

The Father's Heart and Your Destiny

A Seminar by Steve & Marilyn Hill

Introduction

This seminar is directed towards those who have laid down their rights to themselves and who are seeking to walk in the Lordship of Jesus Christ over their lives. That is the foundation for victory and fulfillment in walking out their destinies. However, many of those who do seek this walk never find it. They know they were created to make a difference but never seem to make that difference. The first reason may be that they have never realized that Jesus not only died to forgive their sins but that He died that we might also die in Him! Jesus did not die to forgive and then heal our old nature. He died so that I could die in Him! Sometimes we are trying to heal what God has condemned to death. Sometimes we are trying to cast out what can only be crucified!

The second reason for that may be that there are unresolved issues and insecurities in their relationship as a new creation with the Heavenly Father. They want to love and trust Him with their whole hearts but on some deeper levels there are areas of mistrust, fear and anger that prevent their love and faith from having its full expression. Sometimes we are trying to crucify what can only be cast out! Sometimes we are trying to crucify what can only be healed!

The purpose of this seminar is that you would work through the basic issues which could prevent you from walking out the full destiny for which you were created and which Jesus died to give to you.

Part 1/ Separated From the Father

A/ Grace or Addiction?

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,” Ephesians 5:18

“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scriptures has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” John 7:37- 38

We were made to run on love! We were made to run on the new wine of the Holy Spirit! The energy of our lives was designed to be the breath of God drawn from our relationship with Him. If we do not run on grace we will run on some addiction.¹

The verb “be filled” is a commandment in the continuous present tense and as we obey this instruction we will have the joy of living which will express itself in all kinds of songs. We will have the endurance and perspective to give thanks in all situations. We will have the grace to honor one another “in the fear of God” (with an attitude that pleases God) in all our relationships as brothers and sisters in Christ, as husbands and wives, as parents and children, and as employers and employees. This is the fire for daily life!

This is the message of Jesus to a crowd that had just spent seven days feasting and drinking! He knows that the things of this life do not satisfy! “If after all of this, you are still thirsty, come to me and drink!”

We were not made to run on principle and precept or rule and regulation alone. We were not made to run on religious rituals. Many who do so live lives of quiet desperation. We were not created to live by our mental energy and to create our own reason for living. We were not created to attempt to drive away the depression of our own insignificance by an act of our own will. We were created to live freely from the heart. But the condition of that kind of living is to thirst for Jesus, to drink from Jesus, to trust in, to rely upon and to depend upon Jesus!

If we do not live from the divine energy of love given to us in Jesus through the Holy Spirit we will live from other sources. Those sources cannot satisfy since our hearts were made for God! Our attempts to make other sources satisfy our deeps is the set up for addiction. Our addictions may be socially acceptable like sports, power, money, fame, things, risk in business or extreme sports, position, pleasure, knowledge or our addictions may not be

¹Dallas Willard's, “The Divine Conspiracy”

so acceptable like alcohol, drugs, sex, pornography, gambling, violence. But the reality is that we live by grace or addiction. We cannot escape the spiritual thirst of our lives as created by God!

B/ The big lie!

“For God knows that, in the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” Genesis 3:5

“You will show me the path of life; in your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures for evermore.” Psalm 16:11 & Acts 2:28

Our foundational sin is the attempt to live our lives independently and separately from God. We were made for relationship with Him. The fullness of our joy is in Him. That is the revelation from David and quoted by Peter in Acts chapter two as part his declaration of what the falling and filling of the Holy Spirit meant.

This is the choice that Adam and Eve faced in the garden! They could eat from the tree of life or from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. What will you choose as your source of life? Sin is to chose any other source of life other than God. Satan's lie, then and now, is that God is withholding from us and keeping us ignorant because He does not want us to be like Him.

The reality is that God does not want us to know evil by experience. He wants us to live by His word, not by our experience. Satan's lie is that experiencing sin makes us like God. We do become our own little gods in the little worlds of our own creation but the only constant thing in those worlds is death. We can kill and we will die but we cannot create life. The truth is that choosing a life source other than God is death.

C/ The big joy!

“If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have keep my Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that you My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.” John 15:10 & 11

“That which we have seen and heard we declare to you that you may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. These things we write to you that your joy may be full.” I John 1:4

God wants us to know Him and to enjoy life as He enjoys it. He wants us to be like Him through love relationship with him. To live a holy life is to dwell in the source of all true joy. It is to experience life from God's perspective and to enjoy life as God does. Jesus wants us to have the same relationship with God that He does!

“Now may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ will all His saints.” I Thessalonians 3:10

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness”. Matthew 23:27- 28

Holiness is not the result of keeping a list of rules! Rule keeping always ends up focused on the outward appearance. Underneath all legalism you will find the addiction of sin! Holiness is the result of increasing love! It is the result of increasing obedience to the Lord Jesus. Holiness is the result of increasing faith. It is the result of increasing adventure and risk in faith partnership with God. If we pursue God, the result is that He establishes us in His nature which is holy.

You were made for the adventure of love and faith. You were made for the adventure of sons, not for the slavery of rule keeping! That is the message of Matthew 11:25- 30. Religion is an unbearable burden but Jesus give us rest by giving us His revelation of the Father and relationship with the Father!

We were made to walk with God and know the joy of Jesus in doing so. The joy of that adventure is to remain and to be full! That is what our hearts were made for! Is it any wonder that nothing less will satisfy? We are to know and walk in the joy at the center of God!

D/ Sin and Sins and the Addictive Cycle

“And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.” Philippians 3:9

Sin is the nature and constant choice to live independently from God. The theme song of sin is, “I Did It My Way”². Sin is the individual who makes him or herself to be their own little god in their own little world. That is pride. That is refusing to confess that I am a creature who must answer to The Creator. Sin is nothing more than the arrogance that says, “I do not need God.”

Sins are the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Individual sins are all the wrong things that I do which hurt others and hurt myself. Each sin is an individual choice to disobey God. The fruit of this tree of pride are also all the good things that I do to prove that I am a good person. Satan wants us focused on the works of our hands and our belief that if we try hard enough we can do the right things. The enemy's ideal man is a decent and hardworking family man! He does not need God! His addiction may be to simply to please himself. His addiction may be success and appearance. His addiction maybe power and wealth. And these addictions like any other can never be satisfied! The more successful you become the more driven you may become for more. The more you have the more insecure you may become about losing it all!

The man or the woman in the gutter who has lost all control over their life at least knows that they need help! They know that they cannot make it alone. But that is the end of an addictive cycle. How does it start?

Any reason for living that is not God will ultimately become an addiction. As we said before some addictions are more socially acceptable than others but all run their cycles. We do not feel good, accepted, successful, powerful or happy so we do something to give us the feeling that we believe we need. We feel free and in control (that is part of the big lie!) and so we do what we feel we must do. And our strategy works for a short time! We did it! We got what we wanted. We felt what we wanted to feel. But that feeling cannot last since it comes from things that are temporal and not from God who is eternal! The feeling fades and we feel worse than we did before since now we feel the guilt of the thing we did to feel what we felt! The loss of our high, the guilt and shame, the testimony of our weakness (we did not meet our need!) all bring us to the bottom of our addictive cycle where we feel so bad that we must do what we must do to feel good again. The cycle is set. The addiction is set. Our created need to be one with God will drive us to be one with something, even if it destroys us!

“Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death or of obedience leading to righteousness?” Romans 6:16

And through this all is the big lie of our personal freedom- that we could quit if we really wanted to or if we were not so stressed or if our dad had not died or if our girl had not left us or if ... This is the pride of man! That is why you feel so bad when you fail to keep your promise to yourself. You let yourself down. You exposed your lack of self control. You are no longer proud of yourself and that exposes the real problem. If you could make it by your own strength then Jesus did not need to die! Failure is often the ground for the revelation of grace.

Part 2/ Criminals, Crime and Punishment

A/ The Criminal of Romans 6 & 7!

“I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear but now my eye sees you therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes!” Job 42:5- 6

“Knowing this that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be the slaves of sin.” Romans 6:6

We need revelation of the arrogance of our independence from God. We need revelation of the absolute rebellion of our seeking to be our own little god's in our own little world's. We need revelation of the total depravity of this rebel called the man of sin. There is a mystery of iniquity and part of that mystery is its power to deceive us about its real nature! Each man keeps a list to maintain the fiction of their own basic goodness. The business man never cheats a client but does cheat on his taxes. The next business man does cheat his clients but only those who can afford it. The robber says that at least he does not use violence. The violent says that he never hurts children. The pedophile says that at least he does not kill his victims. The killer says that he only kills those who deserve it.

When man fell how far did man fall? Far enough that a father will use his own daughter as a prostitute! Far enough that a mother will kill her own baby in her body! Far enough that educated people listened to Mozart

²Check out author

while they kept records of all the people they were killing in the gas chambers of Hitler's Germany. Man fell to the absolute depths of evil! Anyone who could still believe in the innate goodness of man and blame poverty, lack of education, poor childhood or whatever for the presence of evil in the world has simply closed their eyes to reality and is keeping the faith of a foolish humanism.

And, of course, the nice person feels morally superior to all! However, as Oswald Chambers says, "There is no one who has done anything in actuality that any of us is not capable of potentially."³ And this lays out the reality- the problem is not what we do or do not do. The problem is who we are. It is not a behavior problem. It is a being problem.

"For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.' But sin taking opportunity by the commandment produced in me all manner of evil desire." Romans 7:7b & 8a

Paul was a good sinner! He kept all the outward laws but had to recognize that he could not control the heart of sin. He had to recognize evil desire. He had to recognize that in him dwelt the man of sin! He had to come to the place of hating himself! He had to see that it was not a behavior problem that he could correct by an act of will but a being problem that only God could deal with. If we could change our hearts by force of will, then Jesus did not need to die! If the problem was a behavior problem, then Jesus did not need to die!

"Behold the Lamb of God That Takes Away the Sin of the World!", John 1:29

Jesus did not die to understand sin, to heal sin, to excuse sin or to change our sinful behavior! He died to take it away. We may be sorry about our sins and how they have hurt others and how they have hurt our own lives but those sins are only the fruit of the tree of sin. We may be confronted with how out of control our lives have become and still believe that the problem is that we have to get them back in control. We may then ask Jesus to forgive our sins but what about asking him to kill us? What about repenting of who we are? Through the whole book of Job, he protests that his actions have been righteous and God agreed with him! But when Job saw God he said, "I abhor myself!"

This is one of the first reasons that we struggle to walk with God! We are trying to produce the life of God out of the old man. We are trying to bring life out of death. Do we see ourselves as a criminal in being, act, intention and potentiality? Do we see ourselves nailed to the cross of Jesus? Have we "reckoned ourselves to be dead unto sin but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord"?

The message of Romans is not an improved life but an exchanged life. To quote Oswald Chambers, "If we give God real solid sin, He can give us real solid righteousness."⁴

"And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment: of sin because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment because the ruler of this world is judged." John 16:8-11

The main job of the Holy Spirit is not to convict us of things that we are doing wrong! Our conscience can do that. Satan wants to keep us focused on the sins of our hands so that we do not see our hearts. Satan wants to keep us wrapped up in the religious, legalistic games of guilt and moral control. He wants to keep us distracted from the real problem! Sometimes we speak of the Holy Spirit convicting us to quit smoking or to lose weight. Why do we do that? Common sense should tell us these things! However, it takes the power of the Holy Spirit to show us the true state of our hearts!

The main job of the Holy Spirit is not to convict us of the things that we need to do! Any self improvement course could do that! Any religious list could do that! Sometimes we speak of the Holy Spirit convicting us to read the scriptures more. That should be common sense! We do not need anyone to convince us to eat regularly! The supreme task of the Holy Spirit is to show us Jesus. This is the dynamic of what happened to Job. When we see Him, our righteousness, we know that we are not and know that we must have Him. It is not that we must try harder to do better! We must simply have Him! Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled with righteousness!

The main job of the Holy Spirit is not to convince me that I am guilty and deserving of death. My conscience and my enemy all accuse me! The main job of the Holy Spirit is to convince me that satan is already judged and that therefore I am free to live a victorious, righteous life! Satan keeps trying to convince us that he is active, powerful and in control (and some Christians also teach that!). The conviction of the Holy Spirit is that satan is already judged!

³Oswald Chambers

⁴Oswald Chambers

B/ The Crime Sheet!

“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all your trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way having nailed it to the cross.” Colossians 2:13- 14

God took total responsibility for all of our wrong choices. The lists of our sins were nailed to the cross and taken out of the way so that our sins no longer separate us from God. Yes, God gave us free choice! Yes, we have abused His gift! No, we cannot pay for our sins for the penalty is death! Jesus died in our place and took our penalty. Yes, God is a just God and every sin is accounted for and must be paid for either through the cross or through eternal punishment. There will be justice in this life or in the next!

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”, I John 1:9 of 5- 10

One of the reasons that we never seem to get free is that we do not deal with our acts of rebellion and sin the way God does! He kept a list and nailed that to the cross! We do a general “forgive me”! While some may walk wonderfully free after asking for a general forgiveness, others may struggle with guilt from their past, with accusations of the enemy and with shame. You committed sin one wrong choice and one wrong act at a time! You may need to confess them one at a time! You may need to make a list and go through it before Him and then do some symbolic act like burning it!

God took responsibility for each of your wrong choices. Your freedom in Him is to take radical responsibility for your wrong choices by owning them and systematically confessing them to Him.

C/ The Ten Commandments and the Crime Sheet!

“Whoever therefore breaks one of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:19

The God who is love, the God who is three persons in a love relationship of mutual trust and respect has created a universe and man after His image. It is a universe of relationships shaped by covenant and choice where those choices have eternal consequences because they are made in moral freedom. He outlines the moral boundaries of His relational universe in the Ten Commandments. These help us to make specific confession to Him and to others. They help us to recover our freedom!

Jesus does not cancel the Ten Commandments! He makes them even more demanding! He applies them to our hearts and not just to our actions. He makes it them absolutely impossible to keep without a changed heart! This is the promise of the New Covenant of the New Heart!

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes and you will keep My judgments and do them.” Ezekiel 36:26- 27

To the man of sin these are commandments which could not be kept! To the new man these are promises of how the life of God will express itself through us!

I/ “And God spoke all these words saying, ‘I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other god's before Me.’” Exodus 20:1- 17

“There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire or one who practices witchcraft or a soothsayer or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist or one who calls up the dead.” Deuteronomy 18:10- 11

“For he who finds me finds life and obtains favor from the Lord. But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul. All those who hate me love death.” Proverbs 8:35- 36

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” Matthew 6:24

All covenants, dedications and any connections with all other religions and belief systems must be confessed as wrong, renounced and forgiveness sought for seeking life from them. Maybe your parents dedicated you to another religion? Ask forgiveness for yourself and for them. Forgive them! Do you have any items such as charms, books, or even “art” objects such as masks or figures or anything that ties you to those religions? Destroy them. When we touch the unclean things or keep them in our possession it gives the enemy the right to continue to harass us and curse us.

Jesus is represented in Proverbs as Wisdom. Those who seek Him find life! Those who reject Him find themselves loving death. You may think that is too strong a statement but look at the religious world around you! How many are focused on worship of ancestors, saints, prophets, relics, bones, idols- all dead! Ben Laden is quoted as saying, “We love death. You Christians love life.”

Man, in rebellion against the living God, wants to worship a god he feels in can control through offering and ritual. The living God can only be loved and obeyed. He is free and cannot be controlled!

2/ “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.” Exodus 20:7

“But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No' be 'No'. For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.” Matthew 5:37 of 33- 37.

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue.” Proverbs 18:21

“And when you pray do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think they will be heard for their many words.” Matthew 6:7

God created the worlds by the word of His mouth. When He said, “Let their be light.” (Genesis 1:3), the present, waiting Holy Spirit, united with those words “and there was light”!

We have been created in the image of God. Our words have creative power! We live in a spiritual universe where the Spirit of God and the spirits of darkness are waiting to create with our words. What will we create- blessing or cursing?

Some one has said, “Profanity is the effort of a weak mind to express itself strongly!” We know that our words are to have power and effect. Where does that power come from? Does it come from ourselves or from our relationship with the Holy Spirit?

Part 2/ The Father's Creative Loved

A/ "The Father... from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," Ephesians 3:14- 15.

God's primary relationship to us is that He is our creator, our Father. Whatever the earthly circumstances of our birth may have been, God is the Father. No one chose the circumstances of their birth- their gender, race, body type, talents, intelligence, financial status, class or their parents. We grow up and begin to realize that of all the people and personal circumstances in the world, I am me in mine and that I did not choose them. Grand parents and parents make choices and we are the result of their choices but ultimately God made those choices for us. He takes that ultimate responsibility. Isaiah 45:7 states this truth very powerfully!

If your circumstances were good, you may be thankful. If your circumstances were bad you may be angry. If your natural father was kind and loving, you may have little difficulty trusting God. If your natural father was distant or even abusive, you may have great difficulty trusting the heavenly Father.

If I can not trust Him with my past how can I trust Him with my future? Isaiah 45 continues in verses 9 through 10 to state this truth in a very dramatic way. Does the clay question the hands of the potter? It also speaks "woe to him who strives with his maker". That does not sound like a good future!

However in verse 11, the passage invites us to ask the Creator questions concerning His sons and the work of his hands. It is good and even commanded to ask questions about the why of His creative choices in our lives. The answers to those questions will not only heal our hearts but also unlock our destinies.

B/ Psalm 139, Radical Self-Acceptance, Radical Father Acceptance!

Some may have a general knowledge that God is the creator but see that as being true only in the beginning. Their view is that now things just run by natural process and that is partially true. However, in this Psalm David gives us a powerful picture of God's hand forming him in his mother's womb and of God being intimately involved in every detail of his life. This is not a natural process running according to its own impersonal laws. God is David's very personal creator. He is personally responsible for David's physical being. Radical self-acceptance begins right here on the physical level.

In Psalm 139 verse 14, David's response to the Father's hand in forming him is thanks and rejoicing. What do you do when you look at your body in the mirror? Our culture makes appearance and personality the keys to success and happiness. David's key to success began with thankfulness. That was the foundation for fulfilling his book of destiny (verse 16), for the revelation of the thoughts of God and intimacy with Him (verse 17) and for remaining in the presence of God (verse 18).

This is a different value system! God is more interested in character than appearance, in integrity than personality and in relationship than the expression of gifting. Some of our problems with God's creative choices have to do with a false value system and comparing ourselves to a false standard of physical appearance. Radical self-acceptance begins with thankfulness to God for the choices He has made in His creative role in our first creation.

Ultimate rebellion can be expressed through gender transformation. I will not live as created but I will recreate myself according to my choices. Some may not take such radical steps but live a life wishing they could make changes, wishing they were somebody else, had different gifts or different circumstances. God has made choices in your creation. You are a creature. He is the Creator. The first step in coming into order in my place in the universe is to say, "Thank you" to my Father, Creator God for how He has made me.

C/ Working out a Radical Father Acceptance- Ephesians 6:2

Thanking God for His creative choices over your life runs into the first major choice He made for you. That is His choice of your parents. Whatever your birth circumstances, God wanted you to be born so much that He allowed even very difficult circumstances so that you could be here. How do we honor our parents? That may be easy or it may be difficult but it involves the expression of love and respect.

We may believe that we have sorted out the issue of the Fatherhood of God over our lives but if there is difficulty in the area of honor towards our natural parents we need to take another look! As Paul says, "this is the

first commandment with a promise, 'that it may go well with you' ". If there are issues with our natural fathers, those issues will not only affect our relationship with God but also with our spiritual fathers. God is a father and everything He does expresses relationship and lineage and works through them.

We may also believe that we love God but know that we have difficulties with our parents. Anger and bitterness towards parents may really be against God but the religious thing in us says it is not nice to be angry with God so we redirect that away from Him. He knows our heart of hearts and does not want us to live a life of pain and pretending. We must worship Him in Spirit and Truth. Radical Father acceptance is possible in face of the most difficult truths, if we will face them!

If we have been involved with rebellion and cursing towards our parents the first step is to simply seek forgiveness. I Samuel 15:23 is a very strong scripture in this regard. You may say your parents are not worthy of honor. Whatever the action around us we are responsible for our reactions. It is not our circumstances but the response we choose to them that determine our destiny. You are never a victim unless you choose to be one. No one can make you a victim!

D/ The question!

Why did God in His wisdom allow circumstances that He could have prevented in His power? Your enemy would have you believe one of two lies. The first is that God loves you but does not have enough power to do much about it. The second is that God is powerful enough to change your circumstance but does not love you enough to care to do so. God is deficient in love or in power and therefore not worthy of your love and trust. The enemy's goal is to destroy your relationship with your Father and destroy your destiny in that relationship. God's goal is to restore you to full relationship and to fulfill the destiny for which He created you. That means radical Father acceptance in all of His love and His power!

Our first identity in life is to be a son or a daughter. Upon that foundation we build our identities as brothers, sisters then as men and women, husbands and wives, and fathers and mothers. In God's school we cannot skip a grade. If we do, we can never really work out the next grades successfully.

Our goal is to work through the truths of difficult circumstances, the reality of anger, the depths of pain and mourning that there might be true forgiveness and the joy of a radical restoration of your place in the father heart of God. We want to begin with a discussion of the nature of our spirit as coming from God.

Part 3: The Father of your Spirit

A/ Your Spirit, the breath of God- Genesis 2:7

This scripture is very clear. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being." There was no life in man until God "breathed" it in. He did not create it. He imparted it. Ecclesiastes 3:11 says, "He has put eternity in their hearts..."

Spiritual life is eternal and God's intention was for that eternal life to be with Him who is life. However we have each made our own choices to be independent from Him. That puts our spirit in a place of death according to Ephesians 2:1- 10. Spiritual death is simply separation from God. Spiritual life is to be one with Him. Another biblical expression for coming into oneness with God is "to be born again". Colossians 1:13 expresses this another way- the Father has "delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love".

B/ Born of His will- John 1:13 & James 1:18

Both of these scriptures speak of your crossing from death to life as a new birth and that new birth as being "of His will". God was intimately and purposely involved in your new birth just as He was in your first birth. He has two opportunities to directly express His Fatherhood through the act of your creation. He has two opportunities to breath hopes, dreams and destiny into your being!

The will of God is the most powerful force in the universe and you have been born of that will in your first birth and in your new birth. You have been born of destiny, to express it and to fulfill it. You were born to make a difference. You were born to fulfill Genesis 1:26! You were born to rule "over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth"!

But God did not create a machine unable to choose. He created us in His image. We are like Him in that our choices make the difference of life and death for ourselves and for one another. Our choices matter for eternity! In the mystery of God's sovereignty is a place where He suspends His power and "guarantees" our freedom to choose. By force of logic, I cannot reconcile God's sovereignty and my freedom. However, it is reasonable that God should create sons and daughters who are like Him and with whom He desires to have a love relationship. We can understand that apart from the freedom to choose not to love, there is no possibility of loving.

C/ Breath, wind, river- metaphors of the spirit

The Hebrew and the Greek words for "spirit" both translate as "breath" or "wind". The picture is of something moving, something living and Jesus gives us the same picture in John 3:8, "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

The other dominant metaphor for the spirit is that of moving water. A river flowed out of the garden (Genesis 2:10) and a river flows from the throne (Revelation 22:1). Again Jesus gives us the same picture in John 7:37-39 when He speaks of "rivers of living water" flowing from the hearts of those who drink from Him. And the gospel writer comments that through this metaphor Jesus was speaking of the Holy Spirit

The metaphors of "breath" and "river" speak of something, which must be moving, or it dies. God created us in His image. He is a continuous expression of love and honor within Himself and towards His universe. "God so loved that He gave"! He created us to worship. He created us so that a continuous flow of love and worship would flow from us to Him and to His family. Again from John we have the teaching of Jesus on this in John 4:23-24, "...the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth: for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

D/ More word pictures of the Spirit- Ephesians 3:14- 21

Verse 16 gives us the phrase "the inner man". This is the hidden person of the heart. The secret person that only you and God really know. Paul prays that this inner person may be made strong as the resources of Glory are given to him or her through the person of the Holy Spirit. Your spirit, your inner man may be reborn but it may still need to be made strong!

Verse 17 uses the word "heart" as the place where Christ lives in you through faith. Not the physical organ pumping your blood but another word picture of your innermost being, your spirit where Jesus is one with you. This relationship is "through faith" and faith is to increase, trust is to increase and love is to increase.

"Being rooted and grounded in love" is another expression from verse 17. The plant cutting is first rooted in water and then placed in the earth. This speaks of the very beginnings of our lives. Our spirits may have been "rooted and grounded" in acceptance and warmth or in rejection and fear. However we began our lives, we have the opportunity to begin again with our roots going down into the love of God.

"Filled with all the fullness of God" is the phrase from verse 19. This presents your spirit as a wonderful "deep" with the capacity to be filled with God. Psalm 42:7 speaks of deep calling unto deep! Your spirit is made in the image of God with the capacity of satisfying His desire for fellowship. That is an incredible ability! Our problem is not that we desire too much but that we desire too little.

E/ Spiritual beginnings- Luke 1:15, 41, 44

We have a view of the human being as maturing through the different stages of life and we apply that view to the spirit. However, the spirit is open and responsive to spiritual realities from its very beginning. In that sense it does not mature. Your "deep" will fill with whatever fills your mother's spirit. Your "roots" will go down into whatever is in your mother's spirit. Your "inner person of the heart" will assume the character of the spiritual environment around you. In its beginnings, your spirit is not protected by your will. As one matures one grows in the ability to guard and protect their heart. The gate of consciousness forms and begins to function to protect your spirit but in the beginning it is not so. Your spirit is responsive to and becomes filled with spiritual realities such as love or hatred, acceptance or rejection, fear or peace right from the very beginning in the womb.

This is the view of the scripture in Luke 1:15, 41 & 44 as it speaks of John the Baptist. He was to be "filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb". This baby in the womb did a dance of joy when he came into

the presence of Jesus in the womb of Mary. This is also increasingly the view of science as they begin to understand the realities of the responses of the child in the womb.

Whatever the spiritual environment, it can fill and affect the spiritual beginnings of a new life. If the child is not wanted, if the mother is afraid, if the mother goes through traumatic experiences such as abandonment during the pregnancy, all can affect the baby in her womb. The person may grow up not understanding their responses to life. They may be in a good home but never felt they could respond to the love and acceptance and never understood why. It may be that Mom and Dad wanted a little boy and they were born a little girl. The first response in the delivery room to them was, "Oh no! A girl!" That was enough to affect the just born heart. Mom and Dad quickly overcame that reaction and really loved their little girl but the damage was already done and no one understood what had taken place.

When the young child experiences difficult or traumatic things and realizes they cannot trust anyone or share their hearts, they close their hearts. The whole personality begins to protect the spirit and the person begins to make vows whether consciously or not. They vow that no one will know what has happened. They vow that they will never trust again so that no one will ever hurt them that way again. Different rooms of the heart are locked up. Those rooms are filled with pain, bitterness, darkness, loneliness, and fears of all kinds but outside we try to act "normal". This is pain concealed behind pretending.

Unclean spirits love places of bitterness and darkness and may seek to dwell in those rooms. A person may realize they need deliverance but little real deliverance can take place unless the vows are broken and the rooms unlocked.

F/ Closed Hearts or Open Hearts? The difference and the difference it makes!

The difference is not just that you are free to give and receive love although that is a wonderful difference. Matthew 16:19 speaks of whatever we bind on earth being bound in heaven and whatever we loose on earth being loosed in heaven. Many use this scripture as a basis for teaching a particular view of spiritual warfare. That is not our intention here. I hope that there are no demons to be bound in heaven! What is bound in heaven if it is bound here? What will be loosed in heaven if loosed here? I believe that this refers to grace, glory, love, revelation, and life- in general the river of God. Closed hearts mean a closed heaven. Open hearts mean an open heaven.

Habakkuk 2:14 and Isaiah 11:9 both make the same promise- "the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea." What is the source of that glory? Water once covered the earth in the time of the flood. That water came from two sources- the "windows of the heaven" and "the fountains of the great deep" (Genesis 9:11). On the day of Pentecost the windows of the heaven opened and the Holy Spirit was poured out (Acts 2:1- 4). In John 7:37- 39, Jesus spoke of what would happen as we drank of His presence in the person of the Holy Spirit. He promised that out of our hearts would flow "rivers of living water". He promised that we would become a source of His glory that would fill the earth.

We were created to be worshipers and lovers. We were created to have a continuous flow of expression flowing out of our innermost being. We were created to be a source of His life filling the earth. When hearts are closed by pain and pretending we are unable to fulfill our true destiny as lovers of God, lovers of man and sources of life.

In this next section we want to outline four steps to be free from the prison of pain and pretending.

Part 4: The Father's Redemptive Love- Freedom from the Prison of Pain and Pretending

Introduction

There are four main reasons we do not want to open up the locked doors of our hearts. The first is that the truth is too painful to face and so we have learned to simply push it down through various forms of denial. The second is that we know we are so angry that if we ever open the doors, we are afraid we may never get things back under control. The third is that we are afraid that once we get done being angry we may never stop crying. The fourth is simply that the little person behind those doors is too small and too vulnerable. I am still the same age that I was when the trauma happened, when I closed the door. How will I cope with that? So we play the macho man or the sophisticated lady or any number of variations on the theme of hiding who we really are and we are never free to learn to live from the heart.

A/ Embracing the truth- getting real with what has happened in my life!

Jesus called the Holy Spirit the Spirit of Truth and promised us that He would lead us into all truth (John 16:13). He would lead us into all of the glorious truth about Jesus. And He would lead us to face the difficult truths as well. The truth of man's inhumanity to man. When man fell how far did he fall? How can a father sexually abuse his own daughter?

Our defense mechanism is to deny and push back the uncomfortable truths about what we have done and about what has been done to us. We may reinforce our denial with drugs or alcohol or total commitment to a career. That may enable us to cope but once we meet Jesus that all can change. The teaching of Isaiah 53:3 is that all of us have hidden our faces from Jesus. Yet verses 4- 7 declare that He is the one who is carrying our sorrows! He was wounded for our transgressions! The Father has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all! When I face my pain I make a tremendous discovery! God has already placed it upon His Son, Jesus. When I embrace the truth, that truth does not traumatize me again. It does not crush me again. When I embrace it, I also embrace Jesus, the one upon whom that pain was placed. The tragedy of seeking to push my pain away is that I also push Jesus, the Man of Sorrows away.

God took total responsibility for giving us free will and our abuse of it. He put all iniquity and all sin upon Jesus and crushed His own Son with what has crushed me. Jesus is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. God crushed God for what has crushed me.

B/ Anger and the cry for justice:

We fear anger and try to control it. However, God did not create you to be a container for anger. It will eat you up emotionally and that is depression. Depression is often simply frozen anger. It will eat you physically and we see the results of that as any number of satan diseases. And most of the time we cannot control the anger anyway. People go through cycles of repression and explosion that can be incredibly destructive.

The reason we get angry is because we are made in the image of God and He gets angry! Psalm 7:11 tells us the "God is a just judge and God is angry with the wicked every day." God is angry when His righteous, loving intention for His sons and daughters is violated. Matthew 18:6 tells us what Jesus thinks of those who harm little ones. God created little children to be loved and cared for and He is angry over their abuse and neglect.

The scripture commands us in Ephesians 4:26 to "Be angry and do not sin"! That does not sound like the "Christian" thing to do. How do I express anger and yet not sin? We sin two ways with anger. If we use anger as energy for revenge we "give place to the devil". If we "let the sun go down" on our anger we sin by holding it in. The one is wrong expression and the other is containment. How do I express anger in a biblical way?

Psalm 22 is an expression of David's anger, frustration and fear. He had been anointed by Samuel to be king but now he is being pursued like an outlaw by a mad king who wants to destroy him. David is sleeping in a cave with 400 other men and his wife has been given to another man. David is expressing his anger and frustration to God! He is not trying to be nice. We may read this Psalm in a religious way and miss the whole point. God does not tell David not to talk to Him that way. There is no footnote telling us to ignore this Psalm because David was just having a bad day. No, this Psalm is inspired by the Holy Spirit just like all of the rest of the Psalms! It is an example to us that we can pour out our hearts to God no matter what is in them. He knows it all already anyway!

David's anger and frustration continue through to verse 21 and then the rest of the Psalm becomes praise. What has happened? Have his circumstances changed? Is the time now two years later and David is King in Jerusalem? No, David is still in the cave. Is David schizophrenic? No! We may not want to express our hearts when we look at the surface of our deep and see all the negative stuff that is there but if we will simply let the river flow, eventually it will begin to run clean from the deep within us.

The basic rule here is that "Impression without expression leads to depression". We were made to worship and what impacts our lives must be expressed or it will destroy us. This is a process of expression that may go on for some time. This is not a one-time thing. We are too deep for that!

We get angry because we have been made in the image of God. In every cry of anger there is a cry for justice. That cry says, "This is not right!" "This is not fair!". When we direct that cry to God he takes our vision and turns it to Jesus on the cross. God also expressed His anger. He poured it out on Jesus. All of His anger over sin and all of His satan's for sin were poured out on Jesus. We are back to Isaiah 53! But when I look upon Jesus I

realize something very powerful. He was innocent. Jesus did nothing wrong to deserve being crushed under the wrath of God for my sin and the sin of the world. If I get what is fair, I go to hell! I may have been sinned against in terrible ways but I have also sinned. I really do not want what is fair. I want mercy and forgiveness.

When I pour out my heart to God, He can then pick me up and hold me. Psalm 22 is followed by Psalm 23- "The Lord is my Shepherd"!

C/ Mourning and the question, "Why?"

Once I have faced the truth of what has happened and once I have faced the issues of anger, I begin to face the issues of what has been lost. Abuse steals innocence and destroys childhood. It destroys the ability to trust and form fulfilling relationships. Sin in every form steals joy and opportunities. It shatters destinies. One reason we want to keep things locked up is so we will not have to deal with the loss and the question of why. Why did it have to be that way?

God is not very good at answering the "why" questions. For many things there are no answers that will satisfy. In John 10:10 we have the words of Jesus on this issue, "The thief does not come except to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly." The possibility of true love allows for the possibility of real evil. Our choices have eternal consequences for good or evil. This is not a rational problem to be solved but a life and death struggle to be won!

God does not promise to answer our questions but He does promise to comfort those who mourn (Matthew 5:4). The comfort promised is not that of words but of the gift of Himself. In II Corinthians 1:3-7 Paul teaches us that a name for the Father God is the "God of all Comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." He pours the substance of His person into us, which we are then able to give to others. "Rejoice with those that rejoice and weep with those that weep", is the command from Romans 12:15. Share the spiritual substance that you have received.

Into the places of grief and loss He pours His own life and love. That is how He comforts us. The filling of the Holy Spirit is not bound in time to only the present moment. He fills us all the way back. As I open my life and pour out the anger and the pain, He begins to fill me with His love and peace. He fills the deep places. He puts my roots into love so that no matter how my life has begun, He will fulfill His role as a Father to me.

His comfort even extends to my physical body. Hebrews 10:19- 22 speaks of us coming into "the Holiest" through all that Jesus has done for us. The time is present tense, not future. We are coming into the holiest place body, soul and spirit. This is not just a "spiritual" thing! The cleansing of Jesus is not just for our conscience but for our bodies as well. No matter what we have done and no matter what has been done to us we are cleansed of every remembrance of evil and our bodies are washed clean. Everything of shame is taken away!

D/ Forgiveness and the joy of restoration to the Father:

Matthew 7:7- 12 are verses with some of the simplest words in any language. "Ask and it will be given unto you; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you." We all ask for the bread of fellowship and covenant trust. We do not ask for the stones of betrayal and rejection. We all ask for the fish of life. We do not ask for the serpent's poison of cursing, sickness and death. And we are told that our heavenly Father knows how to give good gifts to those who ask. What of the stones of betrayal that we have all received? What of the cursing and destruction we have all faced?

Our enemy wants us to doubt the character and power of our Father. He wants us to take those stones and throw them back at those who have betrayed us. He wants us to respond with cursing to those who have cursed. In Matthew 5:43- 48 Jesus asks for a different response. He asks us to love our enemies, to bless those who curse and to pray for those who have hurt us. The promise if we do so is that we will be the sons of our Father who is in heaven. The passage ends with a command to be "perfect just as your Father in heaven is perfect". How can I be perfect, as God is perfect?

Luke 6:27- 36 is the parallel passage to the one we have just referred to. It carries a similar instruction to love our enemies, to bless those who curse and to pray for those who abuse us. It carries the same promise of becoming the sons of our Father but the passage ends with a different command. Luke quotes Jesus as saying, "Therefore be merciful, just as your Father is merciful". This does not ask for perfection of power and execution of intention but to be merciful! I can forgive and bless. I can be merciful and be perfect, as my Father in Heaven is perfect!

When a stone is thrown at me I have a choice. I can forgive or I can take that stone and throw it back. That is the history of relational conflicts and we can never solve them by figuring out who threw the first stone. Some one has to stop throwing stones. But what do I do with the stone? It is a real stone. It was meant to hurt me. Do I believe the circumstances? Do I believe the relational realities? Or do I believe my Father? Do I believe that He is good and only gives good gifts? If I believe my Father I am able to put that stone in my mouth through forgiveness, blessing and prayer for the one who threw the stone and I will discover that it really is bread. It is bread that will become life to me and to those around me. The same is true of the serpent. It will be transformed into life. Do I believe my circumstances or do I believe my Father?

This is the power of the cross of Jesus Christ. God does not work His will by an act of raw power. He does not work His will by an act of superior force. He works by sacrificial love. He took all sin and rebellion upon Himself so that He could forgive it all and so that we could forgive as He forgives. That changes stones into bread and serpents into fish. That is the power that changes betrayal into the bread of fellowship and cursing into the life of blessing.

As I forgive, bless and pray I discover that I really am the son of my Father. I really am my Father's child because His nature is flowing through me. What Satan meant to use to destroy my relationship with my Father will actually be transformed by the power of the cross to restore that relationship. My Father is a good God who gives good gifts to His children! I realize my identity in Him! That is why Jesus says in Matthew 6:14- 15 that the key to being forgiven by the Father is that we forgive. That is why Jeremiah says in Jeremiah 31:34 that we would "know Him through forgiveness"!

We did not speak of forgiveness before this time since that can also become an instrument of denial and a closed door to our hearts. Sometimes Christians know they must forgive and so they do it. They forgive as an act of will and then try to forget the whole thing. First of all only God can forget! We cannot! Secondly, forgiveness is a process, not a single act whereby we try to put the thing away from us forever. The process is only real if we face the truth, the anger and the pain of loss. The process of forgiveness has a beginning and that may be a very dramatic event but however dramatic that beginning was; it is only a beginning. Every time you touch those circumstances or are reminded of them simply forgive, bless and pray.

Satan may keep pushing the repeat button on the traumatic events of our lives. He wants to torture us with them and destroy our peace of mind. His accusation is that we have not having really forgiven or else the memory would not come back with such pain. Every time he pushes that repeat button speak forgiveness, speak blessing and pray for the people involved. Satan does not want people prayed for so he will stop seeking to torment you that way. As you forgive and bless (and sometimes express anger to God over what has happened and sometimes weep again) your spirit is cleansed and freed from the impact of the wrong and you become a channel of grace to those who have wronged you. That is the triumph of the cross! Many have seen nightmares and flashbacks gradually stop as they have forgiven, blessed and prayed for the people involved in causing the trauma.

Another tactic of the enemy in the realm of forgiveness is to throw in confusion around trust issues. He tells us that if we do not trust them, we have not truly forgiven them. That is not true! Forgiving is something I do out of my own heart because of my trust in what Jesus has done on the cross. The other party has nothing to do with my forgiving them. I may have forgiven them and genuinely love them but not be able to trust them since trust has to be earned by the demonstration of a trustworthy character. When you forgive some people they may make a demand that you trust them as proof that you have truly forgiven them. That is an unrighteous demand. Do not confuse forgiveness and trust. Forgiveness may be the first step to a restoration of trust but the next steps must be earned by demonstrations of trustworthiness. Many bear the pain of loving someone they cannot trust.

Many people want to minister but few have a life message. One source of life messages is areas where stones have been turned into bread. The word has become flesh in you. Forgiveness not only restores your heart to your heavenly Father; it releases your destiny. Destiny is not just in your gifting but in the power of the cross. Every destiny that has been fulfilled has gone through death and resurrection. Jesus has always been the Lamb that was slain! The only life that God receives is resurrection life. That means that even the vision that God gives you will go through a process of death and resurrection. It does not die because it is selfish or simply your own ambition. It dies because it must go through to resurrection life. In that process we know it is not ours. We know it is really His!

Part 5: The Father's Heart Expressed

Introduction- Matthew 11:25- 30

Jesus invites us to come to Him and learn of His Father. He is the only one who can teach us for two reasons. The first is that God has given all things to the Son and the second is that no one knows the Father except the Son. Many know things about God but Jesus wants to give us the revelation of heart relationship. He has that revelation because of where He is coming from. John 1:18 tells us that Jesus “is in the bosom of the Father”. Jesus wants to open His heart to us so that we can walk through Him into the same relationship with His Father that He has. This is not just knowledge about God but experience of Him. Through Jesus the heart of God is expressed to us. This “yoke” of relationship is “easy” and this “burden is light”. Many have wrong ideas about God because they have never experienced Him. Jesus has fully experienced the Father and desires to show you the Father God that He knows.

A/ The one gift only a Father can give- Luke 3:22

God spoke publicly over the life of Jesus three times that we know of from the Scriptures. In Luke 3:22 at His baptism, in Mark 7:7 on the mount of Transfiguration and John 12:28 after the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. At the baptism and on the mountain the Father spoke the same thing over His son; “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” God could have said anything at the baptism to introduce the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus. He could have written in fire in the sky but He did nothing spectacular. He simply acted as the Father and blessed His son.

Did Jesus need to hear those words? Yes! Why? Because there is one gift that only a father can give and that is the gift of identity. “This is the Son of my love in whom I delight!” A saying in the world is that you are not a man or a woman until your father says you are. Where that blessing is missing, we struggle with issues of identity and we seek to prove who we are in many different ways. Without that blessing, I cannot bless others. One generation after another struggles alone to prove who they are and that they have worth.

That blessing is what God wants to speak over your life. That gift of identity is what God wants to give to you. The Father’s blessing and gift of identity releases your destiny. If Jesus needed this gift, how much more do we?

B/ The gift cannot be earned!

Had Jesus done any ministry before God spoke over Him at the baptism? No! Up until this time He had been a carpenter. Many do ministry as a means of winning God’s approval. They are driven and that drive can never be satisfied. We can never do enough to please God. His pleasure over our lives is a gift through Jesus Christ. We do what we do in loving obedience and gratitude for His love. That gives our lives freedom from trying to prove who we are, from trying to impress others, from the competitive spirit and from comparing ourselves with others. The God of the universe has already given me the greatest honor that can be given to anyone! He has told me He is pleased with me! It does not get any better than that!

C/ Blessing is more powerful than any curse!

You may have had a father who blessed you and gave you that gift of a secure identity. If so you are likely able to receive the blessing of God. That is God’s intention for godly fatherhood. He wants us to be like Him! He wants us to be able to say like Jesus, “If you have seen me, you have seen the Father!” I am accurately showing you what He is like!

You may have had a father who did not express his love and blessing. He showed it by working hard and providing for you and you knew that he loved you but there was little heart expression. Or he may have believed that if he gave you too much praise, you would not work so hard at your studies. This can crush the spirit and create a lie that says, “It does not matter what I do, it is never good enough, he never gives me any affirmation!” One may try desperately to please, to be perfect and earn that praise and another may become a complete rebel. As a rebel they get the “praise” of their peer group of rebels. Driven to please or driven to rebel are opposite sides of the same coin. That is the coin of trying to create my own identity through performance. You cannot do it! Identity is a gift from the Father as He places His hand on your head and speaks His love over your life.

Instead of just withholding their praise, your parents may have actually cursed you. You may have grown up hearing. “You are no good. You are a shame to the family. You are ugly. You were an accident. I never wanted you. You should have been a boy. Why can’t you be like your older brother?” We become driven- either to prove them wrong by doing well or to prove them right by doing badly. There is a dynamic in rejection that releases rebellion. Break the power of those words of cursing through forgiveness and receive the Father’s words of blessing and identity!

Because of death or divorce there may have been no one there to bless or to curse so we are left with the fear of being abandoned again. We were left with the need to make our own way. God left us alone then why turn

to Him now? Again we become driven to prove who we are and that we are worth something. Jesus was there before you! On the cross God abandoned Him because He could not look upon sin. That sin was taken away so that it could be forgiven and so that every curse could be broken and so that every rejection could become reconciliation.

There may have been actual physical and/or sexual abuse in your life. A terrible lie can take hold in lives, which have been abused especially if the abuse takes place at a very young age. They want to believe that the parent is good but how do they rationalize what is being done to them? So they tell themselves, "Bad things only happen to bad people and so I must be very bad to deserve the bad things that are happening to me!" The truth, of course, is that bad things happen to innocent people but this "magical" thinking helps the child to cope with their situation. Here issues of truth, anger, pain and forgiveness can get pushed very deep and very far back. God promises to be "a father of the fatherless" (Psalm 68:5) and He will be such as we open our hearts to Him.

In all of these situations, the blessing of God is more powerful than any curse. He desires to express that blessing over your life. He desires to give you the one gift that only He can give- the gift of the Father's blessing; the gift of identity.

D/ The Spirit of Adoption- John 14:18- 21, Romans 8:14- 17, Galatians 4:6

When Jesus was talking about leaving His disciples in John 14, he made a promise to them that He would not leave them orphans but that He would come to them. There are many causes and many manifestations of the orphan spirit. It is competitive and jealous of the successes of another. It must be right and is always seeking to prove itself. It is driven and cannot rest. We may understand all about the issues involved and still not be free from their hold on our lives. Jesus promised not to leave us orphans. He wants us to become sons of God in Him! This is not a matter of words but of power!

In John 14:20 Jesus promised the disciples a day when they would know they were in Him and in the Father. That day was the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came. He is the Spirit of Adoption, the Spirit of acceptance and the Spirit of love. This same Holy Spirit wants to come to you and do the same work in you so that you cry, "My Father!" The disciples were as competitive and as position conscious as any normal group of men. Their most common argument (Luke 22:24, Mark 9:33, Matthew 20:20) was about who was going to be the greatest. Yet we never hear that argument after the coming of the Holy Spirit. Unity is not about agreeing upon the same theology but about walking in the same spirit.

The Holy Spirit can fill you directly or through someone praying for you and laying their hands upon you. However He fills you this is a work of power. The disciples were told to wait until the Holy Spirit came (Acts 1:8). They could do nothing to make this happen except to wait. Many of us love to do things for others but to receive for ourselves is more difficult. Doors in our hearts must open and we must learn to receive the filling of the Holy Spirit.

E/ The Holy Spirit of wind, of fire, of joy and of power- Acts 2:1- 3

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of passion and fire that burns in the heart of the Godhead. You were created to burn with the same fire that burns in God. You were created for Holy Fire. We are so often satisfied with so little. Our problem is not that we desire too much but that we desire too little. In Psalm 42:7, David speaks of the deep crying unto the deep. He speaks of the depths of God crying out to your depths! Let your deeps cry out to Him and let Him fill you. There is a cry in the Spirit to fill you and to release through you the heart of God for His world.

When the Holy Spirit filled the disciples on the day of Pentecost, they experienced the wind of God blowing out the old and bringing in the new. They experienced the fire of God's love, acceptance and cleansing. He is a consuming fire of passionate love and holiness! The disciples also experienced the joy of His presence as new wine and were overwhelmed to the point of intoxication on the joy. They also experienced the gifts of the Holy Spirit beginning to flow out of them as they began to speak with tongues they had never learned. The river of life began to flow out of them and they began to speak and work miracles in Jesus name.

The disciples, who were afraid to stand with Jesus just a few days before during his arrest and trial, now stood before the whole nation and declared Him to be the Messiah. Men who had run for their lives (Mark 14:50) now stood without fear and risked imprisonment and death as they declared the name of Jesus. By the power of the Spirit they knew they were sons of the Father. They were secure in their identity and able to stand in their destiny to change the world.

Conclusion

There is always more in God for us to experience and to know. Our spirits will always need more of the prayer of Ephesians 3:14 –21 fulfilled in them. Some of life's experiences leave permanent scars upon our lives. That does not mean we cannot plow the field that God has for us! There are some tears that do not get wiped away until we are God does it in the new heaven (Revelations 21:4) but that does not mean we cannot fulfill our destiny in God for this time! He is looking for men and women of maturity and faith who will be fathers and mothers in His household and who will release the next generation of sons and daughters.