

DEALING WITH THE SPIRIT

The innermost and deepest as well as the loftiest part [of man] is the spirit... We may say that the spirit is the genuineness of man, **the genuine man**. [It] is deeper than the heart, [and] more genuine than the heart. Our living and acting must be according to our spirit that we may be genuine... **Even our spiritual activities**, such as praying, fellowshiping, and preaching must all be done in our spirit to be genuine. Any activity without the exercise of our spirit is outward, shallow, and also false... It is not an intentional pretension, but **the use of a wrong organ**... Generally, a man is most genuine **when he loses his temper**, for at that time his spirit is released. When a man is not angry, he always follows a certain set of rules or **etiquette outwardly**, his real situation being **hidden** within. But when he becomes extremely mad, to the point that he can neither bear nor hide his anger any more, he explodes regardless of everything. What he feels inwardly, he speaks forth outwardly; how angry he feels within, he expresses without; his outward manner depicts his real condition within. At this time his spirit, that is his genuineness, comes forth. Therefore, one who is refined in appearance and who seldom loses his temper is usually a false man, while one who often loses his temper is genuine...

The Meaning of Dealing with the Spirit

We must learn the lesson concerning the spirit in two aspects: one is to **let the spirit come forth**, and the other is to **let the spirit come forth cleanly**. The purpose of the previous lessons on dealing with the flesh, the self, and the natural constitution is to let the spirit come forth. The result of the dealings is that the spirit may be released. It is not enough, however, if we simply experience the breaking of the outward surroundings of the spirit so that the spirit can be released, for when it is released, **whether its condition is correct, upright, pure and unmixed is still another aspect** of the problem... For example, we have said that when a man loses his temper, his spirit comes forth easily. But the spirit which comes forth at such a time is undoubtedly cruel, full of hatred, and rude. This is an improper condition of the spirit. As another example, consider a brother who is going to a certain place to preach. He knows from experience that he cannot rely on his outer man, but that he must allow his spirit to be released; hence, he denies self and rejects the natural constitution. As a result, his spirit as well as the Holy Spirit within his spirit are really released so that many people are touched. However, while he is speaking, there is a desire to exhibit himself and gain the praises of man, as well as a desire to compete with others and surpass them. This improper condition of boasting is manifested along with the release of his spirit. Without doubt his spirit is released at this time, but the condition of its being released is neither right nor pure. Strictly speaking, within our spirit there are many impure elements, such as haughtiness, boastfulness, crookedness, unfairness, cunning, subtlety, rebellion, and stiff-neckedness. **The condition is complicated and delicate beyond our imagination**. Therefore it is a problem whether or not our spirit is released, but even more a problem **whether it is clean when it is released**. With regard to our spirit, not only should we allow it to be released without any hindrance, but we should also cause it to be clean, pure, and proper when released..

The Spirit Itself Is Not Defiled

Though we have said that the spirit must be clean, yet the spirit itself is not actually filthy. Indeed, 2 Corinthians 7:1 says to *“cleanse ourselves from all defilement of...spirit,”* but this defilement is **not of the spirit itself**, but a defilement effected by the soul and body. In Genesis 3 we see that at the fall,... man’s **soul** has been corrupted and made filthy. In addition, with his **body** man ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; therefore man’s body has been contaminated by the mingling of the element of Satan. Yet at this time **man’s spirit was not involved**... Therefore, after the human fall, although man’s spirit was deadened through the defiling influence of soul and body, yet there was no mingling of the element of Satan in the spirit... For example, our conscience at times is contaminated and produces the feeling of offense; yet the conscience itself has no problem. This fact still remains until today, and it is proven by the unsaved, who, whenever their spirit is revived or their conscience is touched, always stand on the side of God. They are able to differentiate between good and evil, and, through the fellowship part of their spirit, have the concept of worshipping God. Even the strongest atheist, who denies the existence of God, has still a sense deeply within him of God. These remaining functions of the spirit prove that the spirit itself is clean.

The Passage Of The Spirit Is Filthy

If the spirit itself is not filthy, why does it sometimes manifest itself in an unclean and improper manner? It is because **the spirit must pass through many of our inward parts when it comes forth**. Within the inward parts is filthiness, so that when the spirit passes through them it is defiled, and thus the filthiness is brought forth also...For example, the water from a hot spring often bears the odor of sulphur. Actually the water itself is clean and odorless, but as it flows out, it passes through a sulphur deposit and brings with it the sulphuric element. Since there is the element of sulphur in the water, it becomes sulphur water, and when it flows out it carries with it the sulphuric odor. Likewise, the spirit in our innermost part is pure and undefiled. However, surrounding the spirit are the soul and body, both of which have been mixed with the wicked elements of Satan and are thus filthy and corrupt. Therefore, when the spirit comes forth and passes through the soul and body, it becomes contaminated by this filthiness and corruption. Hence, when being manifested, the spirit bears certain filthiness, corruption, impurity, impropriety, and various other undesirable conditions. If a person is proud in his soul, the spirit also manifests itself in pride; if a person is angry in the flesh, his spirit also reveals the anger. We often encounter the spirit of anxiety, the spirit of jealousy, a crooked spirit, or a rude spirit, all of which are **not the problem of the spirit itself**, but the defiling influence of the undesirable elements of the soul and body **upon the spirit as it passes through them**...

The **passage** of the spirit can be summed up as the soul and the body,...[and] since all these passages of the spirit surround our spirit, **they naturally affect** the spirit, which must pass through them in order to be released, and which also brings forth their elements and conditions. Hence, the condition of the spirit reflects **the condition of all these passages**. If our motive is not pure, the spirit also is not pure **when released**; if our intention is not clean, the spirit coming forth is also not clean. Take for

example a brother who comes to see the elders and says, "Brother So-and-so and I engaged in business together, and he has wronged me. I come not to accuse him, but simply to have some fellowship with you, the responsible brothers." Although he declares that he does not come to accuse his brother, **his spirit proves otherwise**. His motive and intention in fellowshipping is to accuse his brother. Once we touch his spirit, his motive and intention can never escape our discernment.

Dealing With The Spirit Is Dealing With Its Passage

Since the defilement of the spirit is due to the passage of the spirit (which includes the purpose of the heart, motive, aim, intention, etc.), then dealing with the spirit is not dealing with the spirit itself, but with the passage of the spirit, that is, with the purpose of the heart, motive, aim, intention, etc. Whenever we are about to act or speak, not only do we need to inquire whether what we are about to do is right or wrong, good or bad, but we must also discern whether or not **our inner intention is clean, our motive pure, and our aim wholly for God**. Is there any selfish purpose behind our action? Is there any self-inclination? This kind of dealing is dealing with the spirit. For example, suppose a certain brother has a controversy with you, which causes you to be very angry and disgusted. When you mention him to others, although outwardly you speak lightly as if nothing really matters, nevertheless your words cause others to sense a spirit of condemnation and anger. One day, perhaps during a meeting or while in prayer, you receive mercy from the Lord and realize that since the Lord has forgiven you, you must certainly forgive your brother. At this time, from your deepest being, you deal thoroughly with your unforgiving purpose of heart and intention. Later, when you mention this brother to others, although you touch the controversial matter of the past, your spirit is undisturbed and upright. At this time, not only does your spirit come forth, but it comes forth cleanly without any other intention.

In the church, those who can really supply others and edify the brothers and sisters are those who **have a clean spirit** through this kind of dealing. If our spirit has never been dealt with, then even while praising others we cause **an uncomfortable feeling** in others. This is because our spirit is not clean. It may be that in our praising there is the purpose of flattering or the intention of gaining rewards from others. Contrariwise, one who has had his spirit dealt with may even rebuke others in a firm and straightforward manner, causing those who are rebuked to feel upset in the soul; **yet** their spirit will receive supply and enlightenment, and will thus feel refreshed and satisfied. This is because his spirit is clean and pure, having no other motive.

The Way Of Dealing With The Spirit -- Our Initiative

The practical way to deal with the spirit is similar to that of the various dealings mentioned before. First, we need to **condemn the mixtures**, and second, to **remove them by the power** of the Holy Spirit. For example, if we have a crooked spirit, we must first condemn this crookedness as sin. Secondly, we must **purge out this crookedness from within us** by the power of the Holy Spirit...

The Cross as the Basis and the Function of Life

This type of dealing initiated by us differs from human cultivation. Human cultivation is purely the work of man, whereas the dealing which we initiate is based upon the fact of the cross. It is because **the Lord has already... done away with** our old man on the cross, and our flesh, temper, self, natural constitution, and all other mixtures as well, that we can employ this fact as a basis upon which to deal with our flesh, temper, self-will, natural ability, and **all the mixtures in the passages of our spirit**...Because this **life issues from the death of the cross**, it has within it the element of the death of the cross. Therefore, when His life flows into us, **it brings us back to the death of the cross** in order to unite us with the death of the cross, thereby joining us to the cross...Once we have the feeling derived from the life of the Lord within us, we need to exercise our will to cooperate with His life and immediately initiate the dealing. If we cooperate in this manner, this feeling of life becomes a killing power, enabling us to have the experience of the killing of the cross..

The Standard of Peace

The standard of our dealing with the spirit is still **"life and peace."** We only need to deal to the degree of having peace within; this is sufficient. However, concerning the degree of dealing whereby we can obtain peace, the Holy Spirit will be responsible to speak to us and give us a clear feeling. Many times the speaking of **the Holy Spirit within us has a higher standard** than the outward demand. If our growth in life reaches the degree of dealing with our spirit, then the demand of the Holy Spirit within us will not only be higher than the law of this world, but **higher and more severe** than the regulations in letter in the Bible. Therefore, as long as we feel that there is no problem deep within, that is sufficient. If, however, there is some problem deep within which gives us no peace, we should not listen to outward reasonings. **We must take heed to the inner demand of the Holy Spirit** and thereby attain the standard required by the Holy Spirit deep within.