

When Christ Comes to His Church



David Wilkerson July 20, 2015

All the Old Testament prophets foretold the coming of Christ. Upon his arrival, he would perform glorious blessings — binding up the brokenhearted, proclaiming liberty to the captives, healing the sick and building a new church (see Isaiah 61:1). He would “give...beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness” (61:3, NKJV).

Christ knew from before Creation that a great host would believe in him. Multitudes from all nations would be saved and baptized, streaming to him till the end of time. And Jesus knew he had to have anointed ministers to lead these vast flocks. Fifty days after his ascension to heaven, he made provision for this ministry. At Pentecost, he poured out the Holy Spirit, sanctifying and empowering both sheep and shepherd.

Christ gave great care to the choosing, calling and sending of his shepherds to care for the sheep. The Bible says Peter, Stephen and others like them were men “full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom” (Acts 6:3, KJV), “full of the Holy Ghost and of faith” (11:24). These ministers turned the world upside down. They had no personal agendas, no fleshly ambitions. They had but one measure of concern: “Is this the work of the Holy Ghost? Has he birthed what we’re doing, or is this all the work of our flesh?”

“He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” (Galatians 3:5). The only effective preaching or teaching is by the ministry of the Holy Ghost. This kind of ministry comes from the Spirit alone, it flows out by the Spirit, the words are of the Spirit, and it is all rendered in the power of the Spirit.

God has called us to be servants “full of the Holy Ghost and power.”

At the Upper Room, the Lord poured out the Holy Ghost on the faithful who had gathered there: “They were all filled with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:4). In that moment, Peter became the channel of the Holy Spirit, ministering to the multitudes in Jerusalem — and it shocked him. Just a few weeks prior to this, Peter had denied knowing Jesus, cursing as he declared, “I don’t know the man.”

But now Peter was forgiven and cleansed. And moments after being filled with the Spirit, Peter stood and preached the gospel to a vast multitude of nonbelievers: “When they heard (his words), they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (2:37).

Why did the crowds respond to Peter’s sermon? No human power is able to convict of sin. Only the Holy Spirit can bring conviction and cause a person to cry for help. Those crowds came to Christ because Peter was ministering in Holy Ghost power. The Lord had supplied the Spirit, which flowed out of a renewed, sanctified vessel.

The apostle Philip also was a man full of the Holy Ghost and power. When he went to Samaria, he ministered powerfully in the Spirit. Philip sent devils fleeing, and an entire city was stirred. Multitudes were saved, and the people held a bonfire to burn centuries’ worth of books on witchcraft and the occult. The move was so powerful, Philip had to send word back to Jerusalem for other apostles to come help with the revival. When those Spirit-anointed men arrived, the Holy Ghost continued to fall on everyone whom God’s ministers laid their hands on.

Any man or woman of God who is determined to be an oracle of the Holy Spirit will be refined by fire.

Every such servant prays, “Come, Lord Jesus, purify me. I don’t want to live halfheartedly. I want my life to be a pleasure to you. So, cleanse me, make me a vessel of your honor. Let the Spirit flow out of me.”

Jesus will come to these servants as a refiner of precious metal. “He shall... purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness” (Malachi 3:3). This “offering” is our bodies. We offer them to him as a living sacrifice, to be subjected to his holy, refining fire. He fans the flame until it’s hot enough to accomplish his purpose, then watches over us faithfully as we’re purged of every impurity.

You may wonder, “But why do our trials have to be so intense? Why does a loving God allow such stripping, such severe mental and physical testing?” I don’t believe any of our pain or suffering brings the Lord any pleasure. In fact, it must grieve him. Yet our Lord knows exactly how much of the fire we can take. And he is faithful to pull us out in his time and mercy.

I know of only one reason for the incredible intensity of our trials here on earth. And that is dependency. The Lord desires to bring out of his refining fire a trust in us that’s purer than the purest gold. He wants us to possess a powerful trust in him that will endure any circumstance — job loss, loss of friends and loved ones, even death — to be a pure vessel of his Spirit’s flow.

The trials that many of God’s saints are enduring right now aren’t of the devil or even of their flesh. It is the Lord himself loving them, refining them, and preparing them to be ministers of his Holy Ghost. He’s doing everything necessary to remove every impurity, because it’s going to take Holy Ghost filled witnesses — preachers, teachers, pastors, lay people — through whom his Spirit can flow outward to a lost humanity.

Yes, Christ said his church would be victorious, that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. But at the same time, Jesus was deadly serious about having a committed, last-days army that would follow him into every fire. He declared, “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit... Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me” (John 15:2,4).

Abiding in Christ means trusting him fully in all things.

Abiding in Christ means total dependence on him. It is holding steady in him, no matter how much turmoil, suffering or pain we endure. It means resting in his Word, even though our world seems to be crumbling around us.

For this kind of trust to blossom in us, he allows pruning in our lives. Christ is telling us, “If I left you alone to grow on your own, you’d grow wild, in every direction. Or you’d be content not to grow at all. But I have a plan for you. You see, I need you. And I’m going to make you strong, so I can use you for my glory. But that means I have to deal with everything that gets in the way of your growth.”

If you’re being pruned by the Lord, that is good news. It means God has seen your growth in learning to abide in him. But he then determined that there was still something in you hindering your growth: a seed of doubt, perhaps, or a tendency to fear. So he began to prune you back, to clear out the last remains of the most wicked root-sin in humankind: unbelief.

Jesus gives us a warning on this matter of abiding in him. And his words here should grip our hearts: “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned” (John 15:6). Will you let the Holy Spirit comfort you in all your trials? If not — if you get angry at God, if you won’t believe his Word that your trials are meant to try your faith, if you refuse to trust him to bring you out — it will cause you to wither and dry up. You’ll be cut off from the very source of life.

This is one of the most serious warnings in all of Scripture. It doesn’t matter how difficult, strange or deep your trial becomes. You simply can’t be nonchalant about it. You can’t just say, “Well, I hope I hold onto faith through all of this. It would be nice if I came out of it with fruit.” No! You have to come out of your fiery trial stronger in faith, more dependent on Christ. Your trust in him must emerge as pure, precious gold. He simply will not allow any mixture to remain.

Jesus adds a promise to his warning.

“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love” (15:10). What were the commands the Father gave Jesus? He told him, “Trust me in everything. Do only what I tell you to do and say only what I tell you to say. Do nothing on your own but depend on me at all times, for all things.”

Beloved, there is only one kind of servant who is prepared to minister the Holy Ghost to others. And that is the trusting, fully dependent servant. Does this describe you? Do you have a tried and tested experience? If so, be sure the Spirit will use the fruit of your trial to convict, convince and draw others to the cross.

Perhaps right now you’re going through the test of your life. There is no way you can work your way through it. Your prayer in these times has become, “Oh, Lord, I’ve come to the end of myself.”

God is pruning you, purging you, showing you: “There is only one way you will be able to serve me in these last days, and that is by abiding in me fully. My plan depends on it. Right now, you may not be able to see any way out of your affliction. But I have everything perfectly under control. In fact, I have you in my heavenly training course for these last days. You’re learning to abide in me. Trust me!”

He will see you through it all. And you’ll be prepared for what is coming, by his goodness and love.

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