

James T. Jeremiah  
The Indwelling Ministry of the Spirit  
May 11, 1976

Transcript

James T. Jeremiah:

Jesus said, "I have come that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly." The Lord Jesus Christ is the one who provides the grace. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." And so, he came to save us. Word of God reminds us too that in the world, we shall have tribulations, and there is an abundance of that. "If you are in heaviness or grieving through manifold trials," Peter said, manifold trials, he brings the abundant grace to save us. He brings the manifold trials to test us. We read also in the word of God that we are to walk circumspectly, walk carefully, walk on guard, walk looking around, so that we step carefully in a spiritual sense. And we're told in Ephesians 3:20 that our God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think by the power of his resurrection as we take our journey into Ephesians 1:19. And so, there is power of Christ to equip us. Tonight, we want to think about another aspect of this, and we find it in the text or the scripture we had last night for our study.

James T. Jeremiah:

Last night, we talked about walking circumspectly in Ephesians 5:15. "See then that you walk carefully, circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." And here's the text. "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." Now, the word of God in John chapter seven makes it clear that there is abundance of the power of the spirit of God for every believer. We need not be poverty-stricken spiritually because the word of God tells us by promise what God has provided for us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Let me read John 7:37. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his innermost beings shall flow rivers of living water.'" "I am come that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly."

James T. Jeremiah:

The ministry of the Holy Spirit in the believers' life is a blessed reality. Bible has a lot to say about that. Dealing with a very religious Jew, the Lord Jesus made very clear that the spirit of God is essential to the salvation experience. He said, "Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God," in John chapter three. In order to emphasize that, he said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." So, when the spirit of the Lord uses the word of God to bring life to a believing sinner, he gives him prospect of heaven. Nobody ever sees God's heaven without God's Holy Spirit bringing life to his soul.

James T. Jeremiah:

Bible also teaches us that after or at the time of our regeneration, when we're saved, by one Spirit are you all baptized into one body. And so, being placed into the body of Christ by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, we have a glorious position, our position in Christ, so that no matter where we go as believers, we meet other believers, we talk the same language. Very frankly, I have more in common with Christians I know very little about than I do with some of my own blood relatives. Because, we're members of the body of Christ, baptized into Christ, placed into Christ, by the Holy Spirit. It also reminds us, the scriptures also remind us that, "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which you have of God, and you're not your own?" Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. That means

James T. Jeremiah  
The Indwelling Ministry of the Spirit  
May 11, 1976

then that my body, as a child of God, is indwelt by the Spirit and he possesses me. I am his by virtue of his redemptive grace, by virtue of his presence, by virtue of his promise.

James T. Jeremiah:

May I suggest, my Christian friend, that if you have any question as to whether you should go a certain place or do a certain thing, just stop long enough to remember that the Bible says that God's Holy Spirit dwells in you. Paul, in dealing with the idolaters of Athens, and we can almost visualize that little Jew standing on Mars Hill, pointing his finger to the Acropolis, and saying that God does not dwell in temples made with hands. He doesn't dwell in this church, unless God's people are here. When we leave in two or three hours from now, I just want to see whether you're with me yet, when we leave two or three hours from now and this place is vacant of Christian people, God won't be living here anymore than he does in any other building. God dwells in the bodies of believers. And may I suggest that when we go places and do things that are contrary to the will of God, we don't leave God on the outside and pick him up on the way out. He goes with us.

James T. Jeremiah:

In this same book of Ephesians, we have another great truth about the Holy Spirit. We're told in Ephesians 1:13-14 and Ephesians 4:30, that we're sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise unto the day of redemption. Sealed unto the day of redemption, that means that the Holy Spirit is our protector. Now, that may not mean a whole lot to you, unless you've had the responsibility before God to participate in the laying away of a body of a loved-one. But if you're a child of God and your loved-one is a child of God, and the Bible says that the spirit of God seals the body unto the day of redemption, and that day of redemption is the resurrection, that means the spirit of God in some unbelievable, not unbelievable, but miraculous way, we believe it but we don't understand it, some miraculous way protects the bodies of his people unto the day of resurrection. Think of that.

James T. Jeremiah:

Somebody said, "Well, I don't understand how the body of a child of God can be placed in the ground, that body can go to dust and ashes, and God is going to resurrect it and make it identifiable. [unclear] I don't understand that." I don't either. But, I don't understand how he made the thing out of dust in the first place. And if you can explain Genesis, I'll explain 1 Corinthians 15. We don't have to explain it. God says it. That's enough. That's enough. That's what's going to happen. Think of the ministry of the spirit of God and a child of God, giving us prospect, see the kingdom of God. Giving us position, made placed into the body of Christ. Giving us the assurance of his possession, he dwells in our bodies, temples for his Holy Spirit. Giving us protection until the day of redemption.

James T. Jeremiah:

Now, in the light of that, He says that we ought not to be drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but we ought to be filled with the Spirit. And so, there is a command here. There is a request. There is a bit of instruction. Something that is not optional, but commanded. "Be not drunk with wine, be ye being filled with the Spirit." They are commands of God. Incidentally, in the book of Ephesians, you will find the presence of God in his fullness mentioned. I'm sure you've noted that as you read Ephesians. Let me just briefly call your attention to it. It may be a source of encouragement to you as you recognize what God has provided for you and for me in Christ.

James T. Jeremiah  
The Indwelling Ministry of the Spirit  
May 11, 1976

James T. Jeremiah:

Chapter 3:19, that we read last night. "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God." This is God's promise of his power. Chapter 4:13, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." This is reference I believe that God supply for his people. And then, the one we're going to think about tonight, command of God's word, and that is the control of the spirit of God over our lives. But, it is imperative that we understand that it's not optional. It is a command.

James T. Jeremiah:

Be ye being filled with the spirit, now, what does it mean? How can we be filled with the Spirit? What's the use of it all anyway? Well, I used to read this, and my mind went back to the earlier days of my Christian experience when I went out on a gospel team, and I saw a lady trying to give an object lesson to some kids, and she had two jars filled with water. She was illustrating what it meant to be filled with the Spirit. She had one jar that was clean, just pure, unpolluted water. That was the jar that represented the Christian life filled with the Spirit. The other one was filled with all kinds of junk. Rubber bands and erasers and pencils and paper clips. That represented the Christian life that was filled with the world. It sounded pretty good if you use the word 'filled' to represent it that way, but if you take the text in the light of what it says and Paul's contrast, I think it means something else than that.

James T. Jeremiah:

Paul said, "Be not drunk with wine." What is true of a person who is drunk with wine? Very frankly and very briefly, he's under the control of that alcoholic beverage. Or, as one of my good friends says, "He's under the alfluence of incohol," whatever that may mean. He's under the control of that beverage. His speech, his walk, his actions, his thinking, the whole man is controlled, or the whole woman is controlled by that filthy rotten stuff. That's the bad way of control. And so, Paul, in order for us to get the message, says, "Don't be under the influence and the control of alcohol, but be controlled by the Holy Spirit." I don't have all the answers to all the depths of this, but I am convinced in my own heart that what Paul is trying to say, live your life under the control of the spirit of God. But, how?

James T. Jeremiah:

Do we go to a tiring[?] meeting and wait for God to come down in power, and we have some kind of an ethereal experience? Do we beg God to do something he's commanded us to do and has promised he would do for us if we trust him? How does this come about? Well, I believe that if we're going to be controlled by God's spirit, we must be controlled by God's word. And there are two scriptures that we can bring together here I think that will show what he means. Keep your hand in Ephesians five and go with me to Colossians three. And let's look at that for just a minute, and see what we can find out from a study in contrasts. In Ephesians five, as we look at it now, he says, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, wherein is wantonness, but be filled with the Spirit. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks, submitting yourself," as we talked about last night.

James T. Jeremiah:

Now, in Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the

James T. Jeremiah  
The Indwelling Ministry of the Spirit  
May 11, 1976

Lord. Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the father by him. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands." What did you notice about those two scriptures? Well, if you read it carefully, you'll notice that being controlled by the Spirit produces certain things, and letting the word of Christ dwell in you richly produces the same thing. You cannot have two results so equal without being related to the causes. And there is no such thing as being controlled by the spirit of God without having lives that are directed by the word of God.

James T. Jeremiah:

That's the reason why in the day in which we live with all the so-called wildfire that goes around in the realm of the spiritual, with so little Bible doctrine and Bible teaching to go with it, pretty good evidence that it's not a biblical procedure. What does it mean to have the word of Christ dwell in you richly? Well, when one is born of the spirit of God, the spirit of God is the author of the word of God. And if he brings life to us, he has something for us in the word to which he has given life. Child of God, who is going to let the word of God dwell in him richly, is going to believe the Bible, believe what it says, face value, without argument, just take it as it is.

James T. Jeremiah:

Sometimes, we spend too much time trying to explain and understand some of the things we can't understand and won't understand that we have to glory. Let's believe it because God said it. That ought to be enough. I'm not saying we ought not to try to delve into the depths and find out what it means. What I am saying, don't let the things you don't understand keep you from enjoying the things you do understand.

James T. Jeremiah:

Mark Twain was not known for his theology, at least his fundamentalist theology, but he made the statement on one occasion that the one thing that bothered him was not the verses that he didn't understand, but the ones he did. They bother me too. They get us under conviction, stir us up. Believe it, love it. Love the word of God. Feel that your day has been a poor day if something hasn't been given to you by God from his word. Love his word, know his word. Through the years that I can remember this church, right up until the present hour, you have had the privilege of godly pastors who've taught you the word of God. You ought to know it better than most Christians in Kentucky, in Ohio, in the United States. You all know it, but listen now, nobody ever knows what he ought to know about the word of God by being spoonfed. He needs to learn how to feed himself. It's an interesting thing to watch kids learn to feed themselves, ain't it?

James T. Jeremiah:

We have a boy, I'm not telling you which one it is, but I remember when he was a kid, he had the habit of putting his spoon and trying to get about a bucket full on one spoon too, down in his plate, and then he bring it up right up upside down. And if he had mashed potatoes, he may have rescued some of them, but the floor got most of them. Well, that's the way sometimes we do, but it's better to do that when you're trying to feed yourself than never learn to do it. Know the word of God, know what it says. May I suggest that many of the liberal churches that are now liberal once were fundamentalist, and probably wouldn't be liberal if the people knew the word of God? It's important that you know it. That you love it, that you know it, that you obey it. I don't think the word of Christ can live in us fully, and as

James T. Jeremiah  
The Indwelling Ministry of the Spirit  
May 11, 1976

the word teaches here, unless we're willing to obey what the word of God says, take it at face value, walk in its direction. Do what it says.

James T. Jeremiah:

We hear a lot about the victorious Life. We used to have, I used to have people in my church, especially in the first one I served, that went off to Victorious Life conferences. The only thing about it that bothered me, I never saw any victory. They came back home from the Victorious Life as lacking in victory as they did when they went. I never could figure that out. Bothered me a little bit. Still does. But, there is a simple key that Christian living, it's not very glamorous. Won't give you any great names in the field of theology, but here it is. Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey. Very simple. You sing it. It's imperative that we do it.

James T. Jeremiah:

The word Of Christ cannot dwell in us richly without us declaring it. And when that happens in our lives, as we submit to the Lord and to his word, the spirit of God will control us, use us, make us a blessing to others. The scripture we read from John indicates that we not only need to live the life scripturally, biblically, if the spirit of God is to control us, but also, we are to live it confidently or dependently. And we find that back in John again, John 7:37-39, where Jesus said, "If any man thirsts, and man has an appetite..." One of the reasons why a lot of people have taken off to the charismatic movement is because they're thirsty and they're hungry. And they've gone some place to find the satisfaction to the thirst, and I'm afraid that eventually they're going to be more thirsty than they were before.

James T. Jeremiah:

God's son said, "If any man thirst, let him approach me. If he has an appetite, let him come to me to have it satisfied, and appropriate to drink, and out of his innermost beings shall flow rivers." Abundant life, you see, living water. "If any man thirst, let him come onto me and drink." Friend, that's it. And the drinking isn't taking a little swallow three days after your baptism and forgetting it for the rest of your natural life. There's one thing about the Christian life. If you have it, it shows. If you are in Christ and Christ is in you, you'll grow. I'm very much concerned about professing Christians who are no farther along in the Christian life than they were the day they walked the aisle to make profession of their faith in the Savior. Their lives aren't any different, their attitudes aren't any different, their language isn't any different. Their companions aren't any different. Their way of living isn't any different. The reason is they aren't any different, because Christ is not living in them.

James T. Jeremiah:

"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink," so we live dependently upon him, and out of the innermost being of that individual, through his life, there will be evidence of the presence of Christ and the presence of the Spirit in his life. I'd like to talk about the word feeling in the book of Acts, but I'm going to go onto another thought, be finished in just a minute. I'm convinced if the spirit of God is going to control us and we're going to have the flowing of the rivers of water, we need to live carefully. There are two verses in the Bible that make that clear. There are two things we Christians can do to the Holy Spirit that I'm sure you've heard often from this pulpit, and you studied it in your Bibles, and probably do not need anything beyond this, but I must mention it. We must live carefully.

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James T. Jeremiah  
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May 11, 1976

The word of God says in Ephesians 4:30, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you're sealed unto the day of redemption." Now, let me talk about that a minute to make a couple of things clear about it. First of all, I want you to know that that doesn't say grieve the Holy Spirit away. I like to also to mention that the word 'grief' can only happen in the realm of love. You don't grieve the devil. He hates. Don't grieve it. You may antagonize him. You may open yourself to his temptation, but you don't grieve him. You grieve the Holy Spirit. It's a love word. Love is grieved. My friend, when we grieve the spirit of God, he doesn't leave us.

James T. Jeremiah:

It's possible for a Christian to be so miserable that perhaps he may wish he would, but he doesn't. It's possible for a Christian in his disobedience and his sin to be more miserable than a sinner who's never been saved, because he's grieved the Holy Spirit. You say, "Well, how can we do it?" Well, in the context of that verse, there are several ways. I read this last night. Let me read it again. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby your seal unto the day of redemption. Bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil-speaking be put away from you with all malice." Bad language, bad attitude. Sin can grieve him. Let me ask you something. How large a pig was necessary to defile a Jewish temple? Did it have to be four or five years old, or could have been just a wee little piglet? If it was pork, if it was pork, it defiled the temple regardless of the size.

James T. Jeremiah:

Sometimes, we have the idea the only thing that ever causes grief to the spirit of God is some great sin that Christians committed. And sometimes, the things, the little things we do, causes grief. "Let the peace of God umpire in your hearts," Paul said to the Colossians. What's that mean? And every time we believers do something that's wrong, he umpires. And there's a lack of peace. We need sometimes to take note of that. Make sure that it's what it is and not just a feeling over some physical need, grieving the spirit of God. He won't leave us. He'll stay. He'll stay, thank God, and make us miserable until we get right with God. There are some blessings in misery. That's one of them. What a tragedy it would be if he just left? He doesn't.

James T. Jeremiah:

Then, in Thessalonians chapter five, 1 Thessalonians 5:19, he says, "Quench not the spirit." Now, that's a word relating to fire. You quench a fire. You don't quench a water fountain. You quench a fire. How can you quench a fire? Well, you can leave it alone, just let it burn out. Just quench him. He won't leave you, but the light and the heat, when we want it all to be quench him. Some of us came from the country. I'm sure you can tell that. And I'm glad I did. Twelve years, I spent on the farm. Twelve of the best years of my life as a youngster. I know what it meant for the old wood stove to be quenched. When I failed to bring in the wood, it got quenched. It went out. Leave it alone, neglect the Christian life, friend, just drift on, drift on in dreamland, without being serious about this matter of commitment to Christ.

James T. Jeremiah:

You can quench a fire by pouring water on it, by willfully doing something that you know is against God's word. You can quench the fire by using a non-combustible material, cluttering up your life with worldliness, sin, self-ambitions, and so on. God wants us to use combustible materials in our lives, that which will produce light and life and heat and warmth. Let's live carefully. One more thing. When the spirit of God controls us, we can live courageously. Acts 1:8: "And you shall receive power. After that,



James T. Jeremiah  
The Indwelling Ministry of the Spirit  
May 11, 1976

the Holy Ghost has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me, both, B-O-T-H, one and the same time, Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the uttermost part, extreme parts of the world." Live courageously.

James T. Jeremiah:

Let me put those two verses together. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be controlled by the Spirit." "You shall receive power. After that, the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me." There's a real relationship here. As an intoxicated person lacks nothing in expressing whatever he thinks, so a controlled person who's controlled by the spirit of God will express what God gives him to say without fear of what will happen. One of the greatest needs in our day in our time is for God's people to realize the importance of being what God's word says we ought to be. "Ye shall receive power. After that, the Holy Ghost is come upon you," and he has come upon you if he has come in you. "And you shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the uttermost parts of the earth."

James T. Jeremiah:

Most of us are willing that our witnessing to be done by proxy. Most of us are willing to have our missionary business taken care of across the sea by somebody we send. But that isn't what that verse says. Out yonder beyond these walls, there are multiplied thousands of people going to hell without Christ. How can we sit idly by and do nothing about reaching them when we know that's true and when we're told we are to be controlled by the spirit of God and when he comes upon us, we shall be witnesses? I know why we don't do it. We're afraid. And I want to tell you, friend, I am too. I want to be honest with you. It isn't easy to go up to somebody and start a conversation about leading them to Christ.

James T. Jeremiah:

Let me give you a word of encouragement. The worst thing that could ever happen to you if you went out visiting and called on somebody, invite them to Christ, is that they'd kill you. The worst thing could happen. So what? What's new? Absent from the body, present with the Lord, you know? "Well, that doesn't encourage me. I don't get encouraged about that." I'm just trying to tell you about the worst thing. But, I can guarantee there haven't been more than five people in the last six months that have died in Kentucky because they witnessed. I don't know if anybody has. Ye shall receive power. Connect that with Romans 1:16. Paul said, "I'm not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth: the Jew, first, also the Greek."

James T. Jeremiah:

That word 'power' in Romans 1:16 and Acts 1:8 is the same one. And I'm not sure it's the word from which we get 'dynamite' but it sounds like it. Dunamis. Sounds like it. And dynamites, pretty weak stuff in our day of atomic energy. But, I want to tell you, friend, the dynamite of the gospel of God's grace is sufficient to reach down and touch that heart of that sinner that you're praying for and witnessing to and pleading with God to save. The same power that enables you to talk to him is the power God uses to save him. It's there.

James T. Jeremiah:

James T. Jeremiah  
The Indwelling Ministry of the Spirit  
May 11, 1976

Do we believe it, you, here without Christ tonight, lost in your sin? I'm hopeless. I've heard preaching all my life. I can tell you one day when you won't hear it. When you're dead in hell. I can tell you when you won't hear it. When the silence comes on the church, if we continue to drift in the area we're going today. The devil will put it out of business. You will be without hope, but Jesus died for your sin. He wants to save you and make you a new creature by that power that raised his son from the dead. Will you trust him? Will you receive him? There's power to transform your life if you let him do it.