

May 17, 1970 P.M. WKRT. ✓

THE STIRRING OF THE SPIRIT

John 3:8

Acts 2

INTRODUCTION:

And suddenly a sound as a rushing mighty wind filled the house.

The wind blowth and hear the sound there of, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whether it goeth so is everyone that is born of the Spirit. Some people, as you judge by their words and actions, think the Holy Spirit and His ministry has for many years been a special monopoly. There are people who think that the operation of the Holy Spirit is limited to a certain group.

Throughout the Bible, every man and movement that has been used, has been because of the Holy Spirit. There was definite guidance to do so. As God entrusted and saw fit to use them.

This is displayed by the interview with our Lord by Nicodemus. An educated, thoughtful man, Jesus sought to lead him on to reality in religion with the expression of a new birth or a new creature. That every man who found his way into the kingdom must undergo a second birth.

How can this be. It was late at night. And this Spiritual truth was illustrated with the stirring of the Spirit. The wind was a figure of the Spirit. The wind might teach something of the action, also about the authorship of the new birth.

The stirring of the wind arrests the attention of a man. It blows where it listeth. Sometimes with swiftness, over the surface of the earth. Rushing hither and yon.

We might illustrate this with the tornado in Lubok, Texas, this past week. Many people dead and 10,000 left homeless. By this invisible force. This over mastering power. But sometimes, its breath is so gentle that a single leaf or a blade of grass will give just a token of its action. Then at times it bursts upon the earth with destructive violence. Nothing can resist it. Solid buildings, stout trees.

But we know little of it. You hear the sound there of, you can not tell whence it cometh and whether it goeth. Such is human ignorance.

We know the wind because, first, we feel the chill of it. The blast of it, as it sweeps across the ocean, the forest, the fields. Second, we see how the blades of grass rise and fall and the trees bend. And third, we hear the sound of it.

I suspect sometimes we need to think about the Spiritual in the same sense. Whether it comes in whispers or it roars as it passes over us. Yet, what do we really know about it. Does the wind obey. Is it a mere symbol. The psalmist said, God bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures. So he adds, everyone that is born of the Spirit - the new birth in man. Our Lord desires to convey something more than the real mysterious agent of the Holy Spirit.

In like manner, the wind of Heaven blows where it listeth. The majesty of the Scripture is recognized by the man who has a Spiritually true and trained ear. He knows that the inspiration of the word was given by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit living in the church and in the body of Christ stirs. When he lives in the Christian soul, he continues to speak to the conscience. He speaks in the voice of prayer. He produces love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance. Where he makes his home, there is no mistaking the atmosphere of his presence.

Now the Bible makes it plain in the ages of the past that there were conflicting Spirits. There was a struggle between light and darkness. Between the Almighty and the adversary. And this warfare continues until the ultimate triumph of the King of Kings. Between God of the universe which is light and of the one we call Satan. And that's why we need the whole armour of God. To go uninformed and unarmed with the Gospel in all the world is to invite on slaught of the wicked one. There are many failures, even among those who respond, to the Great Commission. They may know the love of God and the lost condition of the heathen but do not know the realities of Spiritual warfare.

We are to know the dynamic indwelling of the Holy Spirit. With him, we enter the conflict with the powers of darkness.

In the book of Acts - it has much instruction, and encouragement.

We have first the same message as the Apostles had.

Second, we have the same ~~that the~~ Holy Spirit had.

Third, we face the same human needs.

Fourth, we have the same opportunities.

Fifth, we have the same opposition that they encountered.

We live in a bad world, haunted by uncertainty, and dazzled by science. What a shame some ignore the Great Commission, others believe that Christ died only for them.

It is unfortunate we have tried to hide our sin of unbelief. Our lack of evangelistic activity, by emphasizing the apparent differences and identification tags. Now anyone genuinely constrained by the Holy Spirit cannot deny that under God personal evangelism can be carried out.

When a person is constrained by the Holy Spirit, organization and administrative problems represent no real obstacle but rather become a challenge. When a man is constrained by the Holy Spirit, he thinks and works even against all hope. And does super natural work in a natural way.

If each of us could understand the significance of being constrained by the Holy Spirit we would spare no effort today, tomorrow, or anytime - or resources in evangelistic activity.

Constrained by the Holy Spirit, the mother of Moses put him in a basket in the River Nile.

Constrained by the Holy Spirit, Pharaoh's daughter rescued him.

Later, constrained by the Spirit, Moses refused to be called the son, of Pharaoh's daughter. Denied the temporal things and was sustained by the invisible God.

By the stirring of the Holy Spirit, Phillip was removed from an activity of blessedness which he had dedicated his life too. To go to an Ethiopian. A man who was tormented in soul.

The Holy Spirit led Peter to denounce his exclusive spirit to go to the home of Cornelius with a message of good news. For they had long spent time and prayer, and good works - but their spirit was restless.

It was the Spirit that caused Paul to say, I stand at Casear's Judgement Seat. He rejected the philosophy of his day.

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

You will note the stirring of the Spirit. It is not controlled by circumstances - by time - nor by people.

Rather, it is the definite answer to a contrite, humble, and above all, obedient heart.

Now it is not enough for us to know in theory that the Holy Spirit can constrain us. But it is absolutely necessary to accept by faith that he will do so.

The (apparent absence) of concrete manifestation of the Holy Spirit today is not due to a lack of modern Apostles. Nor to a lack of information about him. But I think rather, to a neglect and unbelieving Spirit on the part of leaders, to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel. The need to give liberty to the Spirit. To compensate for their lack.

I think another reason is unconditional surrender to God. It is not only adviseable but imperative to every member in the body of Christ. Psalm 51. It is indispensible to the health of the church. We can never create ministers. Our task is limited. We must deny ourselves. We must first lose ourselves to find ourselves.

Nothing mechanical or professional will develop the work in our churches. If we deny the Holy Spirit. We need to be touched, cleansed, and pardoned as did Isaiah of old. Total surrender is a challenge to the impossible.

Paul asked Ephesians whether they had really taken the Holy Spirit into their plan. Whether they had invited them to cast light on the solution of their problems. Must we confess that we have acted and decided first. And then turned to the Lord and said, carry on. Col. 1:18, stresses that in all things Christ must have pre-imminence.

One cannot read Acts without noticing the tremendous place given to the work of the Spirit.

Acts 1:2, commanded them to wait for the endowment or power that was to be given by the Lord through the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost was spoken of as fulfilling the word, spoken by the Holy Spirit through the Prophets. The Apostles preached faith and repentance, people responded, and were spoken of as having been forgiven in the Holy Spirit.

From then on, nobody ever thought of a Christian apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. Christians were born of the Spirit. And enabled by the Spirit to receive Spiritual truth. Which an ordinary man could not understand.

The Spirit of love was shed abroad in their hearts which gave them a deep concern.

The Spirit by filling a man gave him an immediate desire to fulfill our Lord's command to be a witness. This is clearly seen on the day of Pentecost. It is a compelling force, and the result of the filling was an immediate burst of preaching with power. Which brought conviction and a turning to the Lord.

This stirring of the Spirit you must remember. Jesus made thorough preparation of his Disciples for the coming of the Spirit. John 1:33. John's prophesy among them who see the Spirit descending, shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost. Ye shall receive power. Go ye therefore.

It is necessary to understand the identification with Jesus with the Holy Spirit. In order to appreciate the sense in which he constrains us.

After our best efforts to define and classify the Spirit, the Trinity remains a challenge to human life. But since the Spirit is so vital to the functioning of Christ's body, we need an understandable, useable definition. And we need it stated often. God the Father is the Almighty. Unlimited, invisible God.

God the Son is this Almighty God made understandable to finite minds.

God the Spirit is this Mighty God, comprehensible through the Word. Made available to the now enlightened and through regeneration equips us for service.

Paul perhaps is not bothered about this complication. Rom. 8:9-11, he uses terms filled of God, Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, Christ the Spirit, The Spirit that raised up Jesus from the Dead. Almost interchangeably.

John 20-22 we read, he breathed on them and said unto them, receive thee the Holy Ghost even as His breath could not exist without Him, so the Spirit depends upon the Son, upon Jesus. His breath extended the sphere of his personal influence. Reality without the actual being of Jesus would be impossible.

This, Jesus said, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. And this is the thing that John records, the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive. John 7:39.

It is not extreme to define the Holy Spirit, as the now available, the immediately accessible Jesus.

I think the final days of Jesus on this earth. John 14:15-16. Verse 16-18. The Disciples are to receive another comforter, who is to abide with them forever. He is to be a stand-by, a helper. Their Christian lives thus far had been totally dependent upon Jesus.

They understood what a stand-by or a comforter could mean and they understood the term. The first one could not abide, with them continually in the physical sense. Because he had to die. And because after Pentecost he could be in many places. And if believers were to continue to enjoy his presence, this could be done by his Spirit. Now in case the Disciples did not understand Jesus said plainly, I will not leave you orphans, I will come back to you. Verse 18. That makes it clear. That here is the possible indwelling by means of the Spirit. And of course this made them responsible in John 15, he tells them that they are to go forth. And it is the love of Christ that constrains us. The urge of the Spirit moves and directs our lives.

Paul says we believe and therefore, we must speak. I Cor. 9:16.

Whenever the Spirit stirs, then Revival movement is born. Men are compelled to witness. They feel a deep obligation and to deny it is to suffer loss Spiritually. Now the witness was to be to Christ. A crucified Saviour to His cross and victory.

The compulsion to the Spirit to witness brought with it the guidance of the Spirit. It constrained men to take the message to the Gentile world.

It moved upon the church to set apart Barnabas and Paul. It is obvious that Paul knew from the beginning that he was to take the Gospel to the Gentiles.

It is significant that the Spirit is both the positive and negative as seen in Acts 8: 16. The Apostles were moved by the Holy Spirit, not to speak the word in Asia. The Spirit of Jesus did not allow them to go. But the vision of the man of Macedonia was regarded as a clear direction. And they set out to go. Concluding that God had called them to preach the Gospel to them.

The Spirit took action and stirred, in breaking down natural barriers that existed between the early Christians, the Samaritans, and the Gentile world.

Therefore, we discover that Paul taught much about the Spirit, for it is what he believed about the Spirit that led him and made him the man that he was.

First, Paul taught that all Christians were born of the Spirit. It is the Spirit that restrains the Christian from anxiety and doubt. Their bodies became the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit indwelt them. They were regarded as an inheritance, sealed by the Spirit. The whole chapter is based on the fact, that it is the Spirit that brings life. Rom. 8:11. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus, from the dead.

The Spirit helps us in our weakness. It helps us in our prayers and intercedes. And Paul urges, I. Cor. 2, he speaks of the Spirit imparting the secret and the hidden wisdom, which is revealed. It helps a man to understand the thoughts of God. And it makes it possible for him to understand the gifts of God. I Cor. 2:13.

That human wisdom is one thing, but to be taught by the Spirit is another. The Spirit is the ink with which Christ writes. It impresses the hearts of men.

2 Cor. 3:7-8, he speaks of the ministry of the Spirit in ministering. He expects Timothy to regard the truth, entrusted to him by the Spirit.

Now Paul's beliefs are very important today. The hub of certainty about the Christian message is being attack. Not only being irrelevant to our age, but as being no longer true. Now against such opposition, we like Paul must turn to the dominating power of the Holy Spirit to command and direct us. I think the Spirit helped him in the following ways.

First, the Spirit helped him to be unashamed of the Gospel. Everywhere he writes and speaks of a deep conviction that men need the Gospel, for they are lost. And that he has the answer to their needs.

Second, the Spirit made him a debtor to all mankind. Here was a deep obligation constrained by the Spirit to speak to all men everywhere.

Third, it made him aware that he was a chosen vessel. That he had a mission of suffering, to bear a message to Kings and Gentiles. The unsearchable riches of Christ.

Fourth, it made him know that Christ was to have pre-eminence in all things. He was to count all things lost.

In the fifth place, it made him tremendously concerned, with the life of the converted. His aim was live like Christ. To be possessed of the Spirit. He was concerned with the quality of their behavior. And to be strong in the love of Christ. To walk worthy of their calling. He wanted them to put away falsehood, anger, corrupt speech, grieving the Spirit, bitterness, unforgiving Spirit, unclean living. He was interested in the relationship of husband and wife, children, and servant.

In the sixth place, it made him aware of the gifts God had given through the Spirit. To the Christian for the benefit of the church. He is certain of this. Eph. 4:7. To equip God's people for work in His service to the building up of the body of Christ.

And Seventh, like the Apostle John, he came to see the supreme place of love in the Christian life. He saw this as part of the fruit. God's love.

Eighth, the Spirit made him a great expositor at the cross of Christ. By the Spirit, he was enabled to set forth the meaning of the glory that Christ died for men. How thrilling when people discover the stirring of the Spirit. As the man Jesus talked too by night to listen to the wind. Catherine Marshall, tells a story about two former drug users. Jeff And Carey Buddington have united with Cape Cod Church. Their son is pastor. This couple had led a hippie life. They had spent their time working against the institution, they called it, until they were hungry, starving, and cold. And they discovered they had just as many hang-ups and problems as out in the world. So they fled to the woods in Oregon, worked with a group, and

took acid trips. But some Christians there had compassion for them and cut some fire wood. And this really set them thinking. They said that God loved them and they were doing it for them. And this brand of Christianity set them thinking. And the key was the Holy Spirit. They had encountered the unHoly Spirit. They had been under the power of the unHoly Spirit for months.

They tried all drugs, sex, protest marches, sit ins, witchcraft, rebellion against the establishment.

Most of us have been moving around in ~~the~~ blind ~~circles~~ circles, bumping into one another & getting angry & uptight —

In the hippie commune, they're still doing their own thing —
In the Christian community they're doing His thing!

Now our work is making sense again — finding the good news about Jesus —