



A LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR: FEBRUARY 2020 *by Lee Shipp*

THE DIVINE INTERCESSION AND AN OVERCOMING LIFE

The Gospel is peace and rest! Our lack of peace and rest is not from the Gospel of peace, or faith in Jesus, but by our instinctual impulses to offer from ourselves something that's pleasing to the Lord – which is impossible! This compulsion to find something good in one's self, and thereby please God with it, is not the gospel of God! The gospel of God is the fact that He puts His Son in us, and that gift of His Son is the only good we have!

Why are we even disappointed with ourselves when it comes to spiritual matters? Our disappointment is due to the fact that we think better of ourselves. We thought we could – we thought we could be more faithful, we thought we could be better at prayer, we thought we could be more pleasing.

We thought this because we believed there was something good in us, some ability in us to impress God, but we fail and thus, the disappointment sets in. The revelation of the truth, "there is no good thing in me, that is in my flesh" is a glorious truth. It is profound in this regard: we now know where to look for our help. We are to look to Jesus. It is Christ in us that is our hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). The only good thing in me is Christ, who is in me. My disappointments always come when I look to myself. My hope always comes when I look to Christ, who is in me. When I can rest upon God's grace, I can rest in God's peace.

Hebrews says there remains a rest to the people of God (Hebrews 4). The people of God spoken of here is the Israelites. The rest that remains for them to enter is the New Covenant. This rest that remains for Israel is not in some future day, it is today, "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 4:7).

Joshua did not give them rest. The promise land was not their rest. The gospel of God is their rest. Jesus is God's rest. It is rest indeed! Nothing is keeping us from the rest that Jesus is offering, except our own unbelief! Our unbelief is manifest by who we look to for perfection. We go to Christ for forgiveness, and then too often go to the law for power to fight our sins. Go to Christ and when you are there – stay! Charles Spurgeon wrote,

[If] you want to overcome an angry temper, how do you go to work? It is very possible you have never tried the right way of going to Jesus with it. How did I get salvation? I came to Jesus just as I was, and I trusted Him to save me. I must kill my angry temper in the same way. It is the only way in which I can ever kill it. I must go to the cross with it, and say to Jesus, "Lord, I trust Thee to deliver me from it." This is the only way to give it a death-blow.

Are you covetous? Do you feel the world entangle you? You may struggle against this evil so long as you please, but if it be your besetting sin, you will never be delivered from it in any way but by the blood of Jesus. Take it to Christ and ask Him to save you from it.

Ordinances are nothing without Christ as the means of mortification. Your prayers, and your repentances, and your tears – the whole of them put together – are worth nothing apart from Him. "None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good; or helpless saints either." If you are to conquer at all, you must conquer through Christ!

Salvation is of the Lord. If you are to believe in Jesus, you must know that God believes in Jesus! For you to rest in Jesus you must know the Father rests in Jesus. His Divine wrath is satisfied, His anger towards sin is appeased to all who are in the Son! You will never rest in that fact until you are convinced that the Father does! How do you know the Father has rested in the Son? The advent of the Holy Spirit is the proof, and an empty tomb! You can rest! You can stop trying to appease God yourself! The Father is satisfied in the Son! Can you rest in Jesus?

All that is and has ever been required of men is faith! Faith in Christ is all that God requires. The victorious Christian is he who believes! This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the son of God?" (1 John 5).

THE PRINCE OF PEACE

Now unto Him that is able ... He is our hope and assurance! We have been predestined according to the good pleasure of His will, called according to HIS PURPOSE, saved according to HIS MERCY, and forgiven according to the riches of HIS GRACE!

Jesus knows how to get you home. He did not die to merely keep you out of hell. He died to get you to the Father! He did not die to only remove your sins. He died to robe you in righteousness. He has a plan! He knows everything! He did not just plan up-to-the cross. He planned every moment of your life here and how to get you home! He conceived of everything that could jeopardize your redemption. There is not a loose thread in the tapestry of your redemption. If you will continue to trust in Jesus, He will not fail you! He will never say, of things concerning you, "I did not anticipate that happening."

From His magnificent wisdom, He made the perfect offering of His Son for the fall of man! He has paid for us in full – it is finished! There is no part of His people's interests which He does not consider, and there is nothing which concerns their welfare that is not written in the covenant with His own precious blood. All you must do is believe and He will save!

Do you want to be free from fear, from dread, from terror, from condemnation? What are you doing to get free? It may be that you are struggling, striving, fighting, wrestling, praying, pleading, longing, yearning for true freedom. But is this the way of freedom? This striving? No! That is the way to more condemnation! It is the Holy Spirit who gives us our freedom in Christ! Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:57). It is the Holy Spirit who sets us free. If we turn to the Lord and are occupied with Him, in the way of faith, the Holy Spirit sets us free.

How comprehensively did Jesus offer Himself upon the Cross for our offenses. So far-reaching was the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf that Paul could say, "... nor things present, nor things to come can ever separate us from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus." Jesus didn't take up part of your sins – He took up the whole. For our redemption, He didn't just pay enough – He paid excessively! He didn't just pay a portion – He paid in full!

"WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY." (REV. 22:17)

The Holy Spirit teaches us this! The natural man cannot receive this kind of victorious liberty, he feels certain that his freedom must be the result of his own striving! In vain he strives for freedom only to increase his bondage.

THE SPIRIT OF PEACE

The Holy Spirit is Jesus' gift of grace! He is the earnest of all our inheritance. His coming to the believer is the most fantastic provision of Jesus' finished work! He is our comforter. He abides with us forever. He is the Spirit of Truth Who leads us into freedom. He is our intimate friend. We will know Him and see Him, for He will live in us! Through Him Jesus will come to us. By Him revelation will be given to us. The revelation that we are eternally alive. The revelation that Jesus is in the Father. The revelation that we are in Jesus. The revelation that Jesus is in us.

The Holy Spirit is the divine expression, and tangible evidence, that both the Father and the Son are abiding within us in love! The Holy Spirit will both teach and remind us of all that Jesus taught. The Holy Spirit is the liberating answer to the constant condemnation of the devil. In this world of tribulation, and the devil's condemnation, the Holy Spirit is the voice within us preaching peace and rest to our hearts. Whatever He hears from heaven He will tell us. He will show us things to come. He will glorify Jesus and reveal to us the vastness of Jesus' eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit is our true helper! He helps our infirmities and guarantees that all things will work together for our good! The rest given to believers is real. It is real because the Holy Spirit is a real help. The Holy Spirit is the heaven-sent comforter. He is not the heaven-sent rebuker, unloving guest, or heart-less teacher. The Holy Spirit is our intercessor, our consoler, the One who is within us to alleviate us from grief, sorrow, guilt, and perplexity. He is there, within our spirit, declaring to us that we are the children of God. He is there, assuring us of the efficacy of the blood of Jesus; our sins are forever put away. He is there, within our heart, assuring us that all is well between ourselves and the Father, because He is resting in the merits of His Son on our behalf.

OUR ASSURANCE OF PEACE

We don't even know how to pray as we should, but the Holy Spirit is there to pray for us! He convinces us of the surety of our hope and grants us the patience to wait for it. Consider the profound truth, "... the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26).

It is helpful to understand the word groan. Groan means to be in straits, a narrow passage, a tight fit causing one to sigh and pray inaudibly, with deep yearning and longing.

Oh, how difficult is this passage from EARTH to HEAVEN. How narrow is the way of eternal life, and we groan for our relief and deliverance!

God knew the difficulty and therefore sent our help. Not an angel, but His very own Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has come to help us. He is our portion. He helps our infirmities. This means that the Holy Spirit helps our feeble mind and body, our diseased and morally weak condition.

He helps us because we are corrupted. We are not perfect, but He is perfecting us. We are not strong, so He has become our strength. We are not capable of pleasing God, so He is the grace working within us that we might be pleasing in His sight.

According to Romans 8, we are more than conquerors! Why? It is because of Who is praying for us! Jesus and the Holy Spirit are our intercessors! What a team of intercessors! Jesus, our High Priest, representing us before the Father. The Holy Spirit, our comforter and helper within us, securing the redemption that is occurring before the throne!

Jesus is interceding on our behalf before the Father, releasing all of heaven's bounty to us, that we may be conformed to the image of Christ. The Holy Spirit, knowing the heart of the Father, hearing the conversation between the Father and Son, is within us groaning in agreement for God's will to be done to us.

The Holy Spirit is the presence of God to us, revealing to us what Jesus is gaining for us, as He is representing us before the Father as our High Priest. The Holy Spirit secures the bounties of heaven for us and gives us faith to believe that Jesus will perfect that which concerns us. We can be confident that all will work together for good because the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the guarantors of that good. We can rest!

We are not home yet. We are actually passing through a howling wilderness of calamity, subject to all sorts of infirmities, liable to fail in a thousand ways. Jesus, our High Priest, maintains the link of communion between us and the Father, and restores it when broken. He makes intercession for us and we couldn't go on for a single moment without Him. What beautiful provision, we have one advocate with us in order that we may not sin, and another advocate with the Father if we do sin.

We are such a feeble creation, lower than the angels, infested with corruption of all sorts; we are consumed with temptations and subject to difficulties; therefore, what a gracious provision is our Helper God. The Holy Spirit cares for us here. Jesus cares for us in Heaven. What Jesus secures for us before the Father, the Holy Spirit produces in us.

When a believer falls into sin the work of our High Priest is perpetual, and the Holy Ghost produces this work within the believer in the form of repentance, self-loathing, and disgust for sin. His work within us is so thorough that one cannot think of any other desire than the longing for holiness and purity.

The reason I have spent time on the thought of sin, failure, and forgiveness is due to this fact: "Beloved, if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" (1 John 3:20-21). No believer can exercise a victorious life when he is always suspect of God's acceptance of him. This peace with God is not flimsy. God even assures the believer that the anchor of our hope is the fact that Jesus is standing before God on our behalf!

Please understand Paul's intent in Romans 8. This intercession of the Holy Spirit and Jesus on behalf of the believer is not only concerning sanctification. This intercession regards every aspect of the believer's life! It regards the believer's ministry, the believer's victory, the believer's authority, the believer's promises, the believer's provisions. The believer is not victorious because he confesses he is victorious, he is victorious because the Father gives him the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. This victory is given and assured by the Holy Spirit's intercession and work within the believer.

Everything the believer needs is communicated by the Holy Spirit to the Son. The Son takes us to the Father and intercedes on our behalf. The Father's answer to the Son is "Yes, and amen!" The Holy Spirit hears all that is in the heart of the Father and Son and what has been gained on the believer's behalf from the Son's intercession. The Holy Spirit provides this revelation to the believer. The believer believes the word of faith coming from God and thus, receives all that is in Christ! All the glory is God's!

MERCIFUL TO OUR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

Jesus left us His peace. He did not leave His peace for those who were perfected. He left His peace to those He would perfect! Have you sinned? Does your heart condemn you? Does your heart insist that you are unworthy to approach the Holy God? What are you to do? Have you considered the power and efficacy of Jesus' atonement? You can come ... Jesus is able to save to the uttermost!

Listen to the Father's joyful proclamation, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 8:12). I have read these passages all of my life, but never had the Holy Ghost opened my spiritual understanding to this remarkable confession of God as He has done lately. Do you hear what God is saying? He is talking about the New Covenant. It is new, it is not an addition to the old. It is new and by it God declares His joy to do things for us that apart from the sacrifice of Jesus, and by the Law, He could not do.

God declares that I will be merciful to their unrighteousness (Hebrews 8:12)! Not merciful to their efforts at holiness, their discipline in religion, their attained

righteousness! God plainly says, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness!" Oh beloved, can you rest in this? This is the gospel! This is the victorious life!

Unrighteousness means iniquity, which means: to violate the law, wickedness, unrighteousness, injustice, a wrongful character; just plain wrong! What magnificent wisdom there is in the redemption of God through His Son Jesus. There is power in the blood! In the Old Testament, though God is always merciful and benevolent, the Law demanded justice. In the New Testament justice is satisfied in Christ! The Law has been nailed to His cross and He has fulfilled for us all obedience! Thank you, Jesus!

In general, Christians are not much different from the condition of Old Testament saints. Though they are completely in a New Covenant, their actions are based upon Old Covenant principles. Though victory and freedom are theirs, it is not possessed by faith. They do not know the blessedness of an accomplished redemption. They are not in the enjoyment of a purged conscience. They cannot draw nigh with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and the body washed with pure water; they do not apprehend the grand truth of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, enabling them to cry, "Abba, Father." They have never really entered into the deep blessedness of being under the reign of grace.

They have life. It is impossible to doubt this. They love divine things: the tastes, the habits, the aspirations of divine things. They are, in a way, separated from the world, but their separation is negative rather than positive. Their separation is due more to the fact that they see the utter vanity of the world, and its inability to satisfy their hearts. They see hell and believe in heaven.

How sad to watch these multitudes professing a hope in Christ but never resting in the reign of Grace! They are not enjoyable people. They have no certainty, no rest. They are not happy. They do not know their true bearings. They are neither one thing nor the other. They go to church to impress God and to convince Him that they are good. They do not go because they love Jesus. They are occupied with the thought that the Lord is claiming something from them: "I must do this, I must do that, and I must do the other."

Beloved, if you are to rest, you must cease from your own doings, your own reasonings, and your own feelings. If you are to walk in victory, you must stop fighting! The answer is in hearing and believing. Cease from your restless and worthless doings, and repose in full unquestioning confidence in the one offering of Jesus Christ, which has perfectly satisfied and glorified God as to the great question of your sin and guilt.

The glorious note of Hebrews is "Come!" You are invited ... welcomed! Jesus came, died, rose, and ascended to bring US to GOD! Now this must stir us for it is His purpose. We must come! Will you allow unbelief to keep you from God! "Whosoever will may come." Do you want to come? Then come!

Jesus prevailed on our behalf. Dare you add to the blood atonement of Christ by some personal work of righteousness? Believe what Jesus has done for you. The blood is enough for God, let it be enough for you. How many tears do you have to cry? How much punishment must you bear before you are worthy to come back to God? Don't spurn the joyful desire of God to show mercy. Just come ... you will find mercy and grace to help you! Has the pressure of religion slammed you into the walls of defeat? Have you struggled to achieve holiness only to have a breakdown, and you feel that now all is lost? Are you more focused on discipline and what God requires than Jesus and the free worship of God? Do you lack the provision of a victorious life? Then I joyfully exhort you, on behalf of God, "Come by a new and living way!"

Jesus is there, before the Father for you, to succor your every need through the merits of His blood. Nothing will be denied when you come with Jesus. God's promises are "Yes and Amen" through Jesus. This means it will be granted, right there, right now! It is not up for debate or deliberations or delays. The greatest honor, privilege, and calling the believer has is to draw near to God and obtain! God is passing out gifts in celebration of His Son's victory. He wants to give them to you in His Son's name. Gifts of victory, gifts of comfort, gifts of peace, gifts of rests, gifts of provisions, it's all yours in Christ. Surely you hear your intercessors compelling you to come, "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

Lee Shipp

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