

**Life In A Whole New Light**  
***Where's The Power?***

We are in a message series on the theme: *Life In A Whole New Light*. We are seeking to answer the question: “If I am growing as a Christian, what does that look like?” Perhaps another way of stating the question would be: “What are some of the essential ingredients necessary for maturing as a follower of Jesus Christ?”

The first message dealt with the assurance of salvation. You will not grow far in your Christian walk unless you have certainty from God’s Word about the security of your relationship with God – that he saves you for eternity.

Then we moved on to consider the critical subject of forgiveness. Can I really be certain my sins are forgiven? How does forgiveness work? So last week we saw forgiveness declared, forgiveness experienced and forgiveness expressed.

This morning I want to deal with another critical issue: “Where is the power?” God has called us, as his children, to a life of growing Christlikeness. But how does that happen? Where’s the power to see one’s life changed, or to use the biblical term – transformed?

I want to put up the diagram from last week and refocus our thoughts.

**DIAGRAM – Time/Space Line with circles**

The last two weeks have focused more on what happens above the time-space line. It has to do with our position in Christ. We have been placed into Christ. Our identity is defined eternally by being in Christ. We are regenerated, that is, given new life, spiritual life. We are saved; we are forgiven – completely! We have eternal life as a present reality. There is an inheritance reserved in heaven for us.

At the same time, beginning at the moment of our conversion, our salvation, God invades our life. He sends his Holy Spirit to take up residence in our heart. This is what Jesus promised his disciples in the Upper Room:

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. –  
*John 14:15-17*

He goes on to say:

If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him. – *John 14:23*

This is such an amazing thought that God would come to live within us. It's one of those mysteries the Scriptures describe. Paul writes to the Colossians and speaks about

... the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. – *Colossians 1:26-27*

Turn in your Bible to the book of Galatians. Paul describes how we should understand the present reality of this mystery now revealed.

### **Galatians 2:20**

This speaks of our union with Christ. When we are born into God's family, we are identified with Jesus' death – we died with him. It is an entirely new identity, new reality. I am united with Christ in his death. Now I am made alive in Christ. Now he lives his life through me.

The Holy Spirit is the presence of Christ in your life. He is fully God, sharing all the attributes of the Father and Son. And he comes into your life as the guarantee of the full salvation that God has begun in your conversion. All the promises of God are certain; the presence of the Holy Spirit is the proof, the guarantee of that. You and I are still sinful, fallen people. Our wills are bent towards sin and self. Positionally, God saves us completely. Now he begins his work within us to shape our lives into the very image of Jesus.

The question is: how does that happen? Where does the power come from? Let me make a point with this video.

### **Video – ride in new car**

When I bought the car, it came with an engine in it. If I didn't know that or didn't take advantage of that, it doesn't function as it was created to function. I am going to have to work really hard to go anywhere with this car.

Many Christians come to faith and then try as hard as they can to live the Christian life. They try to keep all the rules; they try to obey the best they can; they try to be a

better person. And all they get is frustration, discouragement, they get worn out, etc. I know; I've been there.

Even though I gave my life to Christ at a young age, all I knew about the Holy Spirit is that he was the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost. It wasn't until I was in college when I heard Bill Bright give a message at a Christmas Conference on the Holy Spirit that I began to understand where the power was to come from.

It begins with the fact that God the Holy Spirit lives in you as a believer in Jesus Christ. It is the experiential reality of the indwelling Christ. God's intent for every believer is that they would experience his power in their lives through the Holy Spirit. A.W. Tozer, in his book *The Divine Conquest*, writes of this power:

It is spiritual power. It is the kind of power that God is. It is the ability to achieve spiritual and moral ends. Its long range result is to produce God-like character in men and women who were once wholly evil by nature and by choice.

God says, "You cannot change by yourself. You cannot live as you ought to live by just trying harder. It won't work. Only through the power of the indwelling Spirit will you see me at work in you."

So, what's required on our part? If we are to experience the work of the Holy Spirit, what is necessary for us to do? What are the requirements? Let me suggest three things to you this morning. Three words:

The first is **DESIRE**. You have to really desire for God to empower your life. You have to want what it is that God offers to every Christian. Listen again to Tozer writing in *Divine Conquest*, in the chapter titled "The Spirit-Filled Life:"

Before a man can be filled with the Spirit he must be sure he wants to be. And let this be taken seriously. Many Christians want to be filled, but their desire is a vague romantic kind of thing hardly worthy to be called desire. They have almost no knowledge of what it will cost them to realize it.

Let us imagine that we are talking to an inquirer, some eager young Christian, let us say, who has sought us out to learn about the Spirit-filled life. As gently as possible, considering the pointed nature of the questions, we would probe his soul somewhat as follows: "Are you sure you want to be filled with a Spirit who, though He is like Jesus in His gentleness and love, will nevertheless demand to be Lord of your life? Are you willing to let your personality be taken over by another, even if that other be the Spirit of God Himself? If the Spirit takes charge of your life He will expect unquestioning obedience in everything. He will not

tolerate in you the self-sins even though they are permitted and excused by most Christians. By the self sins I mean self-love, self-pity, self-seeking, self-confidence, self-righteousness, self-aggrandizement, self-defense. You will find the Spirit to be in sharp opposition to the easy ways of the world and of the mixed multitude within the precincts of religion. He will be jealous over you for good. He will not allow you to boast or swagger or show off. He will take the direction of your life away from you. He will reserve the right to test you, to discipline you, to chasten you for your soul's sake. He may strip you of many of those borderline pleasures which other Christians enjoy but which are to you a source of refined evil. Through it all He will enfold you in a love so vast, so mighty, so all-embracing, so wondrous that your very losses will seem like gains and your small pains like pleasures. Yet the flesh will whimper under His yoke and cry out against it as a burden too great to bear. And you will be permitted to enjoy the solemn privilege of suffering to 'fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ' in your flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church. Now, with the conditions before you, do you still want to be filled with the Holy Spirit?"

Wow, what a question, what a defining perspective! Is it a difficult thing to be filled with the Spirit? Complicated, not really. Easy – definitely not. But only because it challenges whether or not we really want Christ to live his life in and through ours. Desire – do you really desire to experience God's power in your life?

The second word is **PRESENT**. Turn in your Bible to the book of Romans, chapter 12.

### **Romans 12:1**

A friend gave me a book titled *The One Year Christian History – A Daily Glimpse Into God's Powerful Work*. This past Monday, January 14, the story was one that fit right to what we are talking about.

### **Read: *Whose Body?***

This requirement, if we are to experience God's powerful presence in our lives, shows up earlier in Paul's letter. Turn back to Romans, chapter six. In this chapter Paul talks about our union with Christ. In language similar to Galatians 2:20, he says that we have died to sin. Through our identification with Christ, we died with him – a death to sin. This is to have implications, then, in our daily life.

### **Romans 6:12-14**

This word “present” is also translated “yield.” It means “to place at one’s disposal, to present, to offer as a sacrifice.” It is in the present tense which signifies continuous, habitual action. It is an ongoing act of the will in light of what God has done for you and in light of your union with him. It is an intelligent act, not an emotional or impulsive decision, but a decisive act of the will.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit, allowing the Spirit to control and empower your life, is not passive on our part. We are very much partners with God in this process of transformation. But our part isn’t what produces the power; that’s the ministry of the Spirit. But we must choose to put our bodies – our hands, our feet, our mouths, ears and eyes, our thoughts and actions – at the disposal of the Holy Spirit.

The third word, the third thing necessary on our part, I would suggest, is **WALK**. Turn to Galatians, chapter five.

### **Galatians 5:16-25**

“Walk” is the most active word used in the New Testament to describe living out our position in Christ, that is, living as God wants us to. The Greek word means “to conduct oneself, to order one’s behavior.”

If we are to experience the benefits of our salvation, listed here as the fruit of the Spirit, we must orient our lives around the Spirit. We must choose to walk in God’s way, according to his will. We might use here the term “obey.” Jesus told his disciples, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”

Our lives are to be in tune with God’s will for us. That includes his purposes in our lives, his direction for our lives, his power within our lives. Every day I have to choose to say “no” to sin and self, and “yes” to the Holy Spirit who lives in me.

Paul says that we are not under the dominion of sin any more. It no longer defines my life, dictates my attitudes and actions. But daily I have to choose that path for myself. That is the yielding to the Holy Spirit.

Hannah Whitehall Smith wrote a book titled *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life*. It was first printed in 1870. But the truths contained within are timeless because they line up with what we know in the Scriptures. She writes of this living in union with Christ:

It is a very simple transaction, and yet very real. The steps are but three: first, we must be convinced that the Scriptures teach this glorious indwelling of God; then we must surrender our whole selves to Him to be possessed by Him; and, finally,

we must believe that He *has* taken possession, and *is* dwelling in us. We must begin to reckon ourselves dead, and to reckon Christ as our only life. We must maintain this attitude of soul unwaveringly. It will help us to say, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,” over and over, day and night, until it becomes the habitual breathing of our souls. We must put off our self-life by faith continually, and put on the life of Christ; and we must do this not only by faith, but practically as well. We must continually put self to death in all the details of daily life, and must let Christ instead live and work in us. I mean we must never do the selfish thing, but always the Christlike thing. We must let this become, by its constant repetition, the attitude of our whole being. And as surely as we do, we shall come at last to understand something of what it means to be made one with Christ as He and the Father are one. Christ left all to be joined to us; shall we not also leave all to be joined to Him in this Divine union which transcends words.

Are you content with the experience of Christ that you know today? Or do you want to know his resurrection power, day by day? God desires that you would know the fullness of his power in your life – power to overcome temptation, power to make right choices – though difficult they may be, power to see your attitudes and actions change as they line up with how God wants you to live?

This experience of Christ living in you through the Holy Spirit is not just for some Christians; it is not some added benefit or power to come through some extra spiritual blessing to the super-spiritual among us. It is God’s desire for every believer; it is his will for you.

Do you want that? Do you desire that? Are you willing to present your body to the Holy Spirit as a living sacrifice? Are you willing to walk by the Spirit, depending upon him to empower you through faith?

This is the choice God puts before each of us this morning. If you are here today without a personal relationship with God through Christ, he desires for you to believe the good news of the Gospel – that Jesus died for your sins, that he was raised from the dead signifying that the penalty for your sin has been justly paid and fully accepted by God the Father, and that if you would believe and put your trust in Christ alone for salvation, God would forgive you and would save you and give you eternal life.

If you are already God’s child, having believed the Gospel and trusted in Christ, God desires to live his life through you in the Holy Spirit. Would you choose to yield your life to him, to ask the One who lives within to have free rein in your body, soul and spirit?