

## Correct Vision of God

### **The Holy Spirit**

#### **Readings about the Holy Spirit:**

- **John 15: 26, 27**

*'But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.'*

- **1Corinthians 3: 16, 17**

*'Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.'*

- **1Corinthians 2: 10 – 13**

*'But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.'*

- **1Corinthians 6: 19**

*'Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?'*

- **1Corinthians Chapters 12 – 14**

- **2Corinthians 13: 14**

*'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.'*

- **1John 1: 3**

*'That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.'*

- **1John 5: 6 – 8**

*'This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.'*

## **Main message**

The Holy Spirit is the great and amazing gift that the Father has granted us. In the book of Acts, we read:

*'This Jesus God raised up, of which we all are witnesses. Therefore, having been exalted to the right hand of God and having received the promise of the Holy*

*Spirit from the Father, he has poured out this that you see and hear'* (Acts 2: 32, 33).

This was on the day of Pentecost.

We can easily form an image in our mind of God, the Father, because we usually link this to our understanding of the earthly father. We also easily form an image of the Son because we read about Jesus a lot in the gospels and there are many icons and pictures of Him. However, it may not be easy for us to form an image of the Person of the Holy Spirit. We often think of the Him as a power or a Spirit that is unseen.

It is true that He is a power; yet, He is also a Person. Each hypostasis in the Trinity is a Person who has a distinct role; at the same time, they are in each other and they are in unity as One God.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit is a Person of the Trinity. He has been granted to us as a gift from the Father in order to walk with us.

He is called the '*Paraclete*' which means that He **walks by my side** and He defends me against the adversary. He also **dwells in me**. Therefore, He is **in me** and **beside me**. He wants to hold my hand and walk with me to show me the way and also because I will face enemies on my journey.

The Psalmist wrote: '*lead me, O Lord, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; make Your way straight before my face*' (Psalm 5: 8).

It is clear in the bible that whoever walks in the way of God faces enemies who want to hinder him. These enemies are the devil and his evil powers.

We also read the following words about the Holy Spirit in Romans 8: 26:

*'Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

Therefore, the Holy Spirit '*helps in our weaknesses*'. According to the Greek origin, this phrase means that He holds my hands and walks with me despite the resistance of the enemy that wants to hinder my walk. He pushes away the enemy and opens the way for me so that I can move forward.

In fact, the devil tries to hinder any steps taken in a true spiritual life where there is inner spiritual growth and a true move towards the divine purposes. However, the Holy Spirit comes to strengthen me and give me power and push the enemies out of my way.

It is important to learn the battles of the enemy and learn how to deal with them because this is one of the hindrances in the way of following Christ. Therefore, we mentioned earlier that one of the important foundations in following Christ is to have a correct vision of our enemy and learn his strategies and how to overcome him. The Holy Spirit is the One who helps us in these battles. We need to have a true fellowship with the Holy Spirit because He helps us in everything.

The topic of the Holy Spirit is vast. To simplify matters, we will discuss this topic through 5 main headings:

1. The Holy Spirit and the Fellowship with God
2. The Holy Spirit and the World
3. The Holy Spirit and the Church

#### 4. The Holy Spirit and the Individual Person

#### 5. The Holy Spirit and Ministry

### **1. The Holy Spirit and the Fellowship with God**

It is written: *'Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ'* (2Peter 3: 18).

If our prayer life is weak and unfruitful, this will not lead us to an ever-increasing knowledge of God. As a result, we will fail to know God as our Father; and we will fail to know the Son as our Redeemer, Lord, and mighty Saviour. If we do not grow in knowing God, we will not be able to move forward steadily in our spiritual walk nor bear a living message to the people. This is simply because if we do not truly know God whom we are talking about, we will only be repeating some words that we learned.

However, if we grow in knowing God, He will fill our hearts; we will rejoice in our fellowship with Him; He will stir our spirits; and He will fill our mouths with a true message. As a result, when we open our mouths to speak about Him, we will not be able to stop.

- *The Holy Spirit reveals to us the Person of the Father*

In Romans 8: 16 we read:

*'The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.'*

This is not something that we simply know in our minds, but the Holy Spirit bears witness to our spirit that we are children of God and that God is our Father.

The Holy Spirit stirs our heart and opens our eyes to know our heavenly Father. This cannot be known through words or only understood by the mind, but through a divine inner work of the Holy Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit reveals to us the Father who is full of love, tenderness, compassion, mercy, and who cares for us, we rest in Him and feel secure in Him. We will know that we have a mighty, watchful and faithful Father; therefore, nothing in our life can happen at random or adversely affect us. Neither people nor evil powers can control our life. We are not left or handed over to circumstances, no matter how difficult the circumstances may seem.

We sometimes fail to know this or be assured of it due to our lack of knowledge of the Fatherhood of God, His might, and His faithfulness. The enemy tries to hide this from our minds and eyes. As a result, we become ignorant of the Father and fail to enjoy His gifts.

The heavenly Father grants good gifts to His children, as we read in James 1: 17: *'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning'*. These gifts are new every day. It is written: *'The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning'* (Lamentations 3: 22, 23). He grants us true good gifts according to our need.

If we know and trust our heavenly Father, we will learn –through the work of the Holy Spirit –to *'ask of God who gives to all liberally and without reproach'* (James 1: 5). We will ask and we will receive; we will continue to ask more and receive more. We will then know that this is an unsearchable mystery. If we experience this, it will transform our lives.

To sum up this point, the Holy Spirit helps us know the Father. He bears witness to our spirits that we are the children of God. He continues to remind our heart that we are the children of God, our Father, who is close to us and who prepares for us good gifts.

- *The Holy Spirit also reveals to us and proclaims the Lordship of Jesus.*

In 1Corinthians 12: 3, it is written: *'no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit'.*

The Holy Spirit helps us know and enjoy Jesus as Lord over our life.

The more He becomes Lord over our life, the more we desire to do His will and it becomes our delight.

Jesus does not take away our freedom. He only takes away the fake freedom which destroys us and grants us the true freedom that gives us honour and dignity. The Prodigal son used his freedom in a way that destroyed him. Part of the freedom that we have can be poisonous; and so, we need to leave this poisonous part in order to be protected from the enemies and evil powers. When we use the kind of freedom –which the bible describes as egoistic, earthy, sensual, and demonic (James 3: 15) –we fall into the traps of the enemy and get destroyed. The Holy Spirit asks us to leave this kind of freedom because it does not please Jesus, the Captain of our ship, whose Lordship liberates and frees.

Any master enslaves; yet, Jesus is the only Master who liberates. Any master dominates; yet Jesus is the Master who honours. Jesus told His disciples: *'No longer do I call you servants...but I have called you friends'* (John 15: 15).

The Holy Spirit also helps us in allowing the Person of Jesus to grow in us. He shapes our inner being to be conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8: 29). Each one of us will thus have a Christ in him, in unique and manifold ways: a Christ full of joy, a Christ full of peace, a Christ full of meekness, and so on. All these attributes are in Christ who has the fullness of the manifold attributes. Each one of us receives a different attribute of Christ. We will thus look royal, the children of the King, princes and princesses bearing the image of God, the image of His Son.

When Christ is formed in us, the world around us will be able to see and know who Jesus is and they will seek Him and love Him. We will not be talking about Jesus using words that bear no life; but, our message will be a living testimony seen in our life and on our faces.

Jesus is the Only way through whom people may know God. Jesus said:

*'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me'* (John 14: 6).

It is also written: *'for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved'* (Acts 4: 12).

## **2. The Holy Spirit and the World**

We live in a world that *'lies in the power of the evil one'*, as we read in 1 John 5: 19.

Though the devil has been conquered, the full sentence of his defeat will be executed in the Last Day.

He cannot control the life of those who know that he is defeated; but he tries to deceive those who do not know.

The devil is the prince of this world. Jesus said: *'the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me'* (John 14: 30). Each one of us can say the same if Jesus is in us.

Though the devil is the ruler of this world and he temporarily has the world, he has nothing in us and he has limitations. He has everything in the world, but not *'the Redeemed'*, those *'with everlasting joy on their heads'* (Isaiah 35: 10). He cannot hinder them because even the Sea is parted before them and becomes a path so that they can cross. He cannot sadden them because they have everlasting joy on their heads, a joy that casts away the distress and sadness of the world. They are salt; wherever they go, they preserve and purify. This is because the devil has no place in their life and the Holy Spirit occupies the place in their life.

***The Holy Spirit sanctifies us so that we may in turn sanctify the atmosphere around us*** and the people would smell the sweet aroma of Christ instead of the smell of corruption and uncleanness that fills the world.

This is our responsibility and our work. Yet, we cannot do anything on our own. Jesus said: *'for without Me you can do nothing'* (John 15: 5).

The Holy Spirit is the One who sanctifies us and makes us holy. He is called 'Holy'. Therefore, as much as we have fellowship with Him and He has a place in our lives, He sanctifies us and also sanctifies the world through us. As a result, we become holy and we also become the tool and channel for the holiness of the world. People will be able to see that our life is pure and holy, not defiled or unclean with evil and lusts.

In 2Peter 1: 4, it is written:

*'By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust'.*

He granted us the promises to escape the corruption of the world and become partakers of the divine nature.

***The Holy Spirit is the divine fire that dwells in us.***

St Macarius speaks about the Holy Spirit as fire, peace, and power. St Anthony speaks about the Holy Spirit as fire. He tells his spiritual children: *'my children receive this fiery Spirit, whom I have also received; so that the commandment may become easy and light. Ask, and I, your father, will ask with you, so that you may receive Him.'* He said these words to monks who already have a growing fellowship with God; yet, he was telling them that there was something else that they needed and that is: *the divine fire*.

This divine fire should be stirred and ignited.

Apostle Paul tells his disciple Timothy:

*'Stir up the gift of God which is in you' (2Timothy 1: 6).*

He also writes:

*'Do not quench the Spirit' (1Thessalonians 5: 19).*

***The world around us is drowning in coldness to the point of freezing.***

*'Be filled with love; and many around you, who are dying of the cold, will find their way to life' ( St. Seraphim of Sarov).*

Be filled with God. God, the Holy Spirit, who is in us, is fire. We should stir Him and not quench Him.

Everything in the world seems dead, cold and full of darkness, but this does not apply to the children of God, the Redeemed, who have the Holy Spirit in them as fire. They find light in the midst of darkness; warmth in the midst of coldness; power and victory in the midst of the defeat that surrounds the whole world.

This is because *'He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world'* (1John 4: 4). *He who is in us* is the Holy Spirit, the pillar of cloud who went before the people, the children of Israel, and was light for them during the day; and fire during the night. He was the pillar of cloud that overshadowed them and covered them, lighting their steps. He was also a pillar of fire that gave them light at night and protected them:

*'And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night'* (Exodus 13: 21).

### ***The Holy Spirit is a pillar of fire.***

Therefore, some of the saints like Seraphim of Sarov used to go up in the freezing mountains of Russia without feeling the cold. His disciples used to wonder how he was not cold. They would then look at him and see his face full of light like a shining sun. He would tell them that the Holy Spirit in him gives him warmth and so he does not feel the cold that surrounds him.

This enabled many of the hermits and monks who lived in the wilderness wearing one layer of clothes not to suffer the cold or the heat because the Holy Spirit was their warmth in the cold and their breeze in the heat.

*He is the tender Spirit, the Comforter.*

*He refreshes our lives, brightens our ways, and shines upon our steps.*

*He was granted to us, but our problem is that we do not know Him!*

*We need to know Him and enter into a deeper fellowship with Him.*

### **3. The Holy Spirit and the Church**

In the prayers of the Church, we say:

*'O heavenly King, the Spirit of truth, the Comforter, who is everywhere and fills everybody; You are the treasure of goodness and giver of life. We ask you to graciously come and dwell within us, purify us from iniquity and save our souls.'*

This means that the Holy Spirit is a Person not only a power.

***The Holy Spirit comforts the hearts, taking away the fear, the worries and the brokenness. He gives us assurance even regarding the future.***

Therefore, Apostle Paul wrote:

*'For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers...' (Romans 8: 38).*

He is sure regarding the future, the things to come.

***The Holy Spirit also transfers to us the life of Christ.***

*The Church is the bride of Christ.*

When the Holy Spirit is dwelling in the Church with His power, work, and guidance, the Church of Christ will be as described in the book of Song of Songs 6: 10:

*'Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, awesome as an army with banners'.*

She will be filled with power, purity, and beauty.

The bride of Christ is glorious, *'having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing'* (Ephesians 5: 27). She has no sign of aging but is full of life, beauty, and reverence.

***The Holy Spirit is the Person of the Trinity who prepares the Church as the bride of Christ*** so that Christ may come and find her ready and prepared for Him.

The Holy Spirit instils in the church watchfulness and a life of continuous sanctification and purification; so that she may be prepared and be ready for her Bridegroom, Jesus.

***The Holy Spirit connects us together as a family:***

*'For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit'* (1Corinthians 12: 13).

If we give the Holy Spirit the chance to work in our life, He makes us one family which the bible calls *'members of the household of God'* (Ephesians 2: 19).

This is not done on the social level or by being friendly with each other; but, it is a special work of the Holy Spirit who connects the hearts, making us members of the household of God. He instils in us compassion towards one another; therefore, if one suffers, the others would feel pain: *'if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it'* (1Corinthians 12: 26). This connection and unity cannot be described or envisaged until we truly experience it as a true work of the Holy Spirit in our midst.

***The Holy Spirit makes the church an actual house of God where God is present and where the angels and saints are present.***

Even when the churches or monasteries are empty, their dust and stones are good and pleasant because these places have been perfumed by the Holy Spirit.

The Psalmist says: *'for Your servants take pleasure in her stones, and show favour to her dust'* (Psalm 102: 14).

***The Holy Spirit also causes the worship and ministry in the church to be alive.***

This includes the prayers, the liturgies, the meetings, the preaching and any ministry. If the Holy Spirit is present, everything will have a different flavour; the atmosphere will be different and all the members will be one family, the household of God.

#### 4. The Holy Spirit and the Individual Person

***The Holy Spirit grants us to understand God's special plan and calling for our life.***

He helps us discover this plan, understand it, love it, and rejoice in it. We will find in it the fulfilment of our ambitions and desires –the things that we think of and even the things we do not think of. With this divine plan, we would find within ourselves all the talents and gifts necessary to carry it out; and we will also receive the anointing of the Spirit for that special calling.

The problem is that we sometimes make a plan for our life out of our own mind. It may be full of good ambitions; yet, we may not have the gifts and talents needed for it; it may also be different from what God has planned for us. As a result, when we start to walk in it, we become estranged from ourselves; we get frustrated; and we lose the way.

However, if we have fellowship with the Holy Spirit and we walk with Him day after day, He leads our steps and enlightens our minds, helping us to discover God's plan and the things that God has prepared for us. These are things about which it is written:

*'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit' (1Corinthians 2: 9, 10).*

We often think that this verse refers to the things that God has prepared for us in heaven. But, in fact, it refers to the things He prepared for us here on earth because the verse continues to say that God revealed them to us

through His Spirit. In heaven, there will be no need for revelations because we will be able to see everything clearly, face to face.

If we allow the Holy Spirit to make our eyes see and our ears hear what our heavenly Father has prepared for us, it will be beyond anything we have seen or heard before; it will be beyond our dreams! This is because God is Love and He prepares for His children things that are beyond their expectations or dreams. The Holy Spirit reveals these things to us. We will then find that they are better than our best dreams and higher than our highest ambitions; they truly satisfy our heart, glorify God, and bless others around us. Thus, we would be blessed and be a blessing (Genesis 12: 2b).

## **5. The Holy Spirit and Ministry**

The Holy Spirit is the divine power that works in ministry.

He builds up the inner life of the ministers making them holy as is befitting of the ministers of God.

***He helps us fulfil the commandment that Apostle Paul mentions regarding ministers:***

*'But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in sleeplessness, in fastings; by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold*

*we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things'* (2Corinthians 6: 4 – 10).

***The Holy Spirit helps us to be ministers at the level of the ministry of the new covenant.***

It is written that He *'made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant'* (2Corinthians 3: 6). In other words, He made us ministers of grace, life, message, glory, and righteousness –as mentioned in 2Corinthians 3.

The ministry of the new covenant is that of righteousness, grace, life, and glory. Therefore, those who carry this message should be at this level and their life should reflect this. This in turn allows the people that we serve to get in touch with the Spirit of life.

***The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life.***

He draws near the spiritually-dead, raising them up; the distressed, comforting them; and the lost, showing them the way.

By this our ministry would be a living, fruitful, and blessed ministry which glorifies the name of God.

## The infilling of the Holy Spirit

### Readings

- **Ephesians 5: 15 – 21**

*'Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.'*

- **Luke 11: 9 – 13**

*'And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'*

Being filled with the Spirit is clearly a commandment requested of us, as we read in Ephesians.

After understanding the great importance of the Holy Spirit for our personal spiritual life, our fellowship with God, our prayer life, for overcoming the world, and for ministry, it is necessary to know how to be filled by the Spirit.

We will give some preliminary highlights here about how to be filled by the Spirit and how to remain in a continuous state of infilling.

**The infilling of the Spirit requires 3 main steps:**

- Emptying
- Surrender
- Trust

**1. Emptying**

If we want to fill a glass with water, this glass should be empty first in order to be filled. If this glass is already filled with something else, we will not be able to fill it with water or keep the water in it.

Similarly, if we truly desire to be filled by the Spirit, knowing that it is an essential gift that we need, we should empty a space in our inner being for this infilling.

Yet, we need to be honest with ourselves and search our heart whether we really desire this gift to fill us completely or we only want to receive a small portion of it.

Inasmuch as the emptying is true and complete, the infilling will be true and great in measure.

*The infilling of the Spirit is a continuous process.*

According to the original language, the verse in Ephesians uses the continuous tense of the verb *'be filled'*, indicating that we will start to be filled and will continue to be filled again and again.

*The Holy Spirit is the gift of God.*

Therefore, if I desire a greater portion of this gift, I will need to empty myself completely so that this gift may flow in me abundantly. It is written: *'for God does not give the Spirit by measure'* (John 3: 34).

The more this gift flows, the more it works deep within me to transform me.

At the same time, I will experience Him as a Person who accompanies me and walks by my side. It is written: *'He is at my right hand I shall not be moved'* (Psalm 16: 8).

He opens the way for me when the enemy tries to close it, enlarging my step under me (Psalm 18: 36).

He gives light to my steps, delivers my soul when I am cast down, restores my soul when I am low and frustrated, draws near me when I am alone, heals me when I am hurt, and comforts me when I need special help.

He is the Comforting Companion.

He is the Lord, the Giver of Life.

He revives me when I feel dead physically, psychologically or spiritually.

He overflows with Life that swallows up death and frightens the powers of darkness.

If I truly long for this gift, I should make sure to empty myself completely to receive Him.

***This process of emptying practically means a process of true repentance.***

I should examine myself to find the things that preoccupy me and that take a big space inside me.

- *Sometimes cares, entanglements, and material things occupy a big space of one's inner being; and hence, hinder the pouring and infilling of the Spirit.*

If this was the case, I should repent, remembering that it is written: '*casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you*' (1Peter 5: 7).

- *At other times, this space may be filled with people who occupy my mind and emotions. These people can be members of my family.*

It is not wrong to love them, but it is wrong to be emotionally tied to them to the extent of adoring them and allowing this to fill my inner being.

The bible tells us: '*honour your father and your mother*' (Exodus 20: 10) and at the same time, it tells us: '*If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple*' (Luke 14: 26).

This means that when my love to my mother and father and relatives is soulish, fleshly, and unspiritual –filling my whole being and taking the utmost priority in my life –I need to repent and ask the Holy Spirit to help

me to lay aside this kind of soulish love so that the Holy Spirit may pour in me true divine love.

- *Soulish or emotional relationships and bonds are not only limited to the members of my family. They can also include any other emotional bonds with other people of the opposite sex.*

This can also fill my inner being and occupy a big space. I may perceive that something is not right but I may be unable to deal with it.

However, there is a big difference between wanting to lay aside yet being unable to, and not wanting to do so in the first place. In other words, there is a difference between truly wanting to get rid of a wrong emotional tie, yet not knowing how to do so; and not wholeheartedly wanting to do so and so try to compromise, not being convinced that it is wrong or that I should get rid of it.

If I compromise, this means that I am putting these relationships as a priority in my life.

However, I need to come to the Lord with trust and ask Him to free me from any wrong bonds.

**To sum up:**

***Total emptying is necessary to receive continuous infilling.***

This emptying is practically done by going into the presence of God with true repentance, giving the Holy Spirit the chance to search me and see if there are concerns, entanglements and preoccupations towards things or people.

I should then ask His help to get rid of these wrong ties. However, it is important that I want to get rid of them, even if I was unable to.

## **2. Surrender**

Surrender means submitting to the will of God and knowing that He has the Upper Hand that is in control of everything.

My own weaknesses can cause me problems. Also, the devil can find chances to interfere in my life if I open certain doors for him. However, I should always know that above all these things (my weaknesses, the devil, and circumstances), there is an upper mighty, Fatherly, and faithful Hand that is in control of all things.

If I make mistakes, I should repent; but, at the same time, I should know that there is a mighty Hand that I can trust and rest in. Even if my mistakes were the cause of my problems, I should trust that as long as I truly repented, God will take hold of all matters and correct them. I should neither blame myself nor be complacent.

The correct attitude is to know that even if the devil entered in or took control for a certain time because I opened the door for that, God will still allow all matters to work for my good –as long as I have repented. As a result, the things that seemed loss at first will become gain at the end.

*The story of Job is a well-known example in this respect.*

The book of Job highlights how the devil may have charges against us. Sometimes, he is given permission. He even tries to find chances to destroy.

As a result, the situation may seem totally dim and negative for some time – as was the case with Job. However, in the midst of this darkness and difficult circumstances, the divine hand remains in control –even if one cannot see it because of the dimness of the situation. Then, at a certain point, the divine hand is stretched out, correcting and restoring what has been lost in a multiplied way.

The possessions of Job were restored; his daughters and sons were restored; and his honour was restored. God lifted up Job's face and told him to pray for his friends –who thought that Job was wrong –so that God may forgive them (Job 42).

*We need to learn to surrender, trusting and resting in God's faithful hand.*

As we walk with God, we may pass through the valley of the shadow of death, the valley of humility and brokenness, the valley of fear, the valley of loneliness and forsakenness; yet, all these valleys are divine training that will allow us to enter into new heights. We may be as though handed over; yet, it is written: *'though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me'* (Psalm 23: 4).

*This kind of surrender gives the chance for the Holy Spirit to overflow and fill us. These infillings will neither be lost nor fade away but will constantly remain.*

Notice also that the commandment of the infilling of the Spirit is followed by the following words:

*'Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ'.*

We may find it difficult to give thanks in the midst of darkness, difficult circumstances, mistakes that caused problems, attacks and reproach from the devil as with Job. However, in such situations, we should know that we are not left alone. God is our Father.

Living a life of true repentance and being in constant fellowship with God allow the divine hand to be in control of everything in our life. As a result, what seems dark today will shine brightly tomorrow and what seems narrow and tight today will become broad tomorrow.

***Surrender and giving thanks are important things that open the door for the Holy Spirit in our life.***

Lack of surrender and lack of giving thanks grieve the Holy Spirit. As a result, we will not be in the state of continuous infilling and will consequently become weak.

***The sign that we have true surrender is to give thanks.***

We need to learn to thank God with a calm peaceful heart in the midst of difficult situations. This requires training. We need to patiently train ourselves to see and perceive the divine hand. If we look back and reflect on past events, we will find that we have numerously gone down into pits or walked through different valleys; yet, we came out stronger than before.

***If we put our full trust in the divine hand, we will never be afraid of the devil, circumstances, people, or even ourselves.***

*I will never be afraid of myself despite my weaknesses.*

*I will never be afraid of evil people who may come in my way, Amalek (Exodus 17), the Canaanites, as the bible calls them.*

*I will never be afraid of the devil with all his cunning and deceitful plans or his traps and nets (James 4: 7).*

*I will never be afraid of circumstances and unexpected things that may happen.*

*I will always be lifted upwards, feeling secure, and at peace.*

Apostle Paul wrote:

*'Nor things present nor things to come...shall be able to separate us from the love of God' (Romans 8: 38, 39).*

Apostle Paul was certain regarding things to come because he had full trust in God, the *Pantocrator*, who is in control of everything.

This is the meaning of true surrender!

We should not ask God not to allow difficult circumstances because we cannot direct God according to our own mind and also because we do not see as He sees and we do not know what is for our best as He knows. Difficult circumstances shape us and broaden us. It is also written: *'out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong came something sweet'* (Judges 14: 14). This is a divine mystery.

Similarly, God is righteous, even with the devil. Therefore, if the devil finds a chance at a moment when we slumber, God cannot tell him no. However, God will train us and help us to overcome and become spiritually stronger. It is written that He *'trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle'* (Psalm 144: 1).

Therefore, we should not keep asking God to change circumstances, cast the devil away, and take our weaknesses away; but, we should rather give thanks to God, surrender, and ask Him to teach us the lessons we need to learn; and to help us grow through our weaknesses, distressing circumstances, and the battles of the enemy. We can still ask Him to cast the devil away and give us strength; but, we should not complain and grumble.

### **3. Trust**

After going through the process of emptying and training ourselves to surrender in such a way, we should then ask for the gift of the Spirit –as we read in Luke 11: 13:

*'If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!'*

The heavenly Father says that He will give this gift to whoever asks of Him.

At the same time, there is a clear commandment in Ephesians 5 that tells us that we should be continuously filled by the Spirit. God never gives us a commandment without helping us to fulfil it.

Therefore, after I empty my inner being and learn to surrender and rest in Him, I can ask Him for this gift of infilling, based on His promise and commandment.

Since I am going to the Lord based on these biblical truths, I should trust that I will be given what I ask for. In the very same passage, it is written: *'ask, and it will be given to you'*. Therefore, He will surely give me.

I may not necessarily feel anything. The spiritual life is based on faith not on feelings (2 Corinthians 5: 7). I should only trust. If I have fulfilled the required conditions and asked for the gift, it will surely be granted to me.

### **Channels through which the Holy Spirit flows:**

**There are 3 main channels:**

- **The Life of Prayer**
- **The Life of the Church**
- **The Life of Ministry**

#### **A. The Life of Prayer**

The early fathers say: *'the Holy Spirit is prayer'*.

Inasmuch as we learn to have regular times of prayer and quiet times, the Holy Spirit will flow in us and continue to flow. We will receive gift after gift, infilling after infilling, and power after power.

Therefore, if we truly desire the infilling of the Spirit, we should have regular and consistent prayer life as this is one of the essential channels through which the Spirit flows.

We also need to learn to pray the Psalms because the word of God allows the Holy Spirit to flow. In the same passage, it is written: *'addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart.'*

*When the Holy Spirit starts to overflow in me, my whole spiritual life will be greatly transformed.*

My recurring spiritual problems and weaknesses will disappear and I will receive the opposite positive qualities and strength. My spiritual questions that had always perplexed me and I found no answer to, will be resolved.

## **B. The Life of the Church**

The Church life is a channel for the infilling of the Spirit.

This includes repentance, confession, Holy Communion, and attending and sharing in the mystical services and celebrations.

It also includes attending spiritual meetings and having fellowship with the congregation, my brothers and sisters with whom I am connected in love. I should sense that the meeting is part of me and these people are my family. I should be an active member in the meeting, sharing in the singing, the prayer, and listening to the message.

All these are channels for the Holy Spirit. It is called the channel of fellowship.

*Another channel for the Spirit through the life of the Church is the fellowship with the saints and angels.*

Many people have experienced receiving strength from the fellowship with the saints (Hebrews 12: 1, 2). In fact this strength is from the Holy Spirit. When the saints intercede on our behalf, God responds by granting us the power and strength of the Holy Spirit. At times, the problem may be lifted up; yet, at other times we are lifted above the problem.

However, we should learn to ask the prayer of the saints in regards to our spiritual life not our earthly problems. We should desire to follow in their steps and taste the same spiritual richness and sweetness they have tasted.

### **C. The Life of Ministry**

It is written:

*'He who waters will also be watered himself'* (Proverbs 11: 25).

We should have a holy burden towards others and talk to them about Jesus and His love.

The more we think of others and of their needs, the more the gift of the Spirit flows in us. The Holy Spirit waters us so that we may water others.

The more we water, we will be watered even more; the more we give, we will be given more (Luke 6: 38). This is a divine mystery. According to the material world, when we give, we have less; but, in the spiritual world, when we give, we have more.

**To sum up**, there are **3 conditions** or steps to receive the infilling of the Spirit and **3 channels** to receive this gift and continue to receive it. The conditions or steps are: *emptying, surrender, and trust*. The channels are: *the life of prayer, the life of the Church, and the life of ministry*.

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