

**WCCC 2021**

**Brother Godwin Sun**

## **The Presence of the Holy Spirit (2)**

Brothers and sisters, we thank the Lord. We have quickly reached the last half day of the conference. In the past many brothers and sisters have longed for this meeting. We have also made many preparations. But quickly we feel that this conference is going to pass. Not only have we noticed that time flies by quickly, but we have also noticed that time does not wait for us. I think this is an important reminder. Last year when the pandemic started, the Lord placed within me a very heavy reminder: the Lord is returning soon.

When the Lord returns, the heavenly kingdom arrives. I feel as if our entire generation has reached the entrance of the kingdom of heaven. It may take only a few more steps and we will enter into the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, the Holy Spirit has a heavy reminder within me: today within our Christian walk and service, the most important matter concerns entering the kingdom of heaven. If we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, there will be great regret.

By the grace of the Lord, I had the opportunity to encourage many brothers and sisters throughout the past year. The most important matter in our daily walk and service is to be prepared so that we will be able to enter the kingdom of heaven. We must place the matter of entering the kingdom of heaven as the most important. Do not place emphasis or waste effort on matters that do not pertain to the kingdom of heaven. We must attend to matters that prepare us to enter into the kingdom of heaven. May the words that the Lord speaks at this conference be important reminders to us. Do not treat this as any other meeting. We are not sure if we will have more of these meetings in the future. May the Lord's words remain within us, giving us an important reminder. We have to rise up and prepare. Let this be our prayers: "no matter what condition I am in today, I must enter into the kingdom of heaven." We pray that the Lord place this desire strongly within brothers and sisters. Our Lord is to return as the groom. He will receive the saints who are prepared into His wedding feast. May the Lord help us not to take this matter lightly.

Brothers and sisters, if we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, all that you have done and possess are of naught. I desire to start with this mutual

encouragement. Time does not wait for us. It is the mercy of the Lord that He still gives us opportunity now that He has not yet returned.

We thank the Lord that He has given us this conference theme of spiritual reality of the church. We desire Christ to be all and in all. This is a mandatory requirement for today's church. It is also a great challenge. Do we truly possess spiritual reality? May the Lord have mercy on us.

Within the theme of this conference, we mentioned four important topics that are related to spiritual reality. These four topics are important elements of spiritual reality. One is the prevailing authority of the head. We thank the Lord that our brother already explained clearly the meaning of the Lord as our head. Whether it is within the kingdom, or the universe, or within the church, He is the head. And for us today, we have a responsibility. "And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence" (*Colossians 1:18*). To allow the Lord to have the preeminence in all things is the responsibility of the church. Only when this is truly the case can we have spiritual reality.

The second topic concerns the abundant life of Christ. Our brother mentioned many characteristics of life. It is such an important matter to have the life of Christ within the church and within us. The house of God is "... the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (*1 Timothy 3:15*). This phrase "church of the living God" implies that the house of God should be filled with God's life. In other words, everything within the house or church of God needs to be living or have life. Our words have to be living words. All services and worship within the church have to be living as well. May this become a reality in each and every one of our local churches.

The third topic concerns the perfection through the cross. Our brother explained the meaning of the cross very well. This reminds us that the truth and the bearing of the cross must be restored and recovered. The downward force of the dominion of the enemy and the corruption of our natural flesh can then be stopped. In our generation today, the power of darkness overwhelmingly dominates across the entire world. Brothers and sisters, only the cross can prevent the power of the enemy. Only the cross can block our fleshly and evil desires, so that we will not touch God's work with our natural flesh. May these become reality in our personal walk as well as our church life in the days to come.

The fourth topic concerns the manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit. This reminds us that the sovereignty and the true meaning of the working of the Holy Spirit must be honored within the church.

We know that the theme of this conference includes these four aspects. That is the spiritual reality that God desires.

The charge that I received was to share on the topic, the manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit. I have shared a part in my previous message.

In God's glorious will, within His plan, the triune God – the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit – has a division of labor. Paul in chapter 1 of Ephesians clearly tells us that the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit share the same importance; none is dispensable. We cannot favor one over another. The work of each is equally important. They are all the work of God.

The Father plans.

The Son fulfills. He accomplished the will of God and the meaning of the Christ, becoming the ultimate model and pattern.

The Holy Spirit executes.

May the word of the Lord allow us to clearly see that the work of the Father, the work of the Son, and the work of the Holy Spirit are of equal importance. In God's glorious plan, He has clearly delineated the different generations/eras. We are currently in a generation of the working of the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, we cannot touch spiritual reality.

Today I am charged to speak about how the Holy Spirit bears witness for Christ together with us. In other words, we follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit to witness for Christ together.

**Let us read some of the words of the Lord together**

*John 15:26-27 – “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”*

*John 16:13-14 – However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.*

*John 3:33-34 – He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.*

*Acts 1:8 – “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

*Acts 5:32 – And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”*

*1 John 5:6b – And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.*

Dear brothers and sisters, when we read the Bible, we can clearly see that God is willing to entrust His testimony to men. We know that this is the most important burden that God has on earth. During the time of the Old Testament, God chose the people of Israel out of all nations of the world. The purpose of choosing them was to have them testify for God on earth. “You are My witnesses,” says the Lord, (Isaiah 43:10). In the Old Testament, it seems as if all of God’s work was focused on one nation. However, God had not given up on the other nations.

Through Israel God revealed what He wanted. Throughout the several thousand years of Old Testament history, the testimony bore by the people of Israel was a failure. What has God entrusted to them? He has entrusted His name, and He Himself, to the people of Israel. God also entrusted the Law and the tabernacle to them. Throughout the entire history of Israel, however, we found that Israel has failed in bearing the testimony for God: they frequently put God's name to shame; they broke God's law; they turned the worship and service within the tabernacle into a religion. The failure of Israel speaks to the failure and lack of strength of the entire mankind. God has given us a great revelation in the Old Testament that it is impossible for the natural man to witness for God. Today we have to learn the lesson that the natural man cannot bear witness for God.

In New Testament time, God has not changed His heart desire because of the failure of Israel. He still wants to entrust men with His testimony. The Lord Jesus has summed up the meaning of God's Old Testament burden. Therefore, in New Testament time, we talk about the testimony of Christ, which is God's most important mission for individual believers and for the church. God has shown through the Old Testament that the natural man does not have the ability to bear witness for God. During New Testament time, even though we already have the life of the Lord within us, and therefore are different from the people of the Old Testament, we still cannot rely on the ability of the natural man to bear witness for the Lord. If we read the history of the church, we see that men still easily commit this fault. Brothers and sisters, today the Lord has saved us and placed us within the church. Individually, we should be witnesses of Christ. The church also bears witness for Christ.

Here I want to clarify that our testimony should be lived out, not acted out. The Chinese translation may be misleading in having the word "testify" follow the verb "do" or "act," which is inaccurate. We have to understand that the Lord gave us life so that our testimony should be borne or lived out, not acted out. Same for the church. By the principle of the body, it is to be lived out. If we did not understand the heart desire of the Lord, we would strive to act it out, and fail at it. God wants us to *be* His witnesses. The church is His testimony. God has entrusted this testimony to the saints and to the church, which indeed is very serious and solemn. In contrast to our often inappropriately light-hearted messages about the Lord's testimony, our Lord Jesus paid an extraordinarily heavy and great price on the cross, suffering and giving up His life to fulfill God's will. It is such a heavy and solemn matter that God knows, by our natural man, we are unable to bear this witness. He knows that we have to unite with the work of the Holy Spirit to bear witness for Christ.

The Holy Spirit has been referred to as the Spirit who was sent. Those of us who were born again and saved through the Holy Spirit, the work of the Holy Spirit did not stop there. God desires that we as individuals and as the church live out this life. This is the important mission the Holy Spirit has received. When we were born again by the Holy Spirit, our lives on earth and the testimony thereafter should be led by the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus spoke on the work of the Holy Spirit: “when... the Spirit of truth... has come... He will glorify Me...” (*John 16:14*). This shows the purpose of the entire work of the Holy Spirit on earth.

What does it mean, “when the [Holy] Spirit comes... He will glorify [Christ]?” The Holy Spirit only leads people to see Christ. He never leads men to pay attention to Him. All His work is to reveal and glorify Christ. Paul made an analogy in 1 Corinthians 4:9: “We have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.” The audiences are the world, the angels, and men. The content of this spectacle is Christ. The screenwriter is the Father who wrote the play using various ways to manifest Christ, and we are the actors. The director of this spectacle is the Holy Spirit. In this universe, the world – inclusive of the angels and men – is watching the church. Since the Holy Spirit is directing this spectacle, He wants us to fully express and manifest Christ.

We have short-changed our Lord. The screenwriting of the Father is perfect. The content, Christ’s accomplishment, is perfect. The guidance of the Holy Spirit as director is complete and comprehensive. The problem lies in the actors.

Through this simple analogy, we see the position of the Holy Spirit within the scheme of the Lord’s work. That is why the Lord proclaims, “when... the Spirit of truth... has come... He will glorify Me...” (*John 16:14*). All the work that the Holy Spirit does is for the testimony of Christ. In order that we can live out this testimony, He has to work within us. The Bible shows us the abundant work by the Holy Spirit. Spiritual reality is realized when the Holy Spirit works.

I will now share with brothers and sisters some important aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit from the word of the Lord in the New Testament.

## **The Holy Spirit provides revelation**

The Holy Spirit does the work of revelation. We can understand the meaning of Christ only when the Holy Spirit reveals the word of the Lord. We then can understand the purpose of our lives, the purpose of the gathering of the church, that we testify for Christ. Without the revelation of the Holy Spirit, we cannot understand why we bear testimony. It is no wonder that on earth today the church deviates greatly. Many testify for themselves, for their organizations, for their ministry. This implies an inadequate vision of the meaning of Christ through a lack of revelation by the Holy Spirit. We need to understand that the work of revelation of the Holy Spirit is very important for the church.

Not only have we understood that Jesus Christ is the Savior through the initial revelation of the Holy Spirit, we have to continue in the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Then your understanding of Christ will become progressively enriched. A few decades ago, by the ministry of our brothers, we discovered that the will of God is Christ. This is a very important understanding. Later, we continued to hear sharings about Christ left and right, but it was not abundant due to lack of continual revelation of the Holy Spirit. The Christ that Paul knew seems to differ greatly from the Christ that we know. We seem to grasp a point but are unable to comprehend its content. Paul, after he understood Christ, still desired to know Christ more, even when in prison.

The Bible, in its text, is complete; nothing can be added to it. The meaning of Christ within it, however, is unlimited and infinite. Throughout the history of the church, when one generation loses revelation, the church enters a period of darkness. When the revelation of the Holy Spirit comes, we see a period of awakening. The church then moves forward, and its condition is lifted up.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit continually provides revelation on earth, leading men forward toward the goal. If we do not live in revelation today, we fall into tradition. We should not live in the light/enlightenment of our predecessors. We have to see the revelation of the Holy Spirit today. Brother Sparks once shared that the revelations our predecessors received, and their experiences, can serve as confirmation of the experiences of our spiritual life, but they should not become our limitations. "The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former" (*Haggai 2:9a*). This is the work of God, not of man. God is never limited by men. We should not have the false impression that God's revelation stops at a certain individual.

Throughout the history of the church, God has used many different individuals. He may continue to use different individuals today and in coming days. We need God's grace and the revelation by the Holy Spirit to lead us forward. We wholeheartedly thank God for the spiritual abundance brought in by past generations and many brothers and sisters. But we cannot remain at the same place. This is not a feeling of pride. I often feel ashamed that I cannot keep up with our forefathers' love, sacrifice, and pursuit. However, we have to honor God's work. The Holy Spirit continues to reveal to the church, so that the meaning of Christ becomes more and more obvious; that His greatness and endlessness/boundlessness may be further revealed. The church is then continued to be led forward.

The revelation of the Holy Spirit should be very real in the church. Revelation is not the understanding of the natural mind. Today we see a sad condition of the church where we have departed from the revelation of the Holy Spirit. We have, instead, used the wisdom of the natural mind to explain God's word. The testimony of Christ has become weak.

### **The Holy Spirit guides us into all truth**

The Holy Spirit does not only open our eyes so that we can see and understand and know. John 16:13 says, "...when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth." The Holy Spirit will actualize the word of God in our lives. All words of the Bible are words of experience, not just for mere discussion, so that we enter into the reality of the Word. This can only be accomplished by the Holy Spirit. All words of the Lord, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, will bring us into reality.

Only after we have experienced it shall the testimony of Christ become strong and powerful. I repeat. The testimony of Christ is to be lived out.

Paul told us in Philippians 3:8 that he considered the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord as excellence. It is precious to know Christ. Paul would rather "count [all things] as rubbish, that [he] may gain Christ." Not only to know, but also to gain. Paul further mentioned that, in order to gain, our hands have to let



go of other things; otherwise, we cannot gain Christ. Furthermore, Paul was able to enjoy Christ. Regardless of the situation or circumstance, Paul was content and was able to rejoice in all circumstances. He knew how to deal with different circumstances. He involved Christ in his life and ministry, so that Christ may be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death (*Philippians 1:20*). Only through actual experience can we then bear witness for Christ like Paul. Therefore, the Holy Spirit guides us into all truth.

### **The Holy Spirit teaches us the way of the cross**

The Holy Spirit has another important work. “For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (*Romans 8:13*). Only the Holy Spirit can make the effect of the cross a reality in our lives. He can transform our souls and minds so that we will not serve God with our natural flesh. Whenever we live according to the flesh, we give the enemy opportunities to use our flesh to destroy the testimony of Christ. Only the Cross can put to death the evil deeds of the body. God’s work can only be entrusted to those whose flesh has been dealt with. Peter is our example. Before the cross, Peter encountered a great failure, where the Lord dealt with him. When the Day of Pentecost had fully come and the Holy Spirit came upon him, God entrusted a great gift to Peter. He preached and three thousand people were saved. He preached again and five thousand were saved. If the Lord committed such a gift to us today before we were dealt with by the cross, how arrogant and conceited we would have become. Thanks be to God. Peter’s flesh was dealt with by the cross.

If today dozens are saved when we preach the gospel, we may be broadcasting about how the Lord has used us. Peter not only had the gift of evangelism, but his gift of healing was even greater. “...They brought the sick out into the streets... that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them” (*Acts 5:15*). This shows us that God is not reluctant in sending us gifts, but our conditions disallow it. When I was young, I also wanted to be gifted. Now I thank my Lord. He has not given me great gifts because He knew my condition. I have to continually accept the dealing of the cross through the work of the Holy Spirit.

In addition, the work of the Holy Spirit is very much related to the return of the Lord. The work of the Holy Spirit is related to our waiting for the day of redemption (*Ephesians 4*). In this dark generation, our most important Christian

walk is to live with inner light. Proverbs 20:27 tells us that “the spirit of a man is the lamp of the Lord...” In order for this lamp to give out light, it has to have an abundance of oil. This is an important aspect of our lives when we prepare for the return of the Lord. Then we will be like the five wise virgins. Through saints of the past, the Lord reminds us that their lights can stay bright because of an abundance of oil, and they can enter into the wedding feast of the Lamb. We ought to keep our vessels filled with oil.

I have a habit, that when I am one-quarter from a full tank of oil, I will go to the gas station. That is because I like to see that my tank is full when I drive. In our spiritual experience we should be more meticulous. Our vessels should be full until they overflow, and our cups run over. Where does the anointing oil come from? It comes from the Holy Spirit. Therefore, in our daily lives we have to submit to the teaching of the anointing.

### **The Holy Spirit gives gifts to men**

The Holy Spirit gives gifts to us so that we can serve God. In our ministry, we testify for Christ. Ephesians 4 talks about gifts: “[the Lord] ascended on high, ...And gave gifts to men.” We can utilize these gifts from the Holy Spirit to manifest Christ’s power of resurrection and ascension. In this end times filled with death and the work of the enemy the spiritual warfare is fierce. Our service and ministry is a spiritual battle. Chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians thoroughly describes that, by means of the abundant gifts of the Holy Spirit, we manifest Christ and His victory under these circumstances.

### **The Holy Spirit unites**

Another important matter concerns the testimony of unity in the church. Without the work of the Holy Spirit, there is no unity in the church. With our divisive character, it is very difficult to talk about unity. When you consider the early church, the Holy Spirit worked mightily, and the saints were in unity. Therefore, we have to honor the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in the church. Our Lord Jesus has baptized us into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. This baptism does not just mean briefly submerging under water, but it implies a

continual submersion. We indeed were baptized one time by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. The difference was whether the baptism was thorough. Similar to our experience of baptizing into the death of Christ, some were baptized deeply/thoroughly while others may have a shallower baptism. We have to honor the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in the church.

In order to lead us to testify for Christ, the Holy Spirit has to perform extensive work in us. Without the Holy Spirit, it is impossible to enter into spiritual reality.

### **The Holy Spirit seals**

The Holy Spirit is the seal that not only serves to separate us who have received grace and are saved. This seal has another function of discerning the fake from that which is real. In ancient times, when the emperor issued a decree, a seal would be placed after the writing of the decree. By the seal, his subjects could distinguish whether the decree was real. Even in our current age, the seal serves a similarly important function. The Holy Spirit also puts His seal on His work as a guarantee that God is true. If we are to preach the word and share messages, only that which is from the anointing of the Holy Spirit can be sealed as true and from the Lord. If the work that we did for the Lord is from the anointing, it shall be imprinted with the seal. In the future, when we come before the judgement seat, we will be clear. The angel will lay out our works, words we preached throughout our lives. Those that carry the seal will count. Whether it be our walk, our ministry, or our worship in the church, we have to follow the guidance of the anointing. Then the seal of the Holy Spirit will be imprinted in every matter in our lives.

As we conclude, we need to address: how do we manifest the work of the Holy Spirit in our Christian walk and in the church? The Bible teaches us to be mindful of the Holy Spirit and not to grieve the Holy Spirit. It is of utmost importance that we submit to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Peter in Acts chapter 5 tells us that the Holy Spirit is “given to those who obey Him.” If we obey the Holy Spirit, His work will be more apparently manifested. The indwelling Holy Spirit teaches and governs us from inside. We only need to obey Him. The more you submit to Him, the more the indwelling Spirit may be manifested. We need to obey the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In addition to being the indwelling Spirit from within us, the Holy Spirit is also the Spirit of power from the outside. He guides our ministry so that there is power. Each and every one of the apostles of the early church submitted to the guidance of the Holy Spirit; the testimony of the early church gave great glory to Christ. It was the result of their obedience to the Holy Spirit to bear witness together with the Holy Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit both from within and from the outside were apparent. They had this fundamental attitude of complete obedience to the Holy Spirit. One line of a hymn speaks to this: for the sake of loving You, we are willing to obey even the smallest command of the Holy Spirit.

We have to become obedient to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, even in small matters in our lives, our ministry, and church lives. In this way, the presence of the Holy Spirit will be manifested as the spiritual reality of the church.

May this be true in our future walk and church life. Only the testimony we bear together with the Holy Spirit can be a strong and powerful testimony that brings glory to Christ and satisfaction to the heart of God.

Time is short. May the Spirit of truth guide us into all truth. May our sharing on the Spiritual Reality of the church inclusive of the four topics in our short days ahead be realized. May glory be to the Lord. May the Lord bless all brothers and sisters.

**Please bow our heads together in prayer**

*Oh Lord, we wholeheartedly thank You. In this pressing age, You still granted us this opportunity to gather before Your feet. We also thank You for the words which You spoke to us during these meetings. Oh Lord, we are not satisfied with the hearing of the word only. We pray that You grant the reality to the church. May each and every brother/sister live solidly during these times. May You become our joy, our satisfaction, our glorious hope. When Your kingdom of heaven comes, may we all joyously enter in. Oh Lord, we know that You love us. You are also full of mercy. We believe You can accomplish all this. From deep within us we give You our thanksgiving. Listen to our prayer. By the precious name of Jesus Christ, Amen.*