

LIVING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT THE PIERCING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (PART 2)

Last week we saw the piercing work of the Holy Spirit to renew us.
We are washed in the righteousness of God.

The Holy Spirit transforms our sin into righteousness.

The piercing presence of the Holy Spirit begins in people with no hope.

By His piercing washing or regeneration I receive hope of eternal life.

The Holy Spirit penetrates the sinful life with forgiveness.

Through His piercing we become a new creation of grace in Jesus.

That is the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior (v. 4)

The Holy Spirit pierced my life with His renewing presence.

But that is just the beginning of Holy Spirit's piercing.

I welcome His piercing every day.

I cannot spiritually survive without His daily, continuous piercing.

My deeds cannot change me or renew me.

Paul made that clear in 3:5.

But a life pierced by the Spirit no longer lives for themselves.

A life pierced by the Spirit lives for God and for others.

A life pierced by the Spirit fulfills the law.

A life pierced by the Spirit loves God and loves neighbours.

"The saying is sure. ... those who have believed in God may be careful to apply themselves to good deeds; these are excellent and profitable to men." (Titus 3:8)

The person living in Christ enters the spiritual warfare.

We confront the spiritual darkness of this world.

We enter into the work that Jesus began, setting captives free.

Bringing sight to the blind.

Set at liberty those who are oppressed.

Preach good news to the poor.

This is all spiritual work.

We find ourselves engaged with the enemy of people's souls.

For that battle Paul tells the believer to put on the whole armor of God.

We are in a spiritual battle with the spiritual hosts of wickedness.

Part of the armor for this spiritual battle includes a sword.

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication." (Ephesians 6:17-18a)

The writer of Hebrews said the sword of the Spirit is the word.

The Holy Spirit pierces with the living word.

It is a sharp two-edged sword.

There can be no good deeds without the armor of God.

We will be consumed by the battle without the armor.

By the piercing of the Spirit the believer goes into the world.

Jesus told the parable of the one who sows seeds in the world.

Jesus then explained the parable of the sower in Luke 8:11-15.

It was a parable about the piercing of the word of God.

It was a parable about the piercing of the sword of the Spirit.

The seed is the word that penetrates the heart.

Sometimes the word falls on the path and the devil takes it away.

Other times the word is received with joy but doesn't develop roots.
When temptation comes they fall away.

The word is heard but cares, riches, pleasures choke it.

But the word can also fall on receptive soil.

Receptive soil is a heart that is pierced by the word.

The sword of the Spirit the word, is heard and held.

And by patience the word brings forth fruit.

In all instances there is contact with the word.

But only by the piercing of the Spirit does the heart bear fruit.

Listen to this testimony of the piercing work of the Holy Spirit.

Almost 20 years ago I gave a drunk guy named Kevin a brand new [More Than a Carpenter](#) book.

I had already fruitlessly shared Jesus with him and his drinking buddies.

Between the F-bombs, he promised to read it.

I shared the message with him because God put him on my heart.

I was walking past him and his two drunk friends at a shopping mall.

God just moved in me to tell these complete strangers about Jesus.

It seemed like a complete bomb at the time.

I remember thinking that I just wasted that perfectly good book.

This guy will never read it.

Boy was I wrong!

Ten years later he walked into my office.

He threw his marked up edition of Josh McDowell's classic book on my desk.

He said, "I read it. I trusted in Jesus.

"Now I carry 40 of those in the trunk of my car.

"I hand them out to the young people I meet."

Who knows how many will be in heaven as a result.

The Spirit prompts us to scatter seeds of hope wherever we go.

Someday we will meet those we shared with and the fruit from their faith.

And be shocked at the difference all those conversations made!

Paul said to Titus, "And let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not to be unfruitful." (Titus 3:14)

The piercing work of the Holy Spirit makes our life fruitful.

Peter wrote, "You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of

imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God." (1 Peter 1:23)

James said, "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth that we

should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures." (James 1:18)

When the Holy Spirit pierces we are sowers of the word of God.

But the word of God can only pierce lives by the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit implants what is sown into the heart.

The result of the piercing in my life is God's life springing up.

There is an abundance of soil where the seed can be sown.

There are human hearts all around us.

People who need the Gospel are everywhere.

And we have sufficient seed to sow.

The word of God sown by the Spirit does not return void.

As sowers we are desperately dependent on the power of the Spirit.

That is what Nehemiah experienced.

He heard about the trouble and shame those living in Jerusalem experienced.

The wall of Jerusalem was broken down.

The gates of the city were destroyed by fire.

Something happened to Nehemiah when he received that word.

"When I heard these words I sat down and wept, and mourned for days; and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven." (Nehemiah 1:4)

The Holy Spirit moved deeply into Nehemiah's life.

Things could not stay the same.

The piercing was so intense that the king saw it.

"And the king said to me, 'Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing else but sadness of the heart.'" (Nehemiah 2:2)

Nehemiah could not stay where he was.

He had to leave Babylon, no matter what it cost him.

The king could have killed Nehemiah when he asked to leave.

Nehemiah was prepared to accept that decision.

He had been pierced to the heart.

It was either do or die.

For some bizarre reason the king blessed Nehemiah with materials and safety.

After being in Jerusalem for three days he began inspecting the city.

"Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me; and I told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem." (Nehemiah 2:11)

His heart had been penetrated by God's Spirit.

And so the work began in spite of intense opposition.

There were people who resisted and taunted.

But Nehemiah had been pierced by the Spirit.

He refused to get tangled up in disputes and controversies.

Paul said to Titus, **"But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels over the law, for they are unprofitable and futile. As for the man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self-condemned."**

Nehemiah's heart had been stirred and he refused to stop.

Every day Sanballat and Tobiah resisted his work.

They taunted him and threatened him.

They were angry.

They plotted against Nehemiah.

They tried to discourage and distract him.

But Nehemiah had been pierced by the Spirit.

He refused to enter into debate with them and engage them.

"Then I replied to them, 'The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we His servants will arise and build; but you have no portion or right or memorial in Jerusalem.'" (Nehemiah 2:20)

"Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, 'Come and let us meet together in one of the villages in the plain of Ono.' But they intended to do me harm. And I sent messengers to them, saying, 'I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?' And they sent to me four times in this way and I answered them in the same manner." (6:2-4)

Within 52 days the physical work of rebuilding was complete.

But there was still spiritual work to be done.

It wasn't enough to restore a city.

A people had to be restored.

Their hearts had been destroyed, they were a nation that needed God.

People's hearts needed to return to the Lord.

So Nehemiah gathered the people together.

And the word of the Lord was brought out and read before the people.

The people were attentive to the book of the Law.

"For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law." (Neh. 8:9)

Nehemiah understood the working of the Holy Spirit.

He prayed for the people that they would know the piercing joy of the Lord.

"You are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them. ... You gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, and did not withhold Your manna from their mouth, and gave them water for their thirst. Forty years You sustained them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing; their clothes did not wear out and their

feet did not swell. And You gave them kingdoms.” (Neh. 9:17b, 20-22a).

That resulted in renewed commitment to God’s covenant with them.

They discovered the joy of the Lord was their strength (8:10).

“And they offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off.” (Nehemiah 12:43)

Has your heart been pierced by the Spirit like Nehemiah?

That is the great need of the church today.

God’s Kingdom moves forward only by the piercing of the Spirit.

“God, break our hearts with what breaks Yours.”

One person said, “I want to be part of a church that lives out the Gospel of Christ everyday, not just talks about Him one day a week.”

Is that your desire?

It will be as the Holy Spirit pierces you.

“And let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not to be unfruitful.” (3:14)

“Our people have to learn to be diligent in their work so that all necessities are met (especially among the needy) and they don’t end up with nothing to show for their lives.” (The Message)

We will have nothing to show for our life in Christ if we are not pierced by the Spirit.

When is the last time the Spirit pierced?

When did you last read God’s word and feel you were being ripped apart?

When was the last time you did a selfless act of kindness for the least?

That is Jesus’ call to His followers.

“Nevertheless many even of the authorities believed in Him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (John 12:42-43)

O Holy Spirit, pierce our hearts that that may never be said of us!