 2:27).

Praise God for the wonderful nature and benefits of His great salvation!

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 13 of 34

IS GOD

“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, IS GOD.” (Verse 1, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

The establishing and the anointing of reference are both the work of GOD. He is the One who establishes, and He is the One who has anointed us. He has done these things “in Christ,” who is the only acceptable environment for such marvelous workings.

The perception of the working of GOD is fundamental to the enjoyment and comprehension of His great salvation. The overall view is this: Salvation is the outworking of His “eternal purpose” (Eph 1:11; 3:11; 2 Tim 1:9). Before the foundation of the world, He chose us in Christ Jesus, “that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love” (Eph 1:4). Before the world was ever planned, the objective for the saved ones was established. It was that they would ultimately be “conformed to the image of His Son” (Rom 8:29). From the standpoint of personal involvement, these people would be “made the righteousness of God” in Christ Jesus (2 Cor 5:21). God’s own righteousness would be “imputed” to them upon the basis of their faith (Rom 4:22-25).

The Divinely appointed means for the accomplishment of His purpose was the person of Christ Jesus, also “foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1 Pet 1:20). Therefore GOD set Christ forth, or “presented Him” (NIV), “to be a propitiation through faith in His blood” (Rom 3:25). It was GOD who chose “the foolishness of preaching” to save those who believe, delivering a Gospel that is called “the record” He gave of “His Son” (1 Cor 1:27; 1 John 5:10). It is GOD who has prepared marvelous things for those who love Him (1 Cor 2:9), and it is GOD who has “revealed them unto us through His Spirit” (1 Cor 2:10). It is GOD who has “set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him” (1 Cor 12:18). Ultimately, it was GOD who “sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts” (Gal 4:6). In Christ we are, in fact, HIS workmanship, “created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which GOD hath ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:10).

However men may choose to react to it, this word has come down from heaven to us: “GOD hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the

truth” (2 Thess 2:13).

When it comes to salvation, GOD is the ultimate consideration. HE sent Christ, delivered Him up, raised Him, and exalted Him (1 John 4:14; Rom 8:32; Eph 1:20; Phil 2:9). Through Christ we are “reconciled to GOD” (Rom 5:10), have “peace with GOD” (Rom 5:1), and are being brought “to GOD” (1 Pet 3:18). This is an overview of His great salvation.

It should not surprise us, therefore, when we read that GOD is establishing us in Christ Jesus – making us firm and unmoveable. This point is made over and over in Scripture, ensuring that it does not escape the attention of those living by every word of God.

1. “Now to Him that is of power TO STABLISH you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Rom 16:25).
2. “To the end He may STABLISH your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints” (1 Thess 3:13).
3. “Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and STABLISH you in every good word and work” (2 Thess 2:17).
4. “But the Lord is faithful, who shall STABLISH you, and keep you from evil” (2 Thess 3:3).
5. “But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, STABLISH , strengthen, settle you” (1 Pet 5:10).

The announcement of our text is that this is what God is doing. He is ESTABLISHING , and has anointed those in Christ Jesus. He is making us stable, and has equipped us for involvement in His work. This is what will happen to those who abide in Christ Jesus. This is what they are to expect – ESTABLISHMENT. This is why they have been “anointed” – ESTABLISHMENT. God is working to this end, and is doing so in the Son, by the Spirit, and through our faith. The point of vulnerability is certainly not God Himself, His will, or His power. It is not the Son of God, who is the One through whom all things are accomplished. There is no weakness in the Holy Spirit, who knows even “the deep things of God” (1 Cor 2:10), and faithfully executes His ministry. Grace is certainly up to the task of establishment (Tit 2:11-13). If there is a weak link, it is on the human side – the side where faith must be found, and the Spirit must not be quenched or grieved.

There is no question about what God can do! There is no question about what the Son of God can do! There is no question about what the Holy Spirit can do! The questions are “Do you believe?” “Are you abiding in the Son?” If you are, the work IS being done. If you are not, the work CANNOT be done. It is just that simple. It is our business to recognize this.

It is not possible to abide in Christ and establishment not happen. This is something that God has determined and that He does. The issue is not the work itself, but THE MEANS through which it is done. Jesus has provided a just reason for Him to do this work, and our faith has linked us with Him.

One of the difficulties of our time is that we are living in a day of shallow profession. People

claim identity with the Son of God who show no evidence of such an affiliation. Because we are living in peaceful times, such empty professions can be made freely without any supporting evidence. For this reason, a clear statement needs to be made about the real nature of spiritual life. It is NOT possible to abide in Christ without becoming established in Him (John 15:4; 1 John 2:27-28). It is NOT possible to fellowship with Christ without the promises of God being fulfilled in you (1 Cor 1:9). It is NOT possible to live by faith and yet come short of God's appointed blessing (Heb 10:38). Let us find where the villains of "Empty Profession" and "Form of Godliness without Power" exist, and roust them out of the church. Such are a disgrace to Christ, and a hindrance to His people. Now, there is something to think about!

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 14 of 34

SEALED – THE SEALING OF GOD, #1

"Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." (Verse 22, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

Other versions read, "set His seal of ownership upon us" (New International, Version), "putting His seal upon us" (New Revised Standard Version), "It is He who has put His stamp upon us" (Basic Bible English), "marked us with His seal" (New Jerusalem Bible), and "He has identified us as His own" (NLT).

THE MEANING OF THE WORD

The word "sealed" means "to confirm, authenticate, place beyond doubt" (Thayer), "confirm, attest, certify" (Friberg), and "affix to be true, acknowledge, prove" (Neuman). It also carries the idea of "making secure" (Louw-Nida).

Ancient seals were like the official signature of dignitaries. They were absolutely unique, providing a guarantee of the approval of that individual. It could be on a document, some piece of furniture or other item. If official documents were sent, they were secured in a container, with hot wax in which the seal was imprinted. Without that seal, the documents were not considered valid.

There are two modern-day parallels to the "seal" mentioned in Scripture.

A SIGNATURE. First, the simplest form of a "seal" is one's signature, affixed to official documents. If that document is a critical one, whether of a financial nature, or of an official proclamation, the signatures affixed to it validate it. The Declaration of Independence is an example, as well as papers relating to financial loans or other such transactions. A Scriptural example of such a seal would be Paul's signature and salutation on his Epistles (2 Thess 3:17).

AN IMPRESSION. Second, a unit that affixes a special mark on a document, thereby validating it. The most common would be the notary seal, which serves to corroborate the validity of the document on which it is placed. There are also special seals for local, state, and federal governments. A Scriptural example of this kind of seal would be Ahab's seal, which was affixed to official letters (1 Kgs 21:8). King Ahasuerus, associated with Esther, had a ring bearing his official "seal" (Esth 8:8).

SECURITY. Third, there was a "seal" that secured a physical area or container. This was used to prohibit unlawful entry, the removal, or the corruption of the contents of the container. A modern day example would be the sealing of space capsules, in which selected items from a special generation were placed. A Scriptural example would be the sealing of the tomb in which Jesus was placed (Matt 27:66).

We will find that the sealing of our text incorporates all of these ideas. The fact is that God has placed His personal signature upon the redeemed. He has placed His impression upon our real persons. He has also secured us in Christ Jesus for His own glory.

The Scriptures have considerable to say about a seal, and the act of Divine sealing (John 6:27; Rom 4:11; 1 Cor 9:2; Eph 1:13; 4:20; 2 Tim 2:19; Rev 7:2-8; 9:4).

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 15 of 34

SEALED – THE SEALING OF GOD, #2

"Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, IS GOD." (Verse 1, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

THE SEALING OF JESUS

The importance of sealing is seen in the person of Christ Jesus Himself. He said to His disciples, "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: FOR HIM HATH GOD THE FATHER SEALED" (John 6:27). Other versions read, "put his mark" (Basic Bible English), "His seal of approval on Him" (Christian Standard Bible), and "God the Father has authorized and certified Him and put His seal of endorsement upon Him" (Amplified Bible).

This was the seal of DIVINE APPROVAL, designating Jesus Christ as the One who distributes the food that keeps the people from perishing. God placed His signature, as it were, upon Him when He was baptized: "This is My Beloved Son" (Matt 3:17). He placed His impression upon Him when it pleased Him that in Jesus should "all fulness dwell" (Col 1:19). He was the One "approved of God" (Acts 2:22), anointed "with the Holy Spirit and Power" (Acts 10:38). He was the One Divinely sanctioned and commissioned to lay down His life, take it up again (John 10:17-18), make intercession for them (Isa 53:12; Heb 7:25), and bring the sons home safely to, and ready for, glory (Heb 2:10).

This was the One He had promised – a “Man” who would “be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land” (Isa 32:2). He was the One upon whom God would lay “the iniquity of us all,” whom God Himself would “bruise” (Isa 53:10). But He would “prolong His days,” and cause “the pleasure of the Lord to prosper in His hand” (Isa 53:10). He would “see the travail of His soul and be satisfied” (Isa 53:11). He is the One who would bruise the serpent’s head (Gen 3:15) – the One through whom “all families of the earth would be blessed” (Gen 12:3). The “Spirit of the Lord” would “rest upon Him, “the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD” (Isa 11:2).

What men required to be saved would be administered by, and found in, the Son of God – and in Him alone. It is He who would be “made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor 1:30). In Him men would be “made accepted” (Eph 1:6). He would be “our peace” (Eph 2:14), who would ever live “to make intercession for” them who are coming to God (Heb 7:25). The seal of God is upon Him! He alone can bring us to glory (Heb 2:10). He is the One through whom we become “an heir of God” (Gal 4:7). The “exceeding riches” of God’s grace is realized “in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:7). The peace of God keeps our hearts and minds “through Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:7). He alone can “strengthen” us to do “all things” required of us (Phil 4:13). We are “alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 6:11), and “the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 6:23). The Holy Spirit who renews us, was “shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior” (Tit 3:5-6). God Himself is “working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ” (Heb 13:21).

The sealing of the Son of God involved Him being equipped for His mission, and supported by heaven in its fulfillment. Because of these factors, as Isaiah prophesied, “He shall not fail nor be discouraged” (Isa 42:4).

It is time for the professing church to make more of Jesus! Too much has been made of the church itself, which has no power or ability of its own. The church – the real church – is the product of Divine work. It is the result of Jesus’ building (Matt 16:18). It is being prepared to be Christ’s wife, being presently betrothed to Him (2 Cor 11:2), and will be married to Him (Rom 7:4).

God the Father has sealed Jesus. He is our exclusive Leader (Isa 55:4), Captain (Heb 2:10), Shepherd (Heb 13:20), Mediator (1 Tim 2:5), Intercessor (Rom 8:34), and Teacher (Eph 4:20-21; 1 John 5:20). Let it be clear, none of these benefits can be realized through any other source. They cannot be attained through educational channels, or any fountain of worldly wisdom. Even though some men make this claim, no man can develop a system or routine through which the benefits ministered by Jesus can be realized. Any effective spiritual resource must have the stamp of Jesus upon it. Ultimately, He must be the One who ministers it, for it is He whom God has sealed.

In our time, Jesus needs to be more prominent. There is too much flesh in the professing church – too much human influence, and too little Divine influence. Wherever there is a church that lacks Divine power, it is because it lacks Jesus. Him has God the Father sealed.

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 16 of 34

SEALED – THE SEALING OF GOD, #3

“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” (Verse 22, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

THE SEALING OF THE SAINTS

Here, the point is not what constituted the seal – that will be developed in the next clause. The point here is that the sealing has taken place, and that God Himself has done it. This is not something believers anticipate, or that comes at a certain stage in spiritual life. For those in Christ, this has already occurred, and we are being apprised of it.

There are certain implications of this sealing that are affirmed in Scripture – things that delight the soul and make for a strong confidence as we fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life (1 Tim 6:12).

SATAN CANNOT TOUCH THE ONE WHO IS BORN OF GOD

This is not mere conjecture, but is affirmed by the Word of the Lord – the word by which we live. “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one TOUCHETH HIM NOT” (1 John 5:18). Other versions read, “cannot harm him” (New International Version), “he is not touched by the Evil One” (Basic Bible English), “cannot touch him” (New American Bible), “has no hold over him” (New Jerusalem Bible), and “cannot get his hands on him” (New Living Translation).

For some, this seems too wonderful, and thus their hearts tremble in fear that it is not really the case. They reason that the circumstances of life do not justify such a statement. However, after all of the human reasoning has taken place, the affirmation still stands. SATAN CANNOT TOUCH THE ONE WHO IS BORN OF GOD! Generally speaking, that applies to you who are in Christ Jesus. Specifically, it applies to the “new man,” which is the part of you that is “born of God.” This is the result of being “sealed” by God. In Christ you have been designated as belonging to Him. You are among those in whom He has chosen to work (Heb 13:20-21). He is not speaking about the flesh (Rom 7:18), or the outward man (2 Cor 4:16a), but of the “new creation” (2 Cor 5:17), the “workmanship” of God (Eph 2:10), the “new man” (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10), and the “inward man” (2 Cor 4:16b).

Even Satan recognizes this seal, and cannot contend with it. Before Christ Jesus – even before Moses – Satan knew those whom God had approved and protected, and could not touch them. The record of Job confirms this to be true (Job 1-2). Jesus told Peter that Satan had requested to have him, to sift him as wheat (Luke 22:31-32). Although in both cases Satan was given permission to touch God’s saints, yet he was restricted in what he could do. At first he could only touch what Job had, but not his body. Then he was granted permission to touch Job’s body,

but not take his life. Although the devil did, indeed, sift Peter on that awful night when he denied Jesus, yet the Savior had prayed for him, that his faith “fail not” – and it did not!

The point is that our adversary is under the dominion of our Lord, and cannot operate according to his own will. He cannot put a single finger on any child of God without the approval of the One who keeps and strengthens them. Even then, he can only touch the outward man, or the flesh – not the regenerated part of man. He can deliver a grievous “thorn,” but it can only be in the flesh, never in the spirit (2 Cor 12:7).

That is involved in being “sealed” by God! The part of you that has fellowship with Christ (1 Cor 1:9) cannot in any way be touched by Satan. The place where your spirit and the Lord’s Spirit is “joined” (1 Cor 6:17) cannot be touched by the wicked One. The part of you that is “in Christ” cannot be touched by the devil (2 Cor 5:17). Of course, no matter who you are, if you “live after the flesh,” and “mind the things of the flesh” (Rom 8:13), you will have to contend with the touching of the devil. If you do not know what that means, it is time to obtain this crucial knowledge.

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” (2 Cor 1:21-24)

Lesson 17 of 34

NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD

The Divine commitment revealed in our text is a revelation of the outworking of the love of God – especially for His people. In Scripture, they are the only ones specifically TOLD that the love of God is toward them – first in Israel (Deut 7:7; Isa 43:4; 63:9; Zeph 3:7; Mal 1:2), then in the church (Rom 5:5; 8:39; 2 Cor 13:14; Tit 3:4; Eph 2:4; 5:2,25; 2 Thess 2:16; 1 John 3:16; 4:9,10,19; Rev 2:5). I do not believe there is a record of anyone else being TOLD of God’s love. That being true, great weight is added to the following expression: “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” (Rom 8:38-39). That is, no outside influence, regardless of its power, can separate, or put a division between, the people of God and His love.

Again, this is a point concerning which there can be no question. The Lord has spoken! The love of reference is “in Christ Jesus our Lord.” That is, it is directed toward those who are joined to the Lord (1 Cor 6:17), or in fellowship with the Son (1 Cor 1:9) – those who are abiding in Him (1 John 2:28), as they live by faith (Heb 10:38). This also postulates the fact that they are not grieving the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30), quenching the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 5:19), or in some way provoking God (1 Cor 10:22).

Do not think of separation in terms of human experience alone. That is included, to be sure. In fact the extremities of our experience are mentioned: “death” and “life.” Neither one can drive a

wedge between God and those He has sealed. Ponder the scope of our protection! There are lofty and more powerful personalities with which we contend: “angels,” “principalities,” and “powers.” They cannot “separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus!” And when it comes to experience, much more is involved than day-to-day normalities. There are “things present,” and “things to come.” Yet none of them, regardless of their complexity or seeming power, can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. There are also spheres of human experience that transcend the normal – domains in which unusual things occur that can have unusual effects upon our spirits: “height,” and “depth.” Yet as high as the heights may be, and as low as the depths may be, they cannot separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

None of us have an adequate perception of the number of adversarial influences we confront every day. They range from Satan (1 Pet 5:8-9), his angels (Rev 12:9), and wicked principalities and powers (Eph 6:12), to wicked men (1 Thess 3:2), and challenging circumstances (2 Cor 12:7,10; 1 Tim 5:23). That is not to mention times when we are not as alert as we could be, or as diligent and vigilant as we are required to be. Take Jesus and the love of God out of the equation of life and vulnerability becomes insurmountable.

This is why it is important to know about the sealing of God – the marking and designation of those belonging to Him. Whether you know it or not. The devil and his hosts know that mark, yet are unable to do anything about it. Holy angels know it also, and thus minister to those who are properly called “those who shall be heirs of salvation” (Heb 1:13). Your personal advantage comes when you also are persuaded of this sealing. That is all part of being “sealed” by God – and the sealing has already taken place for those who are in Christ Jesus.

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 18 of 34

KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD

“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” (Verses 1-2, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

The mighty God is devoted to those He has “sealed” and “anointed.” They are in a hostile world (1 Pet 5:9), housed in a frail body (Rom 7:24), and stalked by a fierce adversary (1 Pet 5:8). There are forces aligned against them that are superior to them (Eph 6:12). If they rely upon their own strength and wisdom, they will quickly be overcome.

However, even though all of these things are true, salvation has altered life’s arena. Here is how the situation is stated. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD THROUGH FAITH unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet 1:3-5).

The “power” that keeps us is not resident in our faith, but in the God in whom faith is placed. While faith is, indeed, “the victory that overcomes the world” (1 John 5:4), the enabling power is in God Himself. Faith lays hold of the power, but is not the power itself.

If you have ever wondered if you will be able to be “faithful unto death” (Rev 2:10), by faith take hold of this word regarding God’s keeping power. God is “able” to “keep you from falling” (Jude 24), and He will surely do it through your faith. You have His word on that.

“Establish” is a big word, and a mighty work accomplished by the God of heaven. It means a person is “unmoveable” (1 Cor 15:58), “steadfast to the end” (Heb 3:14), “NOT moved away from the hope of the Gospel” (Col 1:23), NOT “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14), and “holding fast the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end” (Heb 3:6). The person who is “established” is “faithful to death” (Rev 2:10), is “rooted and grounded in love” (Eph 3:17), and “rooted and built up in Him (Col 2:7). Such people “stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph 6:11), “stand” in grace (Rom 5:2), “stand fast in the faith” (1 Cor 16:13), and “stand fast . . . in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free” (Gal 5:1).

If you have not fallen, it is because God is establishing you! If you are going through a testing, and are keeping your faith, God is establishing you! If your heart has been broken, and you have chosen to still trust the Lord, God is establishing you! If those over whom you have labored tirelessly have disappointed you, and you have not given up, God is establishing you! If you are becoming more and more displeased and annoyed by sin, God is establishing you! If your hunger and thirst for righteousness is increasing, God is establishing you! If your intention to seek first the Kingdom of God is increasing, God is establishing you! If you are determined to “walk and to please God” (1 Thess 4:1), God is establishing you! If you are going through the fire, and walking through the flood (Isa 43:2), God is establishing you! If you, like the saints of old, are seeking a “continuing city, God is establishing you!

Therefore, when we speak of God establishing and sealing us, we have opened an exceedingly large area for consideration. There is no question about the validity and actuality of being established and anointed by God. That is a matter that has been affirmed, and is beyond all controversy. Now, it is our business to take hold on that word, and go on our way rejoicing. We must live in the power of this reality.

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and GIVEN the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts . . .” (Verses 1-2, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

Lesson 19 of 34

GIVEN THE EARNEST

The fact of the anointing was mentioned previously: “Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and HATH ANOINTED US, is God” (2 Cor 1:21). Now the substance of this anointing is delineated. This is the conferring of the Holy Spirit upon believers, and is referenced in a number

of different ways. Here are some of them:

1. “The GIFT of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).
2. “And they of the circumcision 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” (Acts 10:45).
3. “And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, GIVING THEM the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:8-9).
4. “God, who hath also GIVEN UNTO US His holy Spirit” (1 Thess 4:8).
5. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he SHED ON US ABUNDANTLY through Jesus Christ our Savior” (Tit 3:5-6).
6. “But ye have an unction FROM THE HOLY ONE, and ye know all things” (1 John 2:27).
7. “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that DWELLETH IN YOU” (Rom 8:11; 2 Tim 1:14).
8. “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?” (1 Cor 6:19).
9. “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made PARTAKERS OF THE HOLY GHOST, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come” (Heb 6:4-5).

The Scripture provides a considerable amount of reasoning that is based upon the reality of the people of God possessing the Holy Spirit, which has been given to them. This includes such things as being “led by the Spirit” (Rom 9:14; Gal 5:18), being washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Cor 6:11), being “changed” (2 Cor 3:18), reaping life everlasting (Gal 6:8), unity (Eph 4:3), fruit (Gal 5:22-23; Eph 5:9), the Word of God as a sword (Eph 6:19), fellowship (Phil 2:1), sanctification (2 Thess 2:13; 1 Pet 1:2), and the knowledge of the indwelling of Deity (1 John 3:24).

The giving of the Spirit, therefore, is a primary aspect of salvation, and should draw the sober attention of every believer.

GIVEN

“ . . .and given . . .” Other versions read, “gave us” (New American Standard), “put” (New International Version), “giving us” (New Revised Standard), and “placing” (New Living Translation).

The word from which “given” is translated is a very weighty one. The word means, “to give, to give something to someone, OF ONE’S OWN ACCORD to give one something to his advantage, to bestow a gift” (Thayer). Other lexical definitions are, “appoint, assign, entrust, grant, put” (Friberg), and “give; grant, allow, permit; place, put; appoint; establish; give out, pay; produce, yield, cause; entrust.” (UBS).

The word, then, contains the following ideas.

1. A gift.
2. Something given because the giver desires to do so.
3. A gift that brings certain advantage.
4. Something that is conferred, or bestowed as an official gift.
5. An appointment.
6. Something entrusted to the person.

We are speaking of something God gives, bestowing it upon the individual. Because the Lord “is righteous in all of His ways” (Psa 145:17), and “in all His works” as well (Dan 9:14), this is a wholly appropriate gift. It has a just basis, or foundation, for its bestowment, and therefore brings glory to God who gives it and advantage to the one who receives it. This is not something that is purchased or earned by the one receiving it – it is a gift. All of the children of God receive this gift, and none are excluded. This is because it is conferred because of Christ, and therefore all who are in Him receive the gift. About this there can be no question.

– Given O. Blakely

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 20 of 34

THE EARNEST

“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given THE EARNEST OF THE SPIRIT in our hearts.” (Verses 1-2, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

“ . . . the earnest of the Spirit . . .” Other versions read, “a guarantee” (New King James), “as a pledge” (New American Standard), “a deposit” (New International), “a first installment” (New Revised Standard), and “the sign” (Basic Bible English).

The Holy Spirit is the “anointing,” or “unction” (1 John 2:20,27), that has been conferred upon all of the children of God. Here, the Holy Spirit is appropriately referred to as “the Earnest.” That is, He Himself is not the whole of the blessing, but is the introduction, as it were, to the fulness that is yet to come.

An “earnest” is lexically defined as “a pledge, an earnest” (THAYER), “a down payment, first installment, pledge” (FRIBERG), “a guarantee of what is to come” (Newman) “the first or initial payment . . . as a guarantee for the completion of the transaction or pledge” (LOUW-NIDA).

A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

Here we gain a perspective of the Holy Spirit that is rarely heard these days. He is a pledge, or first installment and guarantee, of the marvelous inheritance that is “reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pet 1:4). That inheritance is comprised of “the things which God hath PREPARED for them that love Him” (1 Cor 2:9). In spiritually primitive times David exclaimed, “Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast LAID UP FOR THEM that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for

them that trust in Thee before the sons of men!” (Psa 31:19). Long before that, even before the Law, there was a man who had a similar view – Abraham.

ABRAHAM’S EXPERIENCE

Abraham also sensed the greatness of what God has to give. After he had arrived in the promised land, he sojourned there “as in a strange country,” living in temporary dwellings while “he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God” (Heb 11:9-10). He sensed by faith something that relatively few professing Christians know: that what is upon the earth, regardless of its magnitude and seeming beauty, is an inadequate representation of the fulness of God’s blessing. That is a reason why it is written, “Let not the rich man glory in his riches” (Jer 9:23). It is why Jesus said, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal” (Matt 6:19-20). One of the primary ways of laying up treasures in heaven is to develop an appetite and longing for them.

There is a marvelous inheritance “reserved” for the people of God “in heaven,” and it transcends anything that can be seen by mortal eye, or experienced by mortal beings. The Holy Spirit has been given to us as an earnest, or guarantee of that coming inheritance. He will introduce us to the kind of things that will be experienced in their fulness—i.e. “Leading (Rom 8:14), being conformed to Christ (2 Cor 3:18), the hope of righteousness (Gal 5:5), purity (1 Pet 1:22), the love of God (Rom 5:5), righteousness, peace, and joy (Rom 14:17; 15:13), renewal (Tit 3:5), tasting of the heavenly gift (Heb 6:4), and fruitage that lasts (Gal 5:22-23; Eph 5:9). There are precious things like confidence, assurance, Divine fellowship, and joy unspeakable and full of glory. These are all evidence of the indwelling Spirit – the Anointing, the Unction!

THE EARNEST

This is not the only place the Holy Spirit is referred to as an “earnest.”

1. “Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the EARNEST of the Spirit” (2 Cor 5:5).
2. “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the EARNEST of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory” (Eph 1:13-14).

Elsewhere “the earnest” of the Holy Spirit is referred to as “the firstfruits of the Spirit” (Rom 8:23). The presence of the Spirit within is our confirmation that we are the Lord’s, and have a part in the inheritance. Thus it is written, “And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And HEREBY WE KNOW THAT HE ABIDETH IN US, by the Spirit which He hath given us” (1 John 3:24). Our perception of that inheritance will be directly proportionate to our perception of the Spirit and His indispensable ministry. If we are not sure about Him, we cannot be sure about the inheritance of which He is the pledge, or earnest.

The “earnest,” “pledge,” or “firstfruit” is God’s provision for us while we tabernacle in the body in this world. This is categorically said to be until “the redemption of the purchased possession,” which is our body, or “mortal flesh” (2 Cor 4:11). God’s people must be told these things!

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 21 of 34

DO NOT GRIEVE HIM!

“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” (Verses 1-2, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

Having been anointed, sealed, and given “the earnest of the Spirit,” it is imperative that those so described be warned not to interfere with the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Solemnly we are apprised that the Spirit is not indifferent toward our attitudes and demeanor. It is written, “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph 4:30). Other versions read, “do not bring sorrow to God’s Holy Spirit” (New Living Translation), “do not offend or vex or sadden Him” (Amplified Bible). Most versions read “grieve not.” The word translated “grieve” has the following lexical meaning: “to make sorrowful; to affect with sadness, cause grief; to throw into sorrow” (Thayer), “be distressed” (Friberg), “pain, grieve, injure” (Newman), “vex, annoy” (Liddell-Scott), and “vex, irritate, offend, insult” (Gingrich).

It is possible for people to think Deity cannot be irritated, vexed, grieved, or caused to sorrow. However, we have Holy Scripture, inspired by God, that speaks Israel vexing the Holy Spirit (Isa 63:10), angering God (Psa 106:22), provoking the Lord to wrath (Deut 9:8), provoking Him to Jealousy (Deut 32:16), provoking Him to anger (Neh 4:5), displeasing the Lord and kindling His anger (Num 11:1). Grieved with Jerusalem, Jesus “wept” over that city, then affirmed, “If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; BECAUSE thou knewest not the time of thy visitation” (Lk 19:42-44).

We are also admonished, “Quench not the Spirit” (1 Thess 5:19). Other versions read, “Do not stifle the Holy Spirit” (New Living Translation), and “Do not quench (suppress or subdue)” (Amplified Bible). There are things the Spirit is sent to do in you. He is the One who is changing you (2 Cor 3:18). He is the One who produces fruit in you (Gal 5:22-23). He is the One who is leading you to mortify the deeds of the body (Rom 8:13). He is the One who enables you to obey the truth (1 Pet 1:22). But if you quench, stifle, and subdue His work, it will not be done – and if it is not done, you will not be saved! The modern church needs to aggressively rid itself of teachings that lead people to erroneous and condemning conclusions. A considerable percentage, if not all, of the sloppy living found in professing Christians is owing to infantile leadership and corrupt teaching. It had produced a spiritually sterile environment, and that sterility is the result of the Holy Spirit being grieved and quenched, and thus ceasing His indispensable work of washing, sanctification, and justification (1 Cor 6:11). O, how it needs to be heard: “Grieve not

the Holy Spirit of God!” and “Quench not the Spirit.”

It ought to be abundantly clear to us that grieving or quenching the Holy Spirit is a sin of the greatest magnitude. If He is the down payment of the inheritance, stifling His work equates to a loss of the inheritance. Thus it is written, “He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: OF HOW MUCH SORER PUNISHMENT, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith He was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath DONE DESPITE TO THE SPIRIT OF GRACE?” (Heb 10:28-29). Other versions read “insulted the Spirit of grace” (New King James), “outraged the Spirit of grace?” (English Revised), “insulted and disdained the Holy Spirit” (New Living Translation).

This sheds more light on the word spoken by Jesus, which has generated no small amount of confusion among professed believers. “And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven” (Luke 12:10). Matthew adds, “but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come” (Matt 12:32). Jesus intentionally does not give a precise definition of this sin. What would be the point in doing so? Men would live as close to that transgression as they thought possible without actually committing it – at least that is the way they would think.

The point is that the nature of the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the saints demands their attention and submission. Conduct and manners that take the Spirit for granted, and offend Him, gradually dull the human spirit, so that eventually God is against them, and yet they are completely unaware of it – like Jerusalem was to the Jesus it rejected.

In our day, all manner of erroneous emphases have been placed upon the Holy Spirit. Some relate the Spirit to strange and exhilarating sensations in the flesh. Some associate Him with supernatural expressions that cannot be understood. Still others limit His work to that of empowerment – making the individual adequate for the challenges of life, the oppositions of men, and the encroachments of the devil. Indeed, there is something to be said for all of those areas. This text, however, gets more to the root of the matter. No person, no matter how seasoned they may appear, can afford to cause grief to the Holy Spirit. Like the Father and the Son, He hates sin, cannot abide indifference, and is offended by slothfulness, unfaithfulness, worldliness, slowness of heart, etc.

It is said of the Lord – and this is true of the Holy Spirit also – “God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, He will whet His sword; He hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; He ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors” (Psa 7:11-13). The New Living Translation reads, “He is angry with the wicked every day. If a person does not repent, God will sharpen His sword; He will bend and string His bow. He will prepare his deadly weapons and shoot His flaming arrows.”

These are revelations that help us to see the absolute need of NOT quenching and NOT grieving the Holy Spirit of God. Our salvation is at stake! The work the Holy Spirit does cannot be accomplished apart from Him. Further He will not perform this work in the person who resists,

quenches, and grieves Him. Now, there is something to think about.

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 22 of 34

THE NATURE OF SALVATION

“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” (Verses 1-2, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

Our text is speaking about salvation – “the salvation of God” (Acts 28:28), and “the salvation of your souls” (1 Pet 1:9). This is a “great salvation” that cannot be neglected with impunity (Heb 2:3). It is a salvation that must be worked out in the lives of those receiving it: “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil 2:12). This means it cannot be taken for granted. There is a sense in which we have not yet experienced it: “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Rom 13:11). There is a sense in which salvation results from Divine choice and the work of the Spirit: “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” (2 Thess 2:13). The grace of God brings salvation: “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (Tit 2:11). Salvation has a Captain who, by Divine appointment, who is charged with administering it and bringing it to completion: “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb 2:10). Salvation has an objective, or “end” – “Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” (1 Pet 1:9).

When God sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for the Savior, Jesus Christ, it was said of him, “And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways; To give KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION unto His people by the remission of their sin.” (Lk 1:76-77). It is that knowledge I wish to address – what it is.

Salvation is essentially a call out of this world (John 15:19; Acts 15:14), involving a preparation for the world to come (Matt 10:29-30). Jesus told His disciples that He had chosen them “out of the world,” and that the world hated them because of it (John 15:19). When praying to His Father, the Lord said He knew the Father had given the people to Him “out of the world” (John 17:6). Jesus affirmed, “I am not of this world” (John 8:23). He declared His kingdom “is not of this world” (John 18:36). Apostolic doctrine affirms that Jesus “gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world according to the will of God and our Father” (Gal 1:4). James said that “friendship with the world is enmity with God” (James 4:4), and John wrote, “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15). There is no such thing as a real salvation that does not really separate a person from the world – the world that is destined to pass away (2 Pet 3:10).

These things being true, the bulk of our salvation is on the other side. Here we have only the first

fruits (Rom 8:23; James 1:18). While we await the day when the “salvation that is ready to be revealed” will be realized (1 Pet 1:5), we are given a foretaste of the coming glory – tasting of the powers of the world to come (Heb 6:5). That foretaste in a word is the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:23). He is in-house Administrator of what we have from God. Whatever your view of the Spirit, and however you are persuaded that He works in you now, the real blessing of His ministry is that He brings to you some sampling of the glory to come – like Israel ate some of the grapes from the land of promise – “And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs” (Num 13:23-24). Those grapes were very real, and could be tasted and ingested. But the vine remained in the promised land, and to eat further from it, Israel had to go there.

If our eyes are turned toward the earth, it is NOT because of the ministry of Holy Spirit. Such a view is actually a swinish view, for the eyes of the swine are slanted toward the earth, and they cannot look up. The Spirit is the “Holy Spirit sent down from heaven” (1 Pet 1:12), and does not expend His effort to anchor us to a world that is passing away. This should be so apparent that nothing more needs to be said about it. To view the “bottom line,” so to speak, the Holy Spirit is presently leading you in ridding yourself of fleshly tendencies, while appropriating things that will actually transfer from this world to the next.

Essentially that is salvation! It is adequate preparation for death, the ultimate demise of the present heavens and the earth, and immediate profitable involvement in the coming day of judgment. If a person is not actually ready for those appointments, their entire life has been a total waste of time, and they will spend eternity in a place where there is not a single aspect of influence of God – a place where Jesus said there would be “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt 25:30). Salvation ensures complete and total deliverance from that awful place, and the kind of life that mandates a person going there.

I will tell you, that there is not enough being said to the nominal church about “salvation.” There is an unacceptable level of interest in and the knowledge of the salvation of God. There is too much in the average church that is of the world, and too little that is of God. There should be no attempt to explain these miserable conditions. God has prepared a great salvation. He has appointed for the establishment of its legitimacy in the atoning death of Christ. He has appointed an Administrator of it. He has wrapped it in grace, and made it accessible to “whosoever will.” He has provided an effective means of working it out, and sent His Holy Spirit to dwell in and empower the believer. There is simply no legitimate reason for sin to reign in any person when such a mighty salvation has been provided. But if any soul is foolish enough to despise or neglect it, they will not be able to avoid the wrath of God. He is serious about this salvation, which mandates that we be serious about it also.

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 23 of 34

IN OUR HEARTS

“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” (Verses 1-2, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

“ . . . in our hearts.” Every version reads the same: “in our hearts.”

In corroboration of this, we are provided the reason for this marvelous transaction (establishment and being anointed) – that is, the Lord giving us “the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” This has taken place because we are the sons of God. As it is written, “And BECAUSE YE ARE SONS, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal 4:6).

Our “hearts” are the most inmost part of our persons, even as our bodies are the most external part. Even though our bodies are referred to as “the temple of the Holy Spirit,” the Spirit is not primarily associated with our bodies. The body is a temple of the Holy Spirit in the same way that the Temple was called “the temple of the Lord” (2 Kgs 11:10). Actually, in the temple, the Lord is said to have dwelt “between the cherubims,” which were upon the mercy seat (2 Kgs 19:15). The heart is to man what the Most Holy place was to the Tabernacle and the Temple. That is where the Spirit dwells, or resides, thereby sanctifying the whole man.

Much is said about the Lord giving His people His Holy Spirit. Because of confusion on this subject, it will be good to consider just how God speaks about this.

1. “And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, GIVING THEM THE HOLY SPIRIT, even as he did unto us” (Acts 15:8).
2. “And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, whom God hath GIVEN TO THEM THAT OBEY HIM” (Acts 5:32).
3. “And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit WHICH IS GIVEN UNTO US” (Rom 5:5).
4. “Now WE HAVE RECEIVED, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Cor 2:12).
5. “Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also HATH GIVEN UNTO US the earnest of the Spirit” (2 Cor 5:5).
6. “And because ye are sons, God hath SENT FORTH THE SPIRIT OF HIS SON into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal 4:6).
7. “He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who HATH ALSO GIVEN UNTO US his Holy Spirit” (1 Thess 4:8).
8. “And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit WHICH HE HATH GIVEN US” (1 John 3:24).
9. “Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because HE HATH GIVEN US of His Spirit” (1 John 4:13).

The Holy Spirit is the possession that identifies the children of God. In fact, it is affirmed, “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Rom 8:9). Some might attempt to distinguish between the “Spirit of Christ” and “the Holy Spirit,” or “the Spirit of God.” The Spirit, the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Christ are one and the same. The very verse just cited confirms this to be the case. “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.”

The actual presence of the Holy Spirit is confirmed by what He produces. This includes “fruit” (Gal 5:22-23; Eph 5:9), mortifying the deeds of the body (Rom 8:13,14), an ever increasing change of our nature (2 Cor 3:18), waiting expectantly for the hope of righteousness (Gal 5:5), obeying the truth (1 Pet 1:22), the love of God being shed abroad in our hearts (Rom 5:5), truthfully confessing that “Jesus is the Lord” (1 Cor 12:3), keeping what God has committed to us (2 Tim 1:14), etc.

We have a right to expect these things to be found in any and every person who has the Holy Spirit – and “if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Rom 8:9). Now, there is something to think about.

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 24 of 34

A STRONG POINT

“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” (Verses 1-2, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

Remember, Paul is defending his Apostleship, which some of the Corinthians had questioned (1 Cor 9:1-3). Here his point is uncomplicated and straightforward. The Corinthians had received the Spirit, together with a number of “spiritual gifts” (1 Cor 1:7). None of the Corinthians doubted this. In fact, they appeared to be boasting because of that circumstance. Paul’s point is that they received the Spirit because they believed the Gospel that HE had preached to them.

There is no such thing as an Apostle with a powerless message, or a God-sent preacher (Rom 10:4) with an impotent word! Further, the effects of the message delivered, when it is believed, confirms if the messenger was sent from God or not – as seen in Paul and Corinth (1 Cor 3:5). Conversely, a powerless message cannot yield powerful results. Furthermore, God never sends a powerless message to anyone. Even when He sends “strong delusion” to those who refuse to receive “the love of the truth,” it has a determined effect – to prepare them for damnation: “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; BECAUSE they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. AND FOR THIS CAUSE God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess 2:10-12).

I want to affirm this again, that God never sends a message that has no power, or that does not produce Divinely intended results. I say this because there is a plethora of powerless preaching in our day – preaching that has not produced the promised and needed effects of the Gospel:—i.e. Deliverance from this present evil world (Gal 1:4); a new man that is created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph 4:24); a love of the brethren (1 John 3:14); new creatureship where old things pass away and all things become new (2 Cor 5:17); the crucifixion of the flesh (Gal 5:24), hearts and minds upon which the laws of God are written (Heb 8:10; 10:16); those who live by

faith (Heb 10:38); those who “have the Spirit of Christ” (Rom 8:9); overcoming the world (1 John 5:4-5) etc., etc. These, and other such results, are not mere options, or goals. They are the result of a “new creation” (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15), and where they are not found either the person has not been born again, or they have “fallen from grace” (Gal 5:4).

No academia-approach to preaching has ever produced the results that follow believing the Gospel of Christ (Rom 1:16). No person or group of persons can possibly invent a procedure that will yield such results – and these results are mandatory, for they establish whether or not a Gospel has been preached that is “the power of God unto salvation.”

CALLING GOD TO RECORD

In our text, Paul continues, “Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul . . .” Other versions read, “I call God as witness against my soul” (NKJV), “I call God as witness to my soul” (NASB), and “I call God as my witness” (NIV).

Paul now explains more fully and precisely why he did not come to Corinth as he had purposed (2 Cor 2:1–3). Keep in mind, Paul had spent eighteen months in Corinth, during which the problems that had now erupted were apparently not found. After he left, false teachers swooped in like spiritual vultures, contaminating and weakening that assembly. The same kind of thing happened in the Galatian churches (Gal 1:6-9). Those false teachers are the ones who had produced the conditions Paul had to address. To undergird what he says, Paul calls upon God to bear witness to the truth of his words. By saying “upon my soul,” or “against my soul,” he means that, should he be lying, God may strike him down for misrepresenting the case. However, if he is speaking the truth, which he is, the summons is for God to cast down the lies that have been spoken against His servant.

Paul used a similar expression in the eighteenth verse: “But as God is true.” He will appeal to God again in the eleventh chapter: “Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth” (11:11). He again states, “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not” (2 Cor 11:31). He spoke in the same way to the Galatians, who also suffered from some delusions about Paul: “Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not” (Gal 1:20).

The church of our day sorely needs preachers and teachers who can speak truthfully and powerfully in such a manner.

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 25 of 34

AN UNFORTUNATE CIRCUMSTANCE

“Moreover I CALL GOD FOR A RECORD upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are HELPERS OF YOUR JOY: for by faith ye stand. (Verses 23-24, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

It is lamentable that Paul had to defend who he was, and the message he declared. One might suppose such a defense was not necessary – that the Gospel will more or less defend itself. However, such a view is too simplistic, and does not take enough into consideration. There are imaginations that need to be cast down (2 Cor 10:4-5), and mouths that need to be “stopped”(Tit 1:11).

Paul wrote of two specific men, warning Timothy of them: “But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. He also wrote of a certain man, “Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words” (2 Tim 4:14-15). When pretentious Diotrephes spoke against the beloved brother John, the Apostle boldly confronted the situation. Concerning the circumstance, he wrote to Gaius, “Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church” (3 John 1:10). These kinds of teachers are preachers are abounding in our day, taking advantage of communication media. We should not be either naive nor indolent concerning the situation.

When some slandered Paul, they charged him with preaching a false gospel. Paul strongly defended what he had preached, making mention of these reports. “For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto His glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just” (Rom 3:47-8).

There are some lies that need to be refuted. While they do not personally harm the messenger of God, they make it more difficult for others to believe his word. When Paul, for example, was brought before a governor on charges of inciting a riot, he spoke in his defense, insisting that the charges were not true. “Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship. And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city: neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me” (Acts 24:12-13).

Now Paul has called God to witness to the truth of what he has said. It must be acknowledged that such action is strange in our society, and would not be considered to have much weight. However, in the Bible days, such an approach carried great weight indeed. There was more of a consciousness of God, and of His inclination to truth and withdrawal from those who lied. Besides this, when the Lord is publically called to witness to the truth of a thing, He at once becomes involved in that circumstance. Paul knew this, and thus made his appeal to the Lord openly, so that all the Corinthians could read it and ponder what he said.

MY OWN EXPERIENCE

Through the years I have experienced the effects of slanderous reports. While they are not to be compared with such a notable soul as Paul, I do know the effects of false accusations. Often

charged as being a controversial figure, many people who might have listened to what I have to say have turned the other way in fear of gaining a bad reputation. While this has been highly offensive, and like a thorn in my side, I have learned from experience the impact of false reports. Of course, I am not alone in this experience.

All of this has made me more aware of the necessity of speaking forthrightly, and always in strict concert with the Word of God, the purpose of God, and the nature of His great salvation. For me, it is imperative that I not have an emphasis or accentuation that is not so presented in Scripture. What is accented must be something upon which the Holy Spirit has placed stress.

It is in order to confront those who raise false accusations, not running from them like a wounded fawn. God can work through such confrontations if they are not in the flesh, or attended by “the wrath of man,” which does not work the righteousness of God (James 1:20).

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 26 of 34

TO SPARE YOU

“Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.” (Verse 23, Cor 1:21-24)

“. . . that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.” Other versions read, “it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth” (NIV), “it was in pity for you that I did not come to Corinth at that time” (BBE), and “The reason I didn't return to Corinth was to spare you from a severe rebuke” (NLT).

Although the Corinthian brethren were deserving of a harsh rebuke, yet Paul, at that time, in tender consideration, held back from doing so face-to-face. He knew that if he went there in person, the circumstance would require a sharp and cutting reprimand. Like the Lord Jesus did to the self acclaimed prophetess in Thyatira, Paul gave the Corinthians “space to repent” (Rev 2:21). He did not prefer to scold them, but sought rather to build them up in the most holy faith. Therefore, he took this temporary measure.

Let me again remind you of the conditions at Corinth. It will enable you to see the wisdom of Paul's stance.

1. What Paul had preached was opposed by some in Corinth. “Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?” (1 Cor 15:12).
2. They had questioned his apostleship. “Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord” (1 Cor 9:1-2).
3. They had no respect for his presence, even though they could not deny the power of his

writings. “For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible” (2 Cor 10:10).

As Paul will later affirm, the Corinthians were their own largest handicap. “You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections” [NASB] (2 Cor 6:12). As with the Hebrew believers he could say, “Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing” (Heb 5:11). Or, as the NIV puts it, “We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn.” Thus Paul sent them powerful letters to turn them into the way of truth, also sending them Timothy to bring the truth to bear upon their consciences (1 Cor 4:17; 16:10). Silas was also sent to preach to them (2 Cor 1:19).

Paul did not ignore the situation at Corinth, but chose a more charitable way to deal with it at that time. This would encourage them to turn from their ways without having to confront Paul face to face – which would not have gone well with them.

Where can a faithful preacher with understanding be found that has not experienced this very thing – a restrictive environment **WITHIN THE CHURCH ITSELF**. Men of God must often lisp in infantile Kingdom-talk if they are to obtain any degree of even casual interest. See, this is no new circumstance. Paul experienced it also. There were places like Corinth that he had to shun, giving them some time to come to their senses so they could profit from what he had to say. Very few people were able to receive the “unsearchable riches of Christ” that Paul had to give (Eph 3:8).

I will tell you that, while this circumstance still exists, it is not owing to any deficiency in the Gospel. Nor, indeed, is it always because the personal carnal difficulties of the people are not being addressed. Where there is no interest in the truth, unbelief is present. When holy men of God with a word from God are not preferred, it is because of hard hearts and stiff necks, just as it has always been.

With these things in mind, the gentleness of Paul shines in this book. He sets a noble example for us all. Because love seeks not its own, it compels the servant of God to seek the most charitable way of addressing the errors of the people. If this way is not successful, other measures will be taken. It is never right for unacceptable conditions to continue to exist – never.

When men of God can speak kindly face to face with the people, it is largely owing to the good spiritual temperament of the people themselves. Wayward people should not expect kindness, gentleness, and happy faces. They are in jeopardy of condemnation, and smiles and light-heartedness will not improve their situation. For this reason, Paul did not personally go to Corinth at that time. He knew that seeing their condition, and because of His tenderheartedness toward the Lord and sensitivity to spiritual inferiority, it would require him to use the rod. Therefore, in his first letter he wrote, “What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?” (1 Cor 4:21). Therefore, he gave them space to make some corrections in his absence – and they did so, as it is written: “For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter” (2 Cor

7:11).

We must be clear about this. No person living in contradiction of God's will has a right to demand "space." That is not a call they can make. Jesus gives "space to repent," but it is not lengthy, and men should not presume upon it (Rev 2:21).

As for Paul, he did not change his manner. He did not adjust his sensitivity to Corinthian carnality. He did not choose to be personally in the presence of professing believers that were living in contradiction of the will of God. Instead, he wrote a letter while absent from them, so he could be more gentle with them. However, his holy nature would not allow him to walk silently among sinning church members.

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 27 of 34

NOT HAVING DOMINION OVER YOUR FAITH

"Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are HELPERS OF YOUR JOY: for by faith ye stand. (Verse 24, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

Other versions read, "Not for that we would lord it over your faith" (NASB/NIV), "not that we have lordship over your faith" (ASV), "Not that we have authority over your faith" (BBE), "Not that we rule over your faith" (DARBY), "not because we exercise dominion over your faith" (DOUAY), and "But that does not mean we want to tell you exactly how to put your faith into practice" (NLT).

JESUS SPEAKS

During His earthly ministry, Jesus enunciated to His disciples one of the principles of His kingdom. This principle touches on the meaning of this passage. "And He said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. BUT YE SHALL NOT BE SO: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as He that serveth." (Luke 22:25-27).

THOSE WHO HAVE THE RULE OVER YOU

The body of Christ does not contain a hierarchy of authority, where some brethren exercise lordship over other brethren. It is true that there are those who "have the rule over us" (Heb 13:7,17,24). However, they are not like the "kings of the Gentiles" who "lord it over" (NIV) the people. The following is said of these spiritual leaders, who "have the rule over you."

1. They have "spoken unto you the Word of the Lord" (Heb 13:7a).
2. Their faith is to be "followed" (Heb 13:7b).

3. There is a lofty objective to their faith, so that their manner of life can be followed (Heb 13:7c).
4. They “watch for your souls” (Heb 13:17a).
5. They will “give an account” of the flock to Jesus (Heb 13:17b).

These do not “rule” by means of authority, as ordinarily perceived. Rather, they are leaders who are guiding the people in the ways of the Lord, where they themselves have gone. Their primary way of leadership is speaking the Word of God – bringing it to bear upon the hearts and consciences of men. A “leader,” in this case, is someone who knows the appointed goal and the way to get there. It is one who is advanced in this respect, and is on the road himself. He is not like the “kings of the Gentiles” – what we might call a “boss” or “manager.”

When addressing elders, in keeping with the words of Jesus, Peter was careful to make this very point. “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; **NEITHER AS BEING LORDS OVER GOD’S HERITAGE, BUT BEING EXAMPLES TO THE FLOCK**” (1 Pet 5:2-3). Having come from a background where an undue emphasis was placed on the “eldership,” I can tell you that this word of Peter is regularly transgressed in many assemblies. It is time for all leaders to confess with Paul that they do NOT have “dominion” over the faith of others.

THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL

There is no need to speculate on this subject. We have Paul as an example of one with Kingdom authority. First, he was part of a special group within the body of Christ that was “first” in rank. As it is written, “And God hath set some in the church, **FIRST APOSTLES**, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that . . .” (1 Cor 12:28) – NOT “first elders.” Notice that the three ranking ministries have to do with communicating the Word of God! God has never placed any authoritative people in His church who did not minister His Word! Those who cannot handle the Word of God, yet consider themselves leaders in the body of Christ, are imposters. They are not leaders at all. Those who can handle the Word of God **ARE** the appointed leaders – whether they are viewed in this way or not. By default, the person who can bring the Word of God to bear upon a situation is the one with the authority in that matter. They are the ones who have, as Scripture affirms, “spoken unto you the Word of the Lord.” It is in this way that the Spirit’s appointment is made clear: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which **THE HOLY GHOST HATH MADE YOU OVERSEERS**, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28).

Even though Paul was among those ranked “first,” he now states that he did not have “dominion” over the faith of the Corinthians – or anyone else. If anyone could have assumed the role of “boss,” it could have been Paul. He had more visions and revelations of God than others (2 Cor 12:7). He labored “more abundantly” than the others who were classed as “first” (1 Cor 15:10). The Lord Jesus gave him mercy “to be faithful” in his ministry (1 Cor 7:25). Speaking as a man, if anyone could have lorded it over the people, it would have been Paul. If he did not do so, what must be said of those who, occupying a lesser position, and having smaller understanding, take it upon themselves to lord it over the saints of the most high God?

Paul's authority was very real, yet was not one in which he dominated the people themselves. He categorically states that is "authority" was in order to edify, or build up, the people. "For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us FOR EDIFICATION, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed" (2 Cor 10:8).

Our text is an example of this very thing. The Apostle affirms that he is not taking dominion over their faith. He will not dictate what they are to believe, then cast them out if they do not do so. He will not manage how their faith is to be applied. He will not prescribe all of the details of spiritual life, like outlining a routine for the people to follow. That is the role of the Holy Spirit – "the anointing" that teaches us "all things" (1 John 2:27). That position of the Spirit is not to be usurped by men!

The role of the godly teacher is to set the food on the table. The only interposition that can be made is when flagrant violations of the Word take place – like the fornicator with which Corinth had to deal (1 Cor 5:5), or the idle busybodies in Thessalonica (2 Thess 3:6). In those cases, however, the point was not mere procedure. Defilement spreads like cancer, and thus is to be eliminated from the church. But even then, the man of God does not have "dominion" over the faith of the people.

Faith cannot function under the yoke of men! By its very nature it is between the individual and God. Lest the flesh attempt to take advantage of this circumstance, no individual is free to be wrong, or to live in conflict with the revealed will of God. However, faith is under the yoke of Jesus and His Word. Such a circumstance cannot be controlled by men. That is, it is impossible for men to have dominion over the faith of others. That is something for which God has made no provision. If, therefore, such attempted dominion is found, it constitutes a usurpation of the authority of God Himself.

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 28 of 34

"Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand. (Verse 24, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

THE MYTH OF ACCOUNTABILITY TO MAN

Because of the prevalence of sin among those who profess the name of Christ, there is a current stress of men being accountable to one another. While there may be some small tidbit of truth in this emphasis, it has been wholly blown out of proportion, and is really nothing more than a jewel in a swine's snout (Prov 11:22). If Corinth was not accountable to Paul – the premier Apostle, with unparalleled insight – who can possibly justify men being accountable to those of lesser stature? If Paul did not have dominion over the faith of the people converted under his preaching, how can the men of our generation possibly be accountable to their peers? This trend is nothing more than a psychological intrusion into matters with which it cannot cope.

There are some “Christian circles” where men are being taught they should make themselves accountable to others – sometimes more than one. This, it is taught, will assist the individual in maintaining a spiritually consistent life when he is away from his family or other believers. This view demeans Christ, denies the potency of faith, ignores the Holy Spirit, and shrugs off personal responsibility. It does not fit into the “great salvation” that is realized in Christ Jesus.

Being “subject to one another” (1 Pet 5:5) is by no means the same as being “accountable” to one another. True subjection is a means of growing, advancing, and appropriating more of the fulness of Christ.

The principle is this: those who themselves require a Savior cannot dominate the faith of others who need that same Savior. That should be clear enough to require no further explanation. Yet, I know very well that this cannot be received by many people. The matter related in First Peter 5:5 is not designed to assist people who have failed to crucify their flesh – something that must be done, and is done under the leadership of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:13-14). Further, it is clearly affirmed, “And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal 5:24). Crucified affections and lusts have no more power than the propensity to steal had over the impenitent thief on the cross. Furthermore, the grace of God effectively teaches people to reject ungodliness and worldly lusts (Tit 2:11-13). Making oneself accountable to someone else to maintain acceptable behavior is a denial of this fact.

Actually, this is all rather simplistic, but sin does make people “simple” (Prov 22:3).

Allow me to further expound this matter, for it is integral to the thought of one person not having dominion over the faith of another. God has provided One Savior for men – and only One. He is the Intercessor for them. Men are reconciled to God, and thus have access to Him through the Savior and by their faith. Their faith is effective in this matter, enabling them to come to the Lord to “obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need” (Heb 4:16). At no point can this access be reduced to a mere routine. It cannot be “taught” to men, like teaching someone to swim, or to build a house. There is no external procedure or discipline of mind that can guarantee you will obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need. This is all in the area of faith – and men cannot rule or direct your faith. Faith comes from God – it is “given” to men by Him (Phil 1:29). It is the grace of God that delivers faith to us, for grace is “exceeding abundant with faith” (1 Tim 1:14). When faith grows, becoming more robust and capable, thanksgiving is given to God, not to men. As it is written, “We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly” (2 Thess 1:3). For this reason, it is not possible for men to have dominion over the faith of others. It simply cannot be done.

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 29 of 34

HELPERS

“Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are **HELPERS OF YOUR JOY**: for by faith ye stand. (Verse 24, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

“ . . . but are **HELPERS OF YOUR JOY** . . . ”Other versions read, “fellow workers for your joy” (NKJV), “workers with you for your joy” (NASB), “we work with you for your joy” (NIV), “work together with you for your joy” (NIV), and “work together with you so you will be full of joy” (NLT).

The word “helpers” means “a companion in work, fellow worker” (STRONG’S). Lexically, it is defined as “one who labors with another in furthering the cause of Christ” (THAYER), “one who works together with someone else” (LOUW-NIDA), and “working together, joining or helping in work . . . fellow-workman, helpmate, coadjutor, accomplice . . . helping to synergism it, helping towards, helping a person in a thing . . . of the same trade” (LIDDELL-SCOTT).

Rather than having dominion over the faith and/or persons of the Corinthians, Paul was actually working together **WITH** them. This postulates a common activity. Those who are “workers together with Christ” (2 Cor 6:1), are necessarily workers together with one another. Because we have been called into the fellowship of God’s dear Son (1 Cor 1:9), we have consequently been called into companionship with all others who fellowship with the Son.

THE WORK IS COMPLEMENTARY IN NATURE

The word used joins the concepts of “work” and “help” – i.e. co-worker, fellow-worker, working together, or together causing it to happen. In the strictest sense of the word, where there is no work, there can be no real help. Conversely, where there is no true help, there had been no real work. And let us be clear about this, helping someone’s joy has nothing whatsoever to do with humor.

However, more is involved than simply working together – like being in the same field, working for the same employer, but having little to do with one another. In the Kingdom of Christ, work is complementary – that is, the work of one member enhances and stabilizes the work of the other members. The world calls this “synergy” – the total effect is greater than the sum of any individual effects. Take an automobile as an example. When it is working properly, the engine works, the transmission works, the fuel system works, the electrical system works, the axle and tires work, and the steering mechanism works. When they work together, the automobile has utility. When they do not, it is useless for the purpose for which it was intended.

In the body of Christ, the Head, Jesus Christ, ministers nourishment to the members through the members: that is, through the various gifts and ministries that have been given to them. Thus it is written, “. . . the Head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God” [NASB] (Col 2:19). Paul wrote similarly to the Ephesians: “. . . Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which **EVERY JOINT** supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of **EVERY PART**, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (Eph 4:16).

“Helping,” in effect, is the activity of the “joints and ligaments” – “every part.” At the point those who are working together with God touch the lives of kindred spirits, “help” is ministered – that is, the working of one members strengthens the working of the other members. All of the members are working on a common project, like the builders of the wall in Nehemiah’s time. As it is written, “So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work” (Neh 4:6). That “help” strengthens and builds up fellow pilgrims – something that is indispensable for a safe and rewarding journey from earth to glory. The work of the Lord has made no provision for members of Christ to sit on the sidelines and simply watch the others work.

The road to glory requires considerable effort on the part of the believer – every believer. The heart must “look” to Jesus (Heb 12:2). The soul must “reach forward” to the things that are ahead (Phil 3:13). Although the path leads through deserts, floods, and all manner of tests, we must “run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb 12:1). The devil is to be resisted through the steadfastness of our faith (1 Pet 5:8-9). We must not only fight, but fight the “GOOD fight of faith,” laying hold on eternal life (1 Tim 6:12). Faithfully, and through the Spirit, we are to “mortify our members that are upon the earth” (Rom 8:13; Col 3:5). Every insightful soul knows that we need help in these matters. Those who do not see this are simply “blind, and cannot see afar off” (2 Pet 1:9).

One of the great transgressions of the modern church is the simplicity with which it approaches, what is called, “the Christian life.” Its misdirected and shallow teaching has led people to minimize the value of fellow pilgrims. This has spilled over into a general neglect of the Scriptures, and a demeaning view of the assembly of the righteous. The net result of all of this is that serious believers are not receiving the “help” that is intended to come to them through the various members of the body of Christ. If anyone imagines this is not serious, the day of judgment will make it clear.

Now Paul puts his finger on a particular area in which he is ministering “help” – aiding and assisting the people of God.

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 30 of 34

OF YOUR JOY

“Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are HELPERS OF YOUR JOY: for by faith ye stand. (Verse 24, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

“ . . . of your joy . . . ” Other versions read, “fellow workers for your joy” (NKJV), and “so you will be full of joy” (NLT).

This is a most arresting consideration – arresting because it sharply conflicts with the general impressions Christians have been receiving in our part of the world. Rarely will you hear of “help” being applied to our “joy.” I would venture to say that most people would associate

“help” with problem resolution and burden-bearing. And, indeed, there is certainly an element of truth in that. Here, however, it is “JOY” that is helped.

The “joy” of which our text speaks is not mere happiness, as ordinarily perceived. This is a deep joy that is integral to spiritual life. It is not on the surface of life, but at its very heart. The Scriptures speak frequently of this joy. As we look briefly at these texts, it will become apparent that something of depth, duration, and strong support is intended.

1. “And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and EVERLASTING JOY upon their heads: they shall obtain JOY and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Isa 35:10).
2. “Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and EVERLASTING JOY shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and JOY; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away” (Isa 51:11).
3. “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me THE JOY AND REJOICING OF MINE HEART: for I am called by Thy name, O LORD God of hosts” (Jer 15:16).
4. “And not only so, but we also JOY IN GOD through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement” (Rom 5:11).
5. “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and JOY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT” (Rom 14:17).
6. “Now the God of hope fill you with ALL JOY and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost” (Rom 15:13).
7. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, JOY, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith” (Gal 5:22).
8. “And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with JOY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT” (1 Thess 1:6).
9. “My brethren, count it ALL JOY when ye fall into divers temptations”(James 1:2).
10. “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with JOY UNSPEAKABLE AND FULL OF GLORY” (1 Pet 1:8).
11. “And these things write we unto you, that your JOY MAY BE FULL” (1 John 1:4; 2 John 1:12).

That is a “joy” that must be “helped”– helped by Divinely appointed means. It cannot rise up from nature, nor can it be sustained from the well of human wisdom. Further, as we will find, faith cannot be sustained without this joy. The joy of reference assists in stabilizing our faith. It is a joy that serves to clarify the realities for which we long, for “faith is the substance of things HOPE FOR, and evidence of things not seen” (Heb 11:1).

This joy is not primarily emotional, but is rather fundamentally rational. That is, the joy is produced by what we know, not what we feel. Our feelings, which are noted for being most erratic, are impacted by the perception of God and Christ Themselves, together with a persuasion of the truth of God’s “exceeding great and precious promises” (2 Pet 1:4). However, this joy does not stop at our feelings. This is a joy that can be “full,”yielding Kingdom advantages that cannot otherwise be realized.

If the joy of the Lord was equated with “strength” in Nehemiah’s day (Neh 8:10), what may be said of it in this “day of salvation” – when we are receiving of the “fulness” of the Son of God Himself (John 1:16)? God be praised and thanked for every Kingdom laborer who helps our joy. What a blessing to journey to our heavenly home, joyful as we go.

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 31 of 34

BY FAITH YOU STAND

“Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are HELPERS OF YOUR JOY: for by faith ye stand. (Verse 24, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

Other versions read, “for in your faith you are standing firm” (NASB), “because it is by faith you stand firm” (NIV), “because you stand firm in the faith” (NRSV), and “for it is faith which is your support” (BBE).

This is the reason why Paul was a helper of their joy – because the Corinthians were, as well as we are, standing by faith! Therefore, the joy of reference has an impact upon faith, which is the means through which we are “grounded and settled” (Col 1:23).

What does it mean to “stand?” Does this simply entail not being knocked down – that you are somehow able to survive the trials and difficulties of life? That this is involved cannot be denied, but it is not the whole of the matter. Nor, indeed, is the life of faith revealed in never being knocked down at all, for it is written that we are “struck down, but not destroyed” [NKJV] (2 Cor 4:9). “Standing” does not suggest that those with faith never, in some sense, fall. Again it is written, “For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again”(Prov 24:16). However, such falls are not the result of stumbling, which is the consequence of walking in the “night” (John 11:9-10). These are falls that occur in the ferocity of spiritual battle, when saints of God are “pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that” they even “despair of life” (2 Cor 1:8). However, even in those difficult circumstances, such souls remain “standing” in the sense of our text. This is a standing that views the conclusion of the battle, and the ultimate frustration of the wicked one. This an “after-the-trial” point of view.

The word “stand” means “to cause or make to stand . . . to make firm, fix, establish” (THAYER). It has more to do with character than with circumstance. It is a consequence of spiritual stability. It is a condition in which the believer becomes resilient, and able to ride the high waves of trial without drowning in despair.

The word “stand” depicts a mighty oak tree, swaying under the force of contrary winds, yet remaining firmly rooted and unmoved. It provides the image of a mighty warrior that concludes the battle on his feet – like “Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David” (2 Sam 23:9). Once, when the Philistines attacked, and “the men of Israel were gone away,” he “arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave [stuck,

NKJV] unto the sword” (2 Sam 3:10). He “stood!”

Standing is the condition of a runner who completes the race, and a worker who finishes his project. Standing has to do with not being deterred in the race that is set before us. It is not being turned aside to lesser things or becoming enamored with things that will pass away. It speaks of consistency, stability, firmness, and steadfastness. The person who stands is resolute, and continues pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, even amidst oppositions, hindrances, and discouragements.

Somehow, the people of God must be brought to the point where they “stand” – where the word of God is fulfilled in them, “having done all, to stand” (Eph 6:13). Vacillating Christians bring no glory to God, and dishonor the Son of God. Those who do not “stand” suggest that the Gospel is not true at all. They make it appear as though Jesus is neither sufficient nor effective in saving His people. Such people are a blotch on the canvas of life – a source of vexation to God Himself, a discouragement to His people, and a cause for criticism from His enemies. I do not say these things because of a disdain for people, but because of a love for Christ Jesus, of whom it is said, “He shall save His people from their sins” (Matt 1:21). Not standing contradicts that statement.

Here, “standing” is traced back to “faith,” which is helped along by spiritual joy – “BY faith ye stand.” Ponder what the Spirit says concerning “standing.”

1. “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we STAND . . .”(Rom 5:2)
2. “. . . thou STANDEST by faith . . .”(Rom 11:20)
3. “. . . God is able to make him STAND.”(Rom 14:4)
4. “. . . the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye STAND” (1 Cor 15:1)
5. “Watch ye, STAND fast in the faith . . .”(1 Cor 16:13)
6. “STAND fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free . . .”(Gal 5:1)
7. “Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to STAND against the wiles of the devil.”(Eph 6:11)
8. “Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to WITHSTAND in the evil day, and having done all, to STAND.”(Eph 6:13)
9. “STAND therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.”(Eph 6:14)
10. “. . . so STAND fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.”(Phil 4:1)
11. “Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may STAND perfect and complete in all the will of God.”(Col 4:12).
12. “For now we live, if ye STAND fast in the Lord.”(1 Thess 3:8)
13. “Therefore, brethren, STAND fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.”(2 Thess 2:15)
14. “. . . this is the true grace of God wherein ye STAND.”(1 Pet 5:12)

Stand weary pilgrim, STAND! If you are weary, and have been knocked down (Prov 24:16; Cor 4:9), get up, and STAND! Whatever is included in the phrase “having done all, to stand” (Eph 6:13), DO IT! Be a living testimony to the effectiveness of faith, which is helped along by joy.

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 32 of 34

THE NECESSITY OF STANDING PRESUMES INIMICAL INFLUENCES

“Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are HELPERS OF YOUR JOY: for by faith ye stand. (Verse 24, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

The necessity to “stand” presumes inimical, contradicting, and aggressive influences. We are not being brought to glory in a moral or spiritual vacuum. Rather, we are journeying through the territory of the enemy, confronting hostile forces within and without – as Israel did in their trek from Egypt to Canaan.

This situation forbids a casual spiritual posture, or a diversion to lesser things. If we are going to “walk in the light” (1 John 1:7), it must be in a stable and insightful posture. If we are going to “walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham” (Rom 4:12), spiritual solidity and toughness are required. If we are going to “walk in the Spirit” (Gal 5:16), we must be on our spiritual feet.

Now, we are told, “for by faith ye stand.” Faith is the secret to spiritual stability. It is the reality that keeps the soul from wavering, vacillating, and halting between two opinions (1 Kgs 18:21). Faith equips the soul to stand amidst the storm of trial, and the floods of ungodly of men. If a person has faith, they can survive every trial, every test, and every battle, for “faith is the victory that overcomes the world” (1 John 5:4). The earth has nothing that equates with faith, or can effectively compete against it. The enemies of our soul possess no power or influence that is greater than faith. That is precisely why it is written, “for BY FAITH ye stand!” But what does that mean?

Faith involves spiritual rationality, for it is “by faith” that we “understand” (Heb 11:3). It brings clarity to the understanding, so that all doubt about the Person, accomplishments, and ministry of Christ are removed.

Our ability to “stand” is directly proportionate to the lucidity of Christ Jesus and things relating to the redemption that is in Him. If our perception of Jesus Christ and His wonderful works is not clear to us, we at once become vulnerable to the devices of the devil – for BY FAITH WE STAND. If confidence, assurance, and understanding – all aspects of faith – are not found in us, or are at low levels, stability is virtually impossible – for BY FAITH WE STAND. If it is difficult for the individual to trust in the Lord, leaning the weight of their soul upon Him, falls will come more easily – for BY FAITH WE STAND.

Faith is like the eye of the soul. It brings the ability to see things that are beyond the perimeter of flesh and blood. It enables us to become familiar with God and the things He has prepared for those who love Him (1 Cor 2:9). If that inner “eye” is weak, and cannot peer beyond present circumstances, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to survive the attacks of the wicked one – for BY FAITH WE STAND.

Faith is like the hand of the soul, that grasps the things of God, seeing the sense and accessibility of them. That is what enables believers to hold the Word of God in their hearts, that they might not sin against the Lord (Psa 119:11). Faith renders the believer capable of confidently taking hold of the promises of God, and living in joyful expectation of their fulfillment. If that “hand” of the soul is infirm, and unable to take hold of the things of God, we will not be able to withstand the winds of trial and adversity – for BY FAITH WE STAND.

– Given O. Blakely

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

Lesson 33 of 34

THE ENVIRONMENT OF FAITH

“Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are **HELPERS OF YOUR JOY**: for by faith ye stand. (Verse 24, 2 Cor 1:21-24)

There is a certain environment in which faith will flourish. It is a surrounding where an acute consciousness of the Living God can be found. It is a domain in which there is a keen awareness of the frailty of the flesh, and the poverty of nature. It is an environ in which Jesus Christ is seen as absolutely preeminent and essential. An environment where thoughts are being cultured for worldly affairs and interests in temporal matters, is not good soil for faith.

Faith flourishes within a boundary where the Word of God is plenteous, and the exceeding great and precious promises of God are in the spotlight. Faith does not come, is not maintained, and does not function independently of Divinely appointed means. Faith comes from God (Eph 6:23), but is not like magic. It does not suddenly sprout up in the soil of flesh, nor can it be sustained within the rocky soil of the cares and delusions of this present evil world (Matt 13:20-22). Faith has to be fed (1 Tim 4:6), and men must fight to maintain it (1 Tim 6:12). It can only survive when it is close to God, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and coupled with a living hope.

Faith is not merely intellectual – a sort of spiritual warehouse in which a lot of facts are stored and remain dormant. There are such realities as “the **SPIRIT** of faith” (2 Cor 4:13), “the **HEARING** of faith” (Gal 3:2), “the **SHIELD** of faith” (Eph 6:16), “the **PRAYER** of faith” (James 5:15), and “the **WORK** of faith” (2 Thess 1:11). These are all activities, requiring the personal involvement of the individual. They require a certain strength of faith – the kind that was found in our father Abraham. As it is written, “And being **NOT WEAK IN FAITH**, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was **STRONG IN FAITH**, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform” (Rom 4:19-21).

Our text confirms the role of spiritual joy in this matter. Paul was helping the “joy” of the Corinthians with a keen awareness of the impact that would have upon their faith. When the heart is made glad in the Lord, faith becomes more robust. When we “rejoice in Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:3), the sinews of our faith are strengthened. Too, when faith is strong, joy flourishes, and

the heart is “glad in the Lord” (Psa 64:10).

Joy and faith are like siamese twins – joined together. They move about together. When one is weak it impacts upon the other. When one is made strong, it has a good effect upon the other.

Those laborers who are sent forth by Jesus have a marked interest in the faith of the people to whom they minister. They know that a weak faith gives the advantage to the devil, and that the victory that overcomes the world is our faith (1 John 5:4). Those who are working together with God refuse to have dominion over the faith of those they teach, for they know God has made absolutely no provision for such a dominion. Faith is between individual and the God who gave it. The real Kingdom worker, labors to help the joy of the believer, thereby strengthening faith. Let those who are capable of such a work get up and do it! There is a crying need within the professed church for people who are not weak in faith, but strong in faith!

HELPERS OF YOUR JOY

“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are HELPERS OF YOUR JOY: for by faith ye stand. (2 Cor 1:21-24)

Lesson 34 of 34

CONCLUSION

The text with which we have dealt provides a sort of spiritual focus. Even though there were a great number of problems in the Corinthian church, the Apostle was able to pierce through the fog emitted by those problems, and get to the heart of things. There is a certain spiritual aptitude involved in such an action that can only come from the Lord. False doctrines and misdirected lives do emit a kind of fog that clouds the mind and produces a spiritual indifference that is lethal. The “Christian” world is filled with pockets of spiritual haze that greatly distort the vision of the people. Each religious sect or denomination actually maintains one or more of these pockets of spiritual fog. In fact, the beclouding is the means Satan employs to keep the denomination going.

Instead of referring to “denominations” or “sects,” Paul used the more proper words “divisions” and “heresies.” If you are familiar with his words on the subject, you know they were very strong. Because of those erroneous divisions he said the Corinthians were “carnal,” and could not be addressed as people of sound spiritual understanding (1 Cor 3:1). He also stated that it was necessary for these heresies to be present “that they which are approved may be made manifest among you” (1 Cor 11:19). Other versions read, “there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you” (NKJV); “there must be divisions among you so that you who have God's approval will be recognized!” (NLT); “there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized” (ESV); “For doubtless there have to be factions or parties among you in order that they who are

genuine and of approved fitness may become evident and plainly recognized among you” (AMPLIFIED).

Therefore, Paul wrote the truth to the people, knowing that those who were approved of God would recognize and embrace it, even if they had been temporarily confused by the conditions at Corinth. Those who are liberated by the truth will always be able to recognize the truth itself.

To the very people among whom some questioned his Apostleship, denied the resurrection of the dead, and treated brethren with contempt, he spoke of being “established,” “sealed,” “anointed,” and receiving “the earnest of the Holy Spirit.” The heresies to which they had been submitted had nothing whatsoever to do with Jesus, salvation, faith, or hope. They were from men and they exalted men.

These teachings did not produce faith, but caused unbelief. They did not bring hope, but moved the people to settle down in the world, and live as though the here and the now were the only things to consider. Where spiritual deficiencies exist in inordinate measures, and erroneous ideas are readily accepted, one must be willing to at least consider that the truth has not been delivered properly to the people.

So Paul blasts a shaft of spiritual life into the stifling darkness that was spreading through that assembly. He told them what the Lord had done, was doing, and would do. He ministered to their joy, for heresies always rob men of true spiritual joy. They make for spiritual moroseness, stifle faith, quench the Spirit, and encourage spiritual infantilism.

Therefore, Paul takes the spiritual weaponry that is available to every child of God, and pulls down the spiritual strongholds that have been erected in Corinth. He casts down imaginations, and high things that had exalted themselves against the knowledge of God (2 Cor 10:4-5). He refuses to have dominion over their faith, but rather chooses to be a helper of their joy.

This is a most marvelous thing! It reveals the proper manner in which labors for Jesus are to be accomplished. Every faithful minister must shine the light on what God has done in Christ Jesus. It is imperative that the saints hear about the reality of establishment and the glory of anointing. The role of faith must be underscored, and the ministers must be obvious helpers, strengthening the joy of the people. All of this is doable if men choose to be “laborers together with God” (1 Cor 3:9).

– Given O. Blakely