

TABERNACLE – THE LAMPSTAND

Imagine that you move into a new house. You go out and purchased a big new refrigerator and have it delivered, along with all the other appliances. Imagine your first night in our new home. You go out for groceries to fill up the fridge. You wake up the next morning and open it only to find that the vegetables are wilting, the ice cream has melted and the milk is sour. You get on the phone and call the store that sold you the appliances to complain that they sold you a lemon – that the refrigerator they sold you does not work. The serviceman asks “is the light on?”. No you reply, it must be broken as well. “Is there any noise from the motor” – “no you say, nothing”. “Check the plug” he says. The problem is that it was never plugged in.

Appliances are pieces of engineering wonder. They are built to do what the manufacturer designed them to do. They are however, useless without a power source. They were created to run on external power. When we give our lives to Christ it is like moving into a new house. God gives us a new mind, heart, and conscience. We have a whole new nature inside our existing body. But sometimes it looks like this new thing just doesn't work properly. Some see coming to Christ was like buying a lemon – things just did not seem to work the way that you were led to believe they would. The problem is not with God but with us. You were not recreated in Christ to run on your own power. We need help from above. We need an enabling from another source in order to work and function properly.

In our homes we have different appliances and each one was designed differently to accomplish a different task. While each is different, all run on the same power source. Likewise in the church each of us is designed for a slightly different role. There are refrigerator Christians and microwave Christians and toaster Christians and can opener Christians. Each of us is different but each of us was designed to run off an external power source. If you are not operating properly, if you are always saying to yourself “there must be more to Christianity than this” than maybe the problem is not the refrigerator. Maybe you are not plugged in to the power source.

Ex 25:31 "Make a lampstand of pure gold and hammer it out, base and shaft; its flowerlike cups, buds and blossoms shall be of one piece with it. 32 Six branches are to extend from the sides of the lampstand--three on one side and three on the other.

As you entered the tent or Holy Place on the left side was a golden 7 branched candlestick. It is the only light that was shining in the tent. Through the Bible we see that the number 7 means FULL or COMPLETE. In Revelations we see that the candlestick represented the Holy Spirit.

Rev 3:5 From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God.

When we receive Jesus we each receive a light within us. As the temple of God we have the Holy Spirit shining within us to reveal truth and to lead us forward into righteousness. As we come into the presence of God it is important to remember and acknowledge the importance of the Holy Spirit in this process. How does the Spirit help us?

1. Light of God's Presence – making God known to us

It is the Holy Spirit which draws us to Christ for our salvation. Once saved, the Holy Spirit continues to play a role in our coming into God's presence. The Holy Spirit acts as our counselor and comforter and makes known to us God's love and God's plan.

In University I had a roommate called Mike (picture) who liked a girl called Pam that I went on a missions trip to Bolivia with (picture). During the time we were together I used every opportunity to talk about my roommate. I was acting as a go between or advocate for Mike to remind Pam of his love. They ended up getting married and I was in the wedding party (picture). Jesus said it this way:

John 16:13 But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

The great Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen (Roal Amoonsen), the first to discover the magnetic meridian of the North Pole and to discover the South Pole. On one of his trips, Amundsen took a homing pigeon with him. When he had finally reached the top of the world, he opened the bird's cage and set it free. Imagine the delight of Amundsen's wife, back in Norway, when she looked up from the doorway of her home and saw the pigeon circling in the sky above. She exclaimed, "He's alive! My husband is still alive!" So it was when Jesus ascended. He was gone, but the disciples clung to his promise to send them the Holy Spirit. What joy, then, when the dovelike Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost. The disciples had with them the continual reminder that Jesus was alive and victorious at the right hand of the Father. This continues to be the Spirit's message.

The lampstand stood beside the table of bread in the tabernacle. The bread represents the word of God and we are going to talk about that more next time. Both the Spirit and the word work together in transforming us into the likeness of Jesus. As we grow in one, we should also grow in the other. We cannot separate the two.

Nothing is more dangerous than to put a wedge between the Word and the Spirit, to emphasize either one at the expense of the other. It is the Spirit and the Word, the Spirit upon the Word, and the Spirit in us as we read the Word. -- Martyn Lloyd-Jones

If you have the Spirit without the Word, you blow up.
If you have the Word without the Spirit, you dry up.
If you have both the Word and the Spirit, you grow up.

2. Light in our Prayers – making us known to God

The Holy Spirit does not only help us in knowing God's love and plan better in our lives but also helps in us communicating our mind and heart to God. The Holy Spirit acts as our translator – communicating our heart and mind to God.

Rom 8:26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

One day a church copier broke down. The pastor was not mechanically minded, but called the repair shop to see if they tell him the problem and what to do about it. He quickly discovered, however, that he didn't even know how to describe what was broken. He didn't know the names of the parts or what was specifically wrong. He just knew the copy machine didn't work. So the repair shop sent out a technician. While working on the machine, he also called the shop.

Unlike the pastor he knew how to describe what was needed. Using word the pastor didn't understand, but the person at the shop did, the copier was repaired. The need was met because someone came and communicated to headquarters in words he could not express. When we don't know how to pray, the Holy Spirit knows precisely what we need and prays in a language the Father perfectly understands.

3. Light of God's Power – walking in strength

The first 2 articles in the courtyard were for cleansing. The next 2 are for empowerment. The Holy Spirit empowers us not only to love the Lord but also to serve Him.

The word Comforter as applied to the Holy Spirit needs to be translated by some vigorous term. Literally, it means "with strength." Jesus promised his followers that "The Strengthener" would be with them. This promise is no lullaby for the fainthearted. It is a blood transfusion for courageous living. -- E. Paul Hovey

With the Holy Spirit within us we can do all the things that Jesus did. Jesus laid aside His majesty. The works He did were by the Holy Spirit just like you and I. We have within us all the fullness of the power of God.

John 14:12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

This passage says we will not only do what Jesus did but do even greater things. Does that mean we will do even greater miracles than Jesus? It means that Jesus was limited in that He was a single person. We are a group. With the Holy Spirit within us we can take the power of God into every home and hurting heart. So often we fail to see this power at work in us because we simply do not need it or even want it. We move and operate at a spiritual level that can be met by our own strength so we never tap into God's strength.

When Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as the Helper, he uses a Greek word PARACLETE. It was an ancient warrior's term. "Greek soldiers went into battle in pairs," says Dalbey, "so when the enemy attacked, they could draw together back-to-back, covering each other's blind side. One's battle partner was the paraclete." Our Lord does not send us to fight the good fight alone. The Holy Spirit is our battle partner who covers our blind side and fights for our wellbeing.

He is not only our helper and battle partner but also our roommate. Do you remember the old show called the Odd Couple - with Felix and Oscar? One was a complete and ungracious slob while the other was a perfectionist and good cook. That's how you might compare our relationship to God. Here we were, living as slob in the filth of this world. But then the Holy Spirit moves into our homes, He cleans us up, He cooks our meals, and He takes care of us. Every day the Holy Spirit continues to live with us and give us spiritual life - feeding us meals and cleaning up our houses - even though it gets pretty stinky and smelly in here - because that's what He does!

I began by talking about appliances. Along with a new refrigerator I had to get a new washing machine for the new house. Does anyone know what that piece sticking up in the middle of a washing machine is called? It is the thing that moves back and forth and shakes up the clothes. It is called the AGITATOR. It's purpose is to cause havoc for the dirty clothes. It is there to shake and separate the clothes from all the dirt and grime?

When we are saved the Holy Spirit moves into our hearts. Even though we have been saved from our past sins, there still remains things of the world that we are still fond of. These things are like stains, they have a way of attaching themselves to us like dirt on clothes. The Holy Spirit, being Holy doesn't like living in a dirty environment, so He begins to gently and lovingly clean things up. He begins to agitate us, shaking us to separate us from the sins that hurt us. He convicts us of the things that need to leave our hearts.

At other times we fail to see the Holy spirit in us because we simply have not understood what it means to be full of the Spirit. It does not mean getting more of God but God getting more of us. We each have within us a spiritual tuner like that on a radio. There are only 2 channels to choose from. One is FBN – the Fleshly Broadcasting Network. The other is HBN – the Heavenly Broadcasting Network. We choose which channel we will listen to.

Rom 8:5 Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

It was a mild October afternoon in 1982 and Badger Stadium in Madison, Wisconsin was packed. Over 60,000 die-hard University of Wisconsin fans were watching their beloved football team take a beating by Michigan State. What seemed odd was that it seemed the more their team lost the more cheers and applause kept being heard in the stands. It was only natural that some people began to wonder who these strange people were who were cheering while their own team was losing. As it turns out seventy miles away from Badger stadium the Milwaukee Brewers were beating the St. Louis Cardinals in game three of the World Series. Many of the Badger fans in the stands were listening to portable radios and responding to something else besides what was happening right in front of their eyes. In many ways that is a fairly accurate description of what the Christian life is like. Even in the midst of horrible circumstances in this world a different voice tells us we have something to cheer about.

One of the most popular Christian devotionals of all time is the book *My Utmost For His Highest*, written by Oswald Chambers. As a young man, he battled a persistent sense of barrenness in his Christian life. He once wrote: "I was getting desperate. I knew no one who had what I wanted; in fact I did not know what I did want. But I knew that if what I had was all the Christianity there was, the thing was a fraud." He struggled to understand the role of the Holy Spirit in his life.

While he was teaching at Dunoon College in Scotland, Dr. F. B. Meyer came and spoke about the Holy Spirit. He went to his room that night and asked God to give him the baptism of the Holy Spirit, whatever that meant. His relationship with Christ was dry and he thought the Bible was the dullest, most uninteresting book in existence. At a little meeting held during a mission in Dunoon, a well-known lady led our meeting and set us to prayer, and then sang "Touch me again, Lord."

As she sang that song Oswald Chambers felt the Holy Spirit calling within. He stood to his feet and prayed Luke 11:13 "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

He says he had no vision of heaven or of angels but knew something was different. A short time latter he was asked to speak to a meeting and forty souls came out to the front! From that point on, Oswald Chambers ministered with extraordinary power. ' He wrote "If the four previous years had been hell on earth, these five years have truly been heaven on earth. The last aching abyss of my heart is filled to overflowing with the love of God."

The words of Oswald Chambers have touched people all around the world. When my father was diagnosed with cancer years ago he read My Utmost For His Highest every day for 5 years. God powerfully used that book to bring comfort and strength to my father.

When Oswald died at an early age in Egypt during World War I, an old Australian soldier whom he had led to Christ had a Bible carved in stone for his grave. Its pages were tuned to Luke 11:13 "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

Maybe you are here today and you are running on empty. Maybe you are just not running at all. Perhaps you have come to the same point as Oswald Chambers in your Christian life when he said "I was getting desperate. I knew no one who had what I wanted; in fact I did not know what I did want. But I knew that if what I had was all the Christianity there was, the thing was a fraud." The problem is not with the refrigerator. Maybe you are just not plugged in.

When you became a Christian you received the Holy Spirit. The issue is not if you have the Spirit but whether or not the Spirit has you:

A committee of ministers in a certain city was discussing the possibility of having D. L. Moody to serve as the evangelist during a city-wide evangelistic campaign. Finally, one young minister who did not want to invite Moody stood up and said: "Why Moody? Does he have a monopoly of the Holy Spirit?" There was silence. Then an old, godly minister spoke up: "No, he does not have a monopoly of the Holy Spirit; but the Holy Spirit has a monopoly of D. L. Moody." Does the Holy Spirit have a monopoly on your life?

Ask your father in heaven today for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Not that you get more of Him but that he get all of you. Answer the call. God is knocking. Invite him in.