

Monday, 8 October 2018 Acts 15:7-11

And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, and he made no distinction between them and us, having cleansed their hearts by faith. Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will."

Peter recognized that the appropriate time for the Holy Spirit to impose conditions for salvation upon the Gentiles was at Caesarea when the Gospel was first given to Cornelius and his men. No, very simple: "that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." (Acts 10:43) No seal of the covenant by circumcision or any other rule, only believe and you will be saved.

We need to be as observant and faithful today. Works do not enter into our salvation, but only as a result of our transformation.

Tuesday, 9 October 2018 Acts 15:28-29

For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell."

James, with wisdom guided by the Holy Spirit, presented a simple set of requirements, not requirements to be saved but four simple ways of demonstrating to the world around them that a transformation has taken place. Abstaining from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, and meat that had been strangled and avoiding sexual immorality was very significant in that day and age. What are four significant demonstrations of our transformation in today's society?

Wednesday, 10 October 2018

Acts 16:6-10

And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia

and help us." And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

A great example to study and meditate upon. Just because an idea occurs to me does not mean that it is of the LORD. There is nothing in the story that any answer to the questions regarding how the Holy Spirit forbade Paul and his companions from ministering in Asia or how He did not allow them to go into Bithynia, but He did.

The lesson to me is that I need to become a Berean in examining my thoughts and proposals. Is this really of the LORD? Is it supported by Scripture? Do I find confirming fleeces? Sometimes waiting on the LORD will result in another door opening; a door that I never suspected existed; my own call to Macedonia.

Thursday, 11 October 2018 Acts 19:1-6

And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying.

The key to understanding this passage lies in the word "believe". Those Ephesians believed in John's statement that they were to believe in the one to come after him and their baptism was a public commitment to that belief. However, Paul introduced them to the One whom John prophesied, the Lord Jesus Christ and they were baptized in His Name. This is a crucial shift in commitment.

Friday, 12 October 2018 Acts 19:21

Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."

He set no conditions, a simple acceptance of the Spirit's direction was sufficient. Would that I would learn that lesson—if the Spirit opens a door, I am to walk through and be His Ambassador of Reconciliation.

Saturday, 13 October 2018 Acts 20:22-23

And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.

A chapter later, I found that Paul was aware that his call was not to be a pleasure-stroll through pleasant flower meadows, but was to be an arduous witness to the power of the Cross. His resolve, his commitment to being obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit was unswerving. He knew full well that imprisonment and afflictions were not to be lightly regarded, but he was called to press on in obedience. Likewise, so am I.

Lord's Day, 14 October 2018 Psalm 119:17-18

Deal bountifully with Your servant, that I may live and keep Your word. Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your law.

Oh, You do deal bountifully, Lord, You do open my eyes to the wondrous things that result from Your law. You give me the blessing of seeing lives transformed, spirits and bodies healed, new lives being created in You. Praise You, my Lord and my Master.

VOICES TOGETHER

Daily Meditations from the Scriptures



October 8-14, 2018

Prayer of the week, based on Paul's prayer in: Ephesians 1:15-17

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

LORD, God the Almighty, we come to You in thanksgiving for this congregation and the many ways that You are using us to bring the message of Your Kingdom to saints throughout our community. Continue, LORD, to increase the working of Your Holy Spirit within us so that we can know You better and bring revelation to those ones You have given us to serve. *Amen*

To fear or not to fear, that is the question.

The fear of the Lord, an expression that occurs many times in Scripture, 142 in the ESV in various forms, is not well understood in the Church today. For many, the phrase represents a weak and flabby description of an overly saccharine spiritual being of some sort. It certainly does not include the concept of the LORD, God the Almighty who spoke all things into being and who controls all things.

Join with me in examining the fear of the LORD and seeking an understanding of life in the Kingdom of Heaven in the here and now as guided by that fear.

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