

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

How Does The Spirit “Bear Witness”?

By Greg Gwin

Romans 8:16 says, *“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”* The big question is, of course, how does He do this?

There are many that would suggest that the Spirit “bears witness” by means of some better-felt-than-told experience. Usually we are given an account of some episode that left the person with an overwhelming emotional feeling. Because of this experience the person claims salvation and is certain that it was the work of the Spirit that caused it all to happen.

There are some problems with this approach. First, as we study cases of conversion in the New Testament, we find not a single case of an individual who was saved through such an experience. In cases where individuals actually had supernatural “experiences,” they still had to hear the Word and obey its commands (Saul - Acts 9; Cornelius - Acts 10; the Jailer - Acts 16, etc.).

Also, we are puzzled by the fact that various individuals who claim to have experienced this confirmation of the Spirit have differing views on fundamental doctrinal issues. We wonder how that could be if they are truly receiving some action directly from the Holy Spirit. Do you see the problem?

So, how does the Spirit *“bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God?”* How can we have this confidence and confirmation of the Spirit?

The Holy Spirit through inspiration produced the written word of God. When we compare our lives with that perfect revelation, we are able to see if we have done those things that are commanded in order to be a child of God. Have you believed (Heb. 11:6), repented of sins (Lk. 13:3), confessed faith in Christ (Rom. 10:10), and been baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38)? Do you continue to faithfully serve the Lord (Rev. 2:10)? If so, the Spirit *“bears witness”* through the Scriptures that you are a child of God. – *Collegevue church of Christ Bulletin Articles*, September 9, 2018.

“Don’t Call Names”

By Luther Blackmon

Sometimes I have suspicioned that we call names out of spite and vindictiveness. Whoever does that advertises his littleness. But the person who says that we should never call names advertises his ignorance of the true spirit of the New Testament writers. Of course, Luke could have said, *“There were a couple in Jerusalem, a man and his wife, who sold some property and misrepresented the amount they gave, and for this the Lord killed them!”* But for some reason, he told us exactly who they were. And Peter said, *“Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost....”* I think I know some preachers who are too nice to use the word *“lie.”* That is, unless something is told on them personally. One preacher just said that he had no place in his vocabulary for the word *“liar.”* All I can say is that his vocabulary is not big enough, and is too sweet.

Peter said, *“Judas by transgression fell that he might go to his own place”* (Acts 1:25). Peter indicated that he had some doubt about Judas going to heaven. *“What a terrible thing to say. He was judging the poor fellow.”* I read an article once which made a feeble attempt to place Judas in a better light than that which is generally cast upon him. However, I doubt that even his champion hopes to meet him *“over there.”*

Paul tells us that “*Elymas*” was a “*child of the devil,*” an “*enemy of all righteousness.*” He told Elymas that. Can’t you just imagine how mortified some of the sophisticated upper crust would react to that kind of preaching today. I shouldn’t wonder if Paul would get “fired” right off.

John Mark turned back from the work and went not with Paul and Barnabas. Later Paul and Barnabas had such a disagreement over Mark that they split up. Luke says the contention between them was “*sharp.*” I have known many who said they would not for anything let their “unsaved” friends read a paper in which brethren are having “sharp contention.” Wonder if they tear out this chapter in Acts? (Acts 15:39). Later on, Paul speaks very favorably of Mark. He redeemed himself, and Paul held no grudges (2 Tim. 4:11).

Apollos preached an imperfect Gospel in Ephesus, “*knowing only the baptism of John.*” Aquila and Priscilla taught him better and he continued his work. Was it necessary to put this in the divine record? Evidently the Holy Spirit thought so (Acts 18:24-26).

Paul said that Peter acted the part of a hypocrite “*when he was come to Antioch.*” Peter was human and made human mistakes and some of them are recorded for all succeeding generations to read. This one is found in Galatians 2:11-13. The word “*dissimulation*” means hypocrisy.

Paul said, “*Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world.*” He said Hymenaeus and Alexander had made “*shipwreck of the faith,*” that Hymenaeus and Philetus had “*erred... teaching that the resurrection had passed already.*”

There are times when gospel preachers ought to be like the old dentist. A young dentist moved to town, and put up a sign that read: “Teeth extracted without pain.” The old dentist put up one that read: “Teeth extracted regardless of pain.” Sometimes it is necessary to name the sinner as well as the sins. It hurts, but it should. *Truth Magazine*, January 30, 1975. ■

Reverence in Worship

By Gene Taylor

The reverence that is necessary for proper worship is not based on externals such as dimmed lights, etc. The proper reverent attitude that is to characterize every worshiper of God comes from within the individual. While this attitude must come from the heart of each person there are a few things that would aid worship and help develop the reverence needed. Here are a few suggestions to help us improve in our worship:

First, prepare your mind mentally for worship. Know what you are doing and why you are doing it. Read a passage from the Bible, look over some of the songs that are to be sung or pray a silent prayer for strength and focus.

Second, keep the use of the rest rooms by you and your children to a minimum during the worship period.

Third, be aware of toddlers to teens. They are never too young or too old to worship. Remember, attitudes learned while one is a youth are carried into adulthood.

Fourth, be as well-rested as possible. You will then be physically and mentally alert.

Fifth, concentrate on what is going on. Put all other things out of your mind.

Many other things could be suggested but if we use these guidelines and determine in our heart to offer worship that is well-pleasing to God, it will reap great benefits for us in this life and the life to come. Let us all learn to truly serve our merciful Father in spirit and in truth. — *Collegue church of Christ Bulletin Articles*, January 1, 2017. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Tommy Glendol McClure, Editor and Evangelist - 925-759-4357

Web Site: www.lodiCAchurchofchrist.com - Email: lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com - Phone: 209-365-9250