

The Holy Spirit - Part 6

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[0:00] Okay team, we are in our series of the personal work of the Holy Spirit and we come to what I trust is the deeply edifying topic of the Holy Spirit's work in sanctification.

And by sanctification, we mean the process by which we increasingly become partakers of the divine nature, to use the terminology from Peter.

That is, to take on a progressive likeness to God in all the ways that we can be like Him. Or, expressed in relation to Christ, who is the perfect human image of God, how can we come to be more Christ-like, more compellingly and comprehensively vivid images of Christ, the image of God, to bear in all aspects of our being the fragrance of Christ?

How does this progressive transformation transpire? In answer, we might felicitously begin by reflecting upon how the first disciples of Jesus were so changed.

How, we might ask, did the Son of Thunder become the Apostle of Love? Or the Thrice Denier become the Rock?

[1:29] A simple statement in Mark's Gospel surely gets at the heart of our answer. He appointed the twelve that they might be with Him.

Mark 3.14 It was by being with Jesus that they were changed. It was in their following that they were formed.

You follow me, He told them, and I will make you fishers of men. And by the same process of Jesus' dynamic presence, everything else that they were to become in His presence.

There was, by Jesus' presence, what we might call an alchemy of influence, imparted, that was slowly but surely, incrementally but ineluctably transformative.

Like the presence of the Shekinah glory in the midst of Israel, a character was imparted as it was upon the face of Moses, as he was before the presence, or the face of in the Hebrew.

[2:39] The presence is always used the word face of, panim, the face of God. Significantly, the opening of John's Gospel presents Jesus, the Son's incarnate presence, in parallel language.

It says of Him, He, Jesus, tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory. And by this means, a transforming, growing likeness began to appear upon His disciples.

As the Sanhedrin would later marvel that so ragtag a posse, pathetic in the world's eyes, could be so full of conviction, confidence, and courage, they remarked, it was perceived that they had been with Jesus, manifesting His imprint.

And if we were to press further and ask, well, how particularly Jesus' presence imprinted His disciples? Our answer, distilled from the Gospels, would be manifold, but two realities seem prominent to me.

His words and His love. His words and His love. In His high priestly prayer to the Father, Jesus highlights repeatedly, I have given them your words.

[4:05] John 17, 8, and then 14, many times throughout. As Peter accounted for why he would keep following, Lord, where else would we go? For you have the words of life.

John 6, 68. And Jesus' words came in the context of His love. This was certainly the striking experience and perception of His disciples themselves.

As the apostle He loved, John, testified, He loved us to the end. John 13, 1. When near the end, when Jesus told them He must leave them, their hearts were heavy to the breaking at such a thought.

There He told them His presence would continue with them by the Spirit, and that His Spirit would bring to their remembrance His words.

What they must have thought of His reassuring yet cryptic promise, I am with you always, given that it was uttered as He was disappearing from their midst, I know not, but it was marvelously fulfilled at

Pentecost by His sending of His Spirit.

[5:22] So I want to suggest that a helpful way to understand the work of the Spirit in sanctification of disciples today, you and I, is by recognizing it as a continuation of the very dynamics of Jesus' earthly ministry among His first disciples.

That is, the Holy Spirit sanctifies, imparts the likeness of Christ by making Christ's transforming reality present to us, and especially His love and His words.

See, same pattern that we saw with the first disciples. Same thing. First, let's consider the critical role in sanctification of the Holy Spirit presenting to us divine words.

And we do so under the title, we have number one here, hearing with faith. Hearing with faith. The phrase is taken from Galatians 3.5, and we'll get there, but let's begin picking up our thread in Romans chapter 8.

That will be kind of our main text for today that we'll work through. In verse 13, so Romans 8.13, the apostle gives us an absolutely pivotal principle of sanctification.

[7:01] The first phrase of that verse, verse 13, gives us the highest stakes for putative disciples. He writes, If you live according to the flesh, and by flesh, he means all within us that either opposes or even ignores God.

That's the flesh. If you live according to that flesh, you will die. If coddling or coasting along with the current of our flesh, if that becomes the characteristic mode of our life, we will at the last have none. We will die. Now there's a warning worth soberly assessing. And surely we should justly ask with the first disciples around the last supper table as to who might betray the master.

Is it I? Is it I? Well, may it not be so. What is the alternative? How do we not die? Well, the apostle goes on.

But, if by the spirit, you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. So, these are the vividly dramatic alternatives.

[8:30] As John Owen, an old Puritan writer, puts it with lapidary succinctness, be killing sin, be killing sin, or sin will be killing you.

Be killing sin, or sin will be killing you. And this needs to be our unrelieved and unwearied stance towards sin.

We must seek nothing else than its extirpation, put to death. Not simply wound, or periodically prune.

Just a little bit off the top, please. No, the axe must be at the root of the tree. For if we let our flesh prevail, that is, what we think, feel, do, be shaped against, or apart from God, we will die.

So, surely the vital question becomes, how do we manage to put to death these deeds of the body?

And by deeds of the body, that phrase is used for our flesh, simply because it's through the body that our flesh is able to express itself.

[9:48] It's the way we are as human beings. So, the deeds of the body, nothing against the body in and of itself. It's just that the body is the instrument through which our flesh expresses itself, but it could also be the instrument through which the spirit expresses itself.

So, it's not negative in itself, but in this context, he's just using that as a parallel to the flesh, the deeds of the body here in this context. And notice, this is critical, notice how our text emphasizes the need to battle our flesh in a particular way.

I can't believe that you just missed the John Owen quote. There'll be another one. Don't worry.

Don't worry. Okay. Be killing sin, or sin will be killing you. You know it well. Okay. Okay. So, notice how our text emphasizes that the need to battle our flesh in a particular way.

Did you see that? It says, if by the spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. Very critical.

You know, because Christian, the Christian is not simply one who puts to death the deeds of the body. Lots of unbelievers do that. I mean, we see them all over the place.

[11:06] Everyone from dieters to ascetics perform acts of self-denial. And neither does being a Christian guarantee in any way that we will go about seeking to put to death the flesh in the right and effectual way.

Hair shirts, that's not gonna, you know, this is not the effectual way. Often, our efforts amount to nothing but a miserable failure. So, that ought to clue us in that, hey, I think we're going about this in the wrong way.

No, the apostle is adamant here. It must be by the spirit that we do the killing. No other way is effectual.

So, our question becomes, how is this done? What does by the spirit mean? Now, the apostle is not as explicit as we all wish that he were here.

But, we're not without resort for the context, verse 5, gives us a clue. And there, we're in Romans 8, Tyler, there, he has just explained those, according to the spirit, set their minds on the things of the spirit.

[12:24] So, inferentially, likely, the way we put to death the flesh by the spirit is by setting our minds on the things of the spirit.

spirit. And if this is so, then the question becomes, what are the things of the spirit? Well, without wanting unduly to narrow the identification, it is interesting that there is one place, just one, one place in the New Testament where that exact phrase occurs.

And again, from Paul's pen, it's in 1 Corinthians 2.14, where we discover that the things of the spirit are the words taught by the Holy Spirit given to Paul, an apostle, to teach us, now recorded in the New Testament, the apostolic words, the voice of the spirit heard in the spirit-inspired scriptures. It's the exact phrase that Paul uses, the things of the spirit. So, I'm proposing to set our mind on the things of the spirit spirit certainly involves setting them on the words of God as we now have them in our Bibles.

And a corroborative piece of evidence suggests we may have the identification right here, and that would be the armor of God. Remember that list in Ephesians 6?

[14:02] Now, interestingly, in that whole list, that whole panoply of things that we need to put on, there is only one of these pieces with which you can kill. Anybody remember what it might be?

The sword! Yeah, you can kill with a sword. And what is the sword of the spirit that identifies what that is? The word of God! There you go. So you're thinking, oh, bingo!

We've got resonance here, we've got correlation. Always a good principle in scripture study is, you know, do these truths that I'm thinking that I'm finding here, do they correlate with other truths that I'm seeing?

Do I get a little thickening weave of the fabric of scripture together? Is this a prominent theme?

Does this seem to work? Yes. Why, then we think, okay, we're on solid ground here.

We're on solid ground. And, as further, and I think decisive support for our contention, Jesus does exactly this when he is faced with temptation.

[15:00] He meets the assault with scripture, the words of God. This was the manner of the master. And you all remember this from the temptation narrative in Luke 4.

Remember? Quote scripture. So, how do we put to death the deeds of the body by the spirit? Well, by taking our minds and setting them firmly on the words of God.

It is the word that is instrumental in killing our sin as we set our minds on it.

The word is the means by which the vigorous action of the Holy Spirit is engaged. So, we set our minds on it, the word.

So, how does this practically work itself out? Well, Paul's remarks to the Galatians that we started with are helpfully kind of fill this out.

[16:08] Particularly, great Galatians 3.5, okay, which gets at what we do such that the spirit is at work. Okay, and the question Paul sets before the Galatians is, how, Galatians, think back with me, remember with me, how was the miracle working power of the spirit unleashed in your lives?

And he gives them two options. Well, did it happen by performing works of the law? Gong, wrong, wrong answer, thank you for playing, no.

Or, did it happen by hearing with faith? Bingo! Hearing with faith. Hearing with faith. Now, is it not interesting how Paul does not just say by faith, by faith.

No, hearing by faith. Why add hearing? Apostle Paul, why add hearing? How does accenting hearing make a difference?

Because the spirit is engaged by our hearing. Now, we're not just spirits, we're embodied spirits.

[17:33] And he works his miracles, and he did to you, to you Galatians, by our hearing. And this is vital. If you want the spirit released to work with power, hear the word of God and believe it.

So, when you're battling with temptation, what is your first act in the fray? Listen! Hear something! Get something into your ear! Okay? Luther used to say, the ear, that's the Christian organ, the ear. I think he's right. Don't minimize the importance of hearing. Oh, I'll just trust in God. Sounds pious.

Well, yes, but it's too vague and amorphous. get a concrete piece of his promises and character and trust that.

[18 : 40] How does this play out? Well, when your flesh kindles something seeking to conceive sin, how do you kill it?

Hear the word. Listen to a promise. This is the spirit's instrument to do his sin-killing work. So the way we slay sin by the spirit, or as we might alternately phrase it, how the spirit sanctifies us in mortifying our sin is by taking the scriptures, the word of Christ, and bringing them to our mind, just as Jesus promised that the spirit would help us to do.

In opposition to our flesh, the world, and the enemy of our soul. Or to bring another Pauline image to bear, when the fiery darts of temptation come in as thick and deadly arrows, raise the shield of faith which extinguishes them.

What is it to raise the shield of faith? Well, faith is always in the scripture putting our trust concretely in the promises of God and the person behind those promises.

And this is again exactly what we see Jesus doing for his disciples. Let's give an example. You remember when his disciples were troubled in heart. So John 14.

[20 : 15] Remember? And he tells them, let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God and in me. That is, raise the shield of faith.

Let's exercise faith here. Yes, faith in God, but further and importantly, he makes a concrete, he makes it concrete to them by giving them a specific promise to sink their teeth into.

If I go, I will come again and take you to myself that where I am, you will be also. So, see, there's something concrete to sink our faith into.

And his words are solid ground, for he it is who is behind them, and he's utterly and always trustworthy, and he even reassures them with that.

Hey, after his promise, if it were not so, I would not have told you. You see how he's directing them to trust in the promise concretely and in the person behind it.

[21 : 19] See how Jesus does this to his disciples? How he helps them? So, this is what it is to put to death the flesh by the spirit, to quench the incoming temptations with the shield of faith.

Lay hold of a word of divine promise and put your trust in it and in the one behind it. Sisters and brothers, what a rich harvest field there is of God's promises.

Jesus. You know, he's not stingy here. He's given us a lot of them. And there is surely an armful to be gleaned to meet every occasion of temptation.

And these the spirit will use as his arsenal in his sin-slaying sanctifying mission.

So let's help out by laboring that the word of Christ might come to dwell in us richly.

[22 : 23] You see how critical a role it has. That the Holy Spirit might have an ample arsenal to draw upon in his war with us on our sin.

And let it encourage us that the spirit's work here is the fulfillment of the promise of the master. He said be assured the Holy Spirit will bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

John 14 26. As John Owen writes I'm going to throw in another one for Tyler here. Christ had said many things, things gracious and heavenly to his disciples.

He had given them many rich and precious promises to uphold their hearts. But knowing full well how ready they were to forget and to let slip the things that were spoken and how coldly his promises would come into their assistance when retained only in their natural faculties and made use of their own strength.

To obviate these ills, he tells them that this work he committed to the charge of another who will do to the purpose, the comforter who is in you.

[23 : 43] He shall bring to remembrance and apply to your souls the things that I have spoken, the promises that I have made, which will then be unto you as life from the dead.

So the Spirit brings the promises of the Word to our minds and applies them for us. And not only that, but the Spirit works upon our affections so that we savor these truths, we relish them.

He causes us to lay great stock in them, to treasure them, delight in them, find them to be food for our soul.

We may have read a promise a hundred times before, but apart from the Spirit, to quote John Owen again, we find no more savor in them than in the white of an egg.

That's not much. But when the same promises are brought to remembrance by the Spirit, the Comforter who is with us and in us, ah, how full of life and power they then become.

[24 : 54] See, this is the work of the Spirit. How often, continues Owen, when the spirits of the saints are ready to faint within them, when straits and perplexities are round about them, that they know not what to do, nor whither to apply themselves for help or supportment, doth the Spirit that dwelleth in them bring to mind some seasonable, suitable promise of Christ, that bears them up quite above their difficulties and distractions, opening such new springs of life and consolation to their souls, as that they who but now stooped, yea, we're almost bowed, bowed to the ground, do now stand upright and feel no weight or burden at all.

Notice how I'm trying to seed in a little appreciation for John Owen. It's just kind of a temptation that you guys should read some of that. That's from his *Saints Perseverance*, his works, volume 11. A lot of works, a lot of works. Well, so I've expounded the Spirit's sanctifying word work, focusing upon words of promise, which is surely a crucial category.

But, what is, excuse me, what is going on when we meet the flesh's blandishments with scriptural truth?

We are engaging in a battle of stories, a battle of stories. stories. Our flesh uses stories.

[26 : 29] It seeks to ensorcel us with a story. Oh, this sin will satisfy. It's your heart's dainty and desire.

Oh, and it's but an isolated indulgence that will not lead to anything seriously harmful. It's so worth it. See, we're being given a story and urged to live within it.

And stories must be met with stories. The scripture also gives us another story, a very different story.

Wait, life that is worth the name is to be had only in Christ alone. God is the fountain of living water and the cisterns sin offers are broken and hold no water.

It may be able to wet our lips, but it can never quench our thirst. Indeed, sin is a murderer. It whispers softly, only that we may draw near, so it stabs fatally.

[27 : 42] Its pleasures are poisoned. When has it ever delivered its promises? sin is a liar from the beginning. It courts me to enslave me.

Its steps go down to death. No, I will not live in the story it offers. I see the face behind the enticement.

It is the enemy of my soul. Get behind me, Satan. When we meet sin with scripture, we are meeting story with story.

A story invites us to inhabit it. And as we dwell, indwell that story, its form forms us.

It informs and forms our imagination. And the spirit's work is to render that story compelling to us, captivating in its goodness, beauty, and truth.

[28 : 54] If we encounter sin's solicitations and the alluring story it tells us without our own countervailing story, we shall surely succumb to its story.

Like an actress torn from her drama she has no storyline to guide and govern her. She is adrift.

When we understand this dynamic, an implication I think becomes forcefully clear.

Are we living within the biblical story, the drama? Do we know the drama in which we are to perform our part? Do we find it compelling?

are our consciousness and our imaginations steeped in it? To respond to sin's solicitations with scripture is not simply to quote isolated atomistic Bible verses like we're reading a fortune cookie or fingering a talisman.

no, it is to apply a piece of the rich fabric with the force of the entire weave behind it.

[30 : 11] So I again ask, are we living within the biblical story? Are we, as we seek to grow in it, finding it more and more compelling, more and more complete, more and more real, more and more beautiful?

Are we more and more confident from tried experience that it always keeps its promises sweeter than honey, for it is the expression of him who is altogether beautiful, who alone has the words of eternal life?

And this brings us to our second sanctifying work of the spirit. For perhaps most compellingly of all, the spirit presents the story to us, indeed makes us feel the story to be a love story.

This is what gives it such transforming power. For a love story is the story that we were all made to be part of and so long to be part of.

More than anything, the sons of Adam and daughters of Eve, as sons of Adam and daughters of Eve, we long to be loved and accepted, to hear the words of welcome and affection spoken over us

like the divine voice of love and acceptance heard so fulfilling in the garden.

[31:47] men. We observe that in the ministry of Jesus to his disciples, his words came in the setting of his love. So let's now briefly consider how the Spirit continues for disciples this experience of Christ's love.

What is this work? Well, it's twofold and we will expound it as involving the kiss and the cry. The kiss and the cry.

First, the kiss. As the apostle describes it in Romans 5, 5, God's love is poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

And in our passage, we've been looking at Romans 8, it's a parallel passage, Paul calls the Holy Spirit the spirit of adoption, whereby, quote, the Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

There's the acceptance, the love and the acceptance. Verse 16. This is not simply the communication of a proposition, though it may come in the form of declarations.

[33:07] It is the imparting of an experience. Our sense of being beloved, a beloved child of God, is not in this particular case, inferential, but experiential.

The Holy Spirit takes the reality of our sonship and allows us to taste it. And ladies, by sonship, don't get hung up on gender.

This is a special thing because sonship implied to those readers the possessor of the full inheritance. So you are included. It's not exclusion. It's actually a marvelous inclusion into the full inheritance.

Okay? Sonship. So the Holy Spirit takes the reality of our sonship and allows us to taste it. we feel as it were the kiss of the father as the prodigal.

And feel, do you ever do this? I got my ring every once in a while. I just miss her. She's away now and I just kind of feel it. It's just such a wonderful thing. And we feel the ring of inheritance on our finger from God.

[34:21] The Holy Spirit allows us to do that. As Thomas Goodwin in another Puritan writes, It is not a bare conviction that a man shall go to heaven, but God telleth him directly in part what heaven is and lets the soul feel it.

Ah, there is nothing sweeter than the love of God and the tasting of that sweetness. The experience may come suddenly and forcefully like a crashing wave, or it may come as the gentleness of dew upon parched ground, but this comfort and joy is carried into the soul by the Holy Spirit who distills it personally into our hearts.

And we feel the truth of this is my beloved in whom I am well pleased. I have loved you with an everlasting love.

Jeremiah 31.3 I have engraved you on the palms of my hands. Isaiah 49.15 He who touches you touches the apple of my eye.

Zechariah 2.18 I will rejoice over you with gladness. I will quiet you by my love. I will exalt over you with singing.

[35:48] yea loud singing. Zephaniah 3.17 and on and on and on. And not only does the Spirit place the divine kiss within his own, he also stirs up an answering cry from our inward parts.

As the Apostle writes, you have received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry, Abba Father. Father. Verse 15.

Abba, the Aramaic word Jesus used, indicative of his intimate, affectionate relationship with the Father. And the Holy Spirit places this word, wow, this word, Abba, as our spontaneous, upwelling, answering utterance out of a heart of deeply loved belonging.

I am my beloved's and my beloved's mind. Song of Solomon 2.16. But how is this connected to our sanctification, this love bit, and how is that so vitally important?

So three brief and concluding observations. sanctification. Why is this, this, that this comes in the context of love so vital for sanctification?

[37:20] Okay? First, it is love that ultimately or finally that deeply changes us, not fear.

fear. It's love that changes us, deeply changes us, not fear. The spirit affects in us a critical change. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery, he writes, Romans 8, what, 14, to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons.

Notice the contrast. contrast. It's pivotal. The spirit of sonship comes in in exchange for the spirit of bondage.

The spirit of bondage relates to the way we all naturally, inevitably, apart from the spirit-applied sonship, how we inevitably seek to sanctify or better ourselves or try to make ourselves acceptable, or at least feel acceptable.

[38:31] We encounter God's law and him as the lawgiver judge who holds us to account, but given the weakness of our flesh, ours is never more than failure to live up to the requirements with the result of never getting beyond a soberly terrified conscience.

conscience. Not a pathologically terrified, soberly terrified conscience. Anxiety over the impending judgment. Utter lack of peace with a perpetually offended God and how could there be peace with a perpetually offended God?

Self-recrimination for our failures or a fragile tissue of delusionality as to our success. No, we're not being good and no hope in the judgment of a holy God.

That's all we get. And the apostle calls this a spirit of bondage. And bondage it is indeed, from which there is no self-escape.

But when the spirit comes and applies the gospel to our helpless estate, he sets forth the unspeakable wonder that God has in the Savior Christ exchanged our miserable, blighted, and blackened record with his own perfect one.

[40:07] In faith union with Christ, our unacceptableness is exchanged for his perfect acceptance. We are accepted in the beloved.

In the indeed, adopted into the family of God where we dare and delight to call him father. We now no longer strive to make ourselves acceptable in suspenseful fear and finally hopeless despair. For we have, we have his full and unfading acceptance. Thus, the dynamic has not simply been altered. We altered the dynamic.

no, it's been upended. It's been upended. We seek to be holy, not striving for God's acceptance, but rather from his acceptance.

We simply want to be like our father and to please him in imitation of him. That's the motive. I learned this difference as a little boy.

[41:11] We used to play soccer together as I was growing up and in the pickup games, my father, who would always be a captain, he would always pick me first to be on his team.

I can still hear those words. I choose my son. He's my first choice. And I knew that I had his love and favor before the game even started.

Whether I scored the goal or swung and missed and fell on my doofus or took us. I had his love. I didn't play for it, but out of it.

And in the absence of fear and in the fullness of love, it's amazing what you can do. I ran as freely and so as fast as my little legs would carry me.

And I got to be pretty good at the game. I learned my soccer in the spirit of sonship. I learned my soccer in the spirit of sonship.

[42:13] So when it comes to sanctification, love is more powerful than fear. Love is far more powerful than fear. You see how it's vital?

It's also vital to our sanctification that the Holy Spirit pours out the love of God into our heart because, too, the way our hearts work, we need for change the expulsive power of an over-mastering affection.

The way our hearts work, we need for change the expulsive power of an over-mastering affection. Our hearts are a natural tangle of well-rooted idols that we cherish.

And these delectables which have ensorcelled our hearts have an uncanny staying power. Their talons grasp.

Their tendrils entwine. They have so fastened themselves as our hearts preference, so ensconced themselves as our ruling appetites, we can feel powerless to cast them off.

[43:30] Haven't you felt that way? how will we destroy these infatuations? Not simply by choking them out to death.

No. Our hearts will always adhere to some object and will never be left void or vacant. That's not how we extinguish them.

but what cannot be thus destroyed may be dispossessed and one taste give way, made to give way to another.

This is echoing Thomas Chalmers. how do you get the toddler to let go of the keys?

I know this, I got a three-year-old and a one-year-old. How do you get the toddler? You know, you can try to wrench his family. No, no, no, no, just bring in the puppy. Bring in the puppy.
[44 : 34] He'll see the puppy and the keys will just drop disinterestedly and he'll head for the wiggly cuteness. Do you see? You're dispelling the one.

The one affection just over masters the other and you drop it. To mortify our sins, we must love something more than them.

And so it is critical that the Spirit present before us Christ in all his beauty, that our hearts may be ravished away from their worldly allurements.

The Spirit makes us to see Christ as the pearl of great price and to treasure him more than all the world proffers in its place. We would gladly part from it in exchange for the pearl of great price.

It is the vision of Christ that the Spirit gives, taken into the soul, which is the drenching downpour, which loosens all those clinging roots of our idols, that they may near effortlessly be plucked up or simply wash away in the flood tide of a superior love.

[45 : 59] And finally, the Spirit's work of displaying Christ is so critical for our sanctification salvation. Because, third and finally, what transforms us at the last is precisely what transforms us all along the way.

What transforms us ultimately at the last is precisely what transforms us all along the way.

what is it which at last shall perfectly transform us into the image of the Son? Well, the Apostle John writes, it has not appeared as yet what we shall be.

We know that when He appears, we shall be like Him because we shall see Him just as He is.

1 John 3, 2. And the Apostle asserts the same in 1 Corinthians 13, where He says, near the end, there is something which awaits us.

[47 : 08] The perfect. Tough word to translate, totalion, the perfect. Which, when we encounter it, is also our perfection.

The realization of the end for which we were fashioned. What is this? It is when we encounter the risen Christ, face to face.

That's how He defines it, face to face. Where His presence, so intimate that His attributes blaze and press against us.

We experience firsthand, up close, front row seat, His glory, beauty, and burning affection. face to face.

This is what will ultimately change us into the image of the beloved Son, the face to face. We shall perfectly see Him, experience perfectly His presence and love, and that will be our perfecting.

[48 : 11] This is the dynamic of our final transformation. But, this is the very dynamic. Do you notice that the Spirit works in our this earthly pilgrimage?

He makes Christ vividly present to us. He makes His attributes shine. He sets forth Christ as beautiful in our hearts. As the apostle writes, and we all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.

For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3.18 The now, in this earthly pilgrimage, does not have the perfect completeness of the then, but is in continuity with it.

We are changed, not fully, but truly. Really, we do not need to wait for Christ's return to glimpse Him. We may, by the Spirit, even now experience His attributes ablaze before us.

We may glimpse His blinding beauty, have His love poured out into our hearts, little foretastes of the feast to come, glimpses of what will be the gaze.

[49 : 38] And these glimpses are as yet only partial and patchy. It's kind of like a New England beach in early spring, or maybe around about this time, when we get the sun through clouds in moments and fragments.

But it is these shafts of light and warmth which transform, not to the degree of the full and uninterrupted brilliance of the noonday presence that that will accomplish, but truly, graciously, and wonderfully, nonetheless.

The Spirit makes a beginning of our putting on glory here below, and He will complete what He begins. The Spirit gives it continuity, something from the future coming to the present.

One of my cherished emblems of this continuity is the homegoing, the Lord took him home to Himself, of R.W. Dale. He was at his desk meditating on the glory of Christ and transcribing his thoughts in the very moment that the Lord called him into his presence.

these were his unfinished words left on the page on his desk. He wrote, Unworldliness does not consist in the rigid observance of any external rules of conduct, but in the spirit and temper and in the way of living created by the vision of God, by constant fellowship with Him, by a personal and vivid experience of the greatness of Christ's redemption, by the settled purpose to do the will of God always in all things, at all costs, and by the power of the great hope, the full assurance that after our mortal years are spent, there is a larger, fuller, richer life in...

[51:34] that was it. The Lord took him. Wow! What was well begun was perfectly completed.

This is what the spirit does in our sanctification. He brings Christ's heavenly presence down into our hearts until he takes us up into Christ's heavenly presence.

The face to face, face to face. Okay, team, sorry, I went a little long, but we have some opportunity for comments or questions, or testimonies.

If you need to leave, I'm sorry, go ahead, I get it, but I'll be here for a few more minutes, questions or comments. Yes, Sam? I want to talk about the sword of the spirit.

Yes? I like that verse, I think, the great thing is where it says, take every soft captive to the Lord shall cry. Excellent, yes, 2 Corinthians 10. Yes, yes, that's so key, and that's that, in 2 Corinthians 10.5, I think you're talking about, and yes, every thought captive, and notice how you look at these stray thoughts that are out, remember, God's purpose is to bring everything under the authority and lordship of Christ to kind of reassemble the things that have fallen apart, so you've got these rogue, stray thoughts that are in rebellion against him and trying to encourage us in rebellion to alienate us from God, and they keep floating through our minds, their times, and Satan even can put things into our minds.

[53:23] Remember, he put it into Judas's mind to betray Jesus, so Satan actually has access to our minds to put them through, but we've got to be careful, like the United States doesn't want to have random flyovers, who knows what that is, so we have to engage and evaluate and take it captive and bring it under submission to Christ, so we're kind of anticipating, sanctification, kind of anticipating that full glorification when everything will be brought under Christ, Ephesians 1.10, and we try to do that in anticipation with every thought, bringing it into order, rightly ordered under Christ, yes?

The second thing that I think I find important is that the Spirit of God never brings condemnation. Excellent.

So, it's, you know, there's no condemnation, so the thoughts and things when they are really negative and destructive are coming from the other side.

That's excellent. I think you're absolutely right on that. And it is, it is true, and I love your distinction, it is true that the Holy Spirit does convict us of sin because it's the Holy Spirit, but that's always, as you say, that's always very, very concrete.

I know just what he's talking about. Boy, that, that word that you exchanged with your wife, that was not honoring to Christ. And there's the invitation, but the enemy of our soul, exactly, exactly, that's right, and the enemy of our soul, he just wants to get us down, so it's kind of this vague sense of being under condemnation, you'll never amount to anything.

[55:12] Well, how am I supposed to repent of that? That's not, you know, no, that's just sowing discouragement and it's oppressive, you're right.

So, when those things happen, remember, that's like a fiery dart that comes in, and what we need to do is we raise the shield of faith.

You say, you know what? You're right, but that's not where my hope is, me amounting to something myself, because my acceptableness is in the beloved and you cannot touch that, get ye behind me, Satan.

So, we answer the assault with this biblical truth that kind of defangs the accuser. So, absolutely, that's right.

Anything else? Okay, good, I won't be upbraided for getting you in too late. Thank you, team, and I think that this class is continuing next week too, that's my impression.

[56:23] Thanks so much.