What is the Holy Spirit’s Ministry to the Church? Part 1b

By Charles Feinberg

[Audio Starts at 4:15]

Charles Feinberg:

Thus far in this message which is the first part of two studies or messages on two tapes thus far and the question, "What is the Holy Spirit's ministry to the church?" We've seen that it's regeneration and baptism but there's still more. the Holy Spirit of God in his wonderful work not only regenerates, not only baptizes but beautiful, blessed thought, he indwells. He indwells the believer. He indwells everyone who has been regenerated, who has been baptized into the body of Christ. What do we mean? From the moment of regeneration the spirit of God Never, please write that in all capital letters on your heart, in your mind, He never leaves the believer. I have seen some dear children of God definitely have known the Lord, and I believe still did know the Lord, There were in great agony. They thought they had been forsaken. They had been abandoned by the spirit of God. That's not true. We read in Hebrews, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee".

And what do we read? Does the scripture ever say that he's going to leave us, the Holy Spirit? Well let's read. After all, all this truth is not man made. It is truth from God, Let's get the source. Let's get the message right from God. John 14:16 and 17. Those verses are the Lord Jesus speaking to his own in The Upper Room Discourse. He said, "and I will ask the Father and He will give you another helper that he may be with you forever. That is the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive". Well, you say, if he's just going to be with us forever that's not indwelling
is it? Well we're not through with the verses yet. Because he says, “that spirit of truth the world doesn't receive", because it doesn't behold him. It's not just some abstract spirit, it's a capital S, The Spirit of God, Spirit of Truth. The world doesn't receive him because it doesn't behold him, it does it see him, it doesn't know him, it hasn't experienced him in the heart of hearts. "But you know him because he abides with you", Notice the change now, "and will be in you". That's what we mean by indwelling. In you. As a matter of fact, friends. That is the actual theme of that marvelous epistle in the New Testament that's been called the Alps of the New Testament, Ephesians. In you and Colossians says, "Christ in you is the hope of glory". In you is identification, that's what's meant in John 15. I in you and you in me. Christ is Indwelling, The Holy Spirit is indwelling. And here we have it, "He will be in you as he is now abiding with you." contrast that if you want to see the marvelous blessing of it.

Contrast that with the word of King David After he'd sinned and in his confession, Psalm 51. Beautiful chapter, marvelous outpouring of the heart of a dear man of God who sinned very grievously but definitely had come to know that God could give forgiveness and pardon. He said when he was in an agony and had not yet confessed, his moisture, that's his vital strength and vigor were dried up as a piece of pottery, as an earthenware. He cried to the Lord, "Do not cast me away from thy presence". My dear friends that is something that no believer today needs to pray. We are not cast away from thy presence. Well you say could David have been? Well we don't know that exactly, that he would be cast away from God's presence. He would be chastised, brought back into fellowship but he had not yet been told the marvelous truth about the great indwelling power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Oh he was born again of the Spirit of God. Nobody in the world has ever been saved without that. Adam was saved that way, Abraham, Genesis 15:6, "He believed God and it was counted unto him as righteousness". 1 Samuel 16:14,
now that was a prayer of King David Psalm 51:11 listen to King Saul for Samuel 16:14, "Now the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul. Now that's not just a prayer that might be on the part of King David in Psalm 51. Here is an actual fact indicated by the spirit of the Lord by the sacred writer. The writer I believe in first Samuel was Samuel himself. "Now the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and an evil spirit from the Lord terrorized him", that's the contrast. Contrast Psalm 51:11, put it down, 1 Samuel 16:14 with the marvelous verses, John 14:16-17, "He will be with you forever". Emphasize that forever. You know him because he's abiding with you and he will be in you. He was dwelling with you now he's dwelling in you. Yes. Is there any other portion of Scripture that tells us that? Oh how Paul goes into that again and again in the first Epistle to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 3:16. And these are passages, friends, that if you want to have joy in your Christian life you should be memorizing them. At least you should know where to find them so that they may minister joy and comfort to you.

1 Corinthians 3:16 we read, "Do you not know that you are a temple", each one of you, "A temple of God?" What makes you that? That the Spirit of God dwells in you, emphasize in you. That's what makes you a temple of God. In Ephesians You have been made a temple of God, a habitation of God through the spirit. He dwells in you, a habitation is a dwelling place. How? He says why is it that you don't realize that you are a temple of God? You don't dare to carry on all kinds of immorality and all kinds of life that are not pleasing to the Lord because you are made a temple of God by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 6:19 the same truth, "Do you not know", he expected them to know. And he said from all indications you do not know, you haven't realized in the way you should. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit? Notice, the temple of God now called the Temple of the Holy Spirit because the spirit of God, the Holy Spirit is God, you see. "It's a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you".
Notice again, "in you whom you have from God". You didn't work that up yourself. You have him in you and you are not your own, you belong to him. Definitely belong to that blessed one, god because he has his Holy Spirit dwelling in you.

Listen to Romans 8:9. That great, great chapter. A high water mark of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans. He says, "However you're not in the flesh". Some people are in the flesh they just live in a certain realm. All they think of are things of flesh. What will bring them comfort as to the physical body? What will make them feel good emotionally? What will make them feel good mentally? Those are the deeds of the flesh. They just think of themselves. No thought for God. You're not in the flesh, you're not in that realm, but in the spirit. IN the spirit, notice, "if indeed the spirit of God dwells in you". Are you sure that you've made the actual choice that God has indicated to you? If anyone doesn't have the spirit of Christ, if he isn't testifying to you that you are his, because his spirit bears witness with our spirits. God's Spirit bears witness with ours that we are the children of God. If anyone doesn't have the spirit of Christ, ah he doesn't belong to him. We're not the sons of God, Romans 8:9.

And then notice 1 Corinthians 12:3, "Therefore I make known to you no one speaking by the spirit of God says Jesus is accursed". You wouldn't talk that way. The Spirit of God dwelling in you is a wonderful restrainer. He will not allow a believer to call Christ cursed. No one can say Jesus is Lord either except by the Holy Spirit, that is to say and really mean it. Oh he controls the Heart, The Life. No Christian should ask now for the spirit. Some people teach that, that you can ask and you should ask, you should pray for the Holy Spirit. That's wrong. Well they say haven't you ever read Luke Chapter 11 verses 5 to 13, especially verses 11 to 13? We read, "Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish. He'll not give him a snake instead of a fish will he?" even though they may look alike. The fellow, the child may be a little fella but
even though he may not differentiate, he wouldn't give him a snake for a fish, will he? Of course not. "Or if he's asked for an egg he won't give him a scorpion Will he? He won't give him something harmful. If a child asked the father for a piece of bread. He wouldn't give him a straight razor would he? He would not give him a scorpion will he? "If you then, being evil", because we're sinners, "Know how to give good gifts to your children Out of love, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?" Now they were asking for him in that day. Why? Because the Holy Spirit had not yet come as on Pentecost. They were to wait for the promise of the Father. The promise of the father had not yet been given In Luke 11. Christ had not yet gone to the cross he said, "if I don't go away the father won't send him and I won't, When I reach the father, I will send him and if I don't go away to the right hand to the father he won't come".

And then well some say maybe John 20:22 is for us. Ah, before our Lord Jesus left, this is after the crucifixion. And it is, what is it? It is a temporary endowment to carry them over, "And when he had said this he breathed on them and said to them", these are his disciples it wasn't everybody. "He breathed them and said to them, 'receive the Holy Spirit.'" Now if that had been sufficient, you wouldn't have needed Acts 2 where he came in a new way and baptized them into the body of Christ, receive the Holy Spirit. No that's not applicable in our age, John 20:22, any more than Luke 11:11-13 is applicable today. You mean we don't ask for the indwelling? No we don't. Why not? Well as Dr. Fischer, Great man of God, once wrote to his friend Lord Eldan, asked him for a special favor. Lord Eldan sat down and said Dear Fisher, he wrote him, "Dear Fischer, I cannot today give you the favor, the position, which you ask. I remain your sincere friend Eldan. Please turn over the page. Then on the other side he wrote, I gave it to you yesterday." Our Heavenly Father similarly answers his children when they ask him
for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, "I've already done that". What would a wife, a loving wife, think of her husband if after five years of marriage, ten years of marriage, if after six months of marriage, or even less two weeks of marriage, if he should come to her and say, "Oh will you please give me the inestimable joy of having you as my wife?" She'd say, "What's the matter with you? Has your memory gone wrong? Do you remember the wedding? Don't you remember the great joy that was ours? You've already had my answer on that", and so here. Yes, "I gave it to you yesterday", said this Alden to Dr. Fischer. I repeat our Heavenly Father similarly answers his children when they ask him for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Look at 2 Corinthians 3:18, "We all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror of the glory of the Lord, are being transformed in the same image from glory to glory just as from the Lord, the Spirit". How could that happen if we are not indwelt by the spirit? He's in us and that's why he is changing our lives. As little as we may realize it, he is changing our lives into the image of Christ. That's what we read in Romans 8, that God had that marvelous son. He has him yet, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he was so satisfied with him, loved him, He wanted many, many like him. And so "we are in him to be conformed unto the image of his son that he might be the firstborn among many brethren". Well you can't do that by tacking on certain agenda outwardly. No, No. Not a change of uniform or apparel, it has to be something done inwardly.

So we read in Romans 8:29, "for whom he foreknew, he also predestined to become conformed to the image of his son that he might be the first born among many brethren. Now when I was born into the family with my name some years ago as I went on and grew I didn't keep thinking when I came to reflective years, "now I've got to act like a member of his family. I've got to try to be a member of this family. I've got to do things the way they do them and speak the way they speak". No, I would never have to do that to become one of them because being one
of them I would already do that. Suppose somebody would say, "I'd give anything if I had the hands of a Paderewski, if I had the mind of a Paderewski, if I had the talent of a Paderewski, that beautiful, beautiful genius of a pianist, the Polish Paderewski". But suppose it were possible for Paderewski to come into the mind, into the heart, into the body of that person who wanted to play like Paderewski. If that person were indwelt by Paderewski he could see the keyboard the way Paderewski did, his fingers could work the way Paderewski’s fingers did. His mind would direct the way the mind of Paderewski does. Don't you see? Indwelling makes all the difference in the world. It becomes not only second nature, it becomes first nature.

The spirit is in us, beloved, to conform us, to shape us according to the son by the renewing of our minds. We are not just transformed, that's an outward deal. The scripture says in Romans 12:1-2 we are transfigured. We are transfigured, that’s it. What is the Holy Spirit do for us? As individuals in the church, for believers? Regenerates, baptizes, he indwells. And then there is another ministry that we want to dwell on yet in this message, and that is his sealing, SEALING. What is the meaning of sealing? When you take a package and if it's not of much worth, you may not seal it very tightly. Or an envelope with a letter, you have a carbon of it. You're not worried that you have to put a particular type of glue on it, and the like. The mucilage that's there from the post office will suffice. But if there is a very important message in that letter you want it sealed. If there's money, a check in it for instance, no money should be sent through the mail. But if there's a check in it, you might even put some scotch tape in sealing it and folk do that with many things that are near and dear to them. They'll seal up a certain dwelling. Kings used to seal their letters with the royal seal. And we are sealed. Who is this seal? The Holy Spirit does the sealing, this is his ministry, and the Holy Spirit Himself is the seal. He is the seal, or the performer of this operation and he is the seal. How do you know? Ephesians 1:13 and 14, Hear
it, Oh these are some of the most beautiful words in all the Bible "in him", In Christ, "you also after listening", Notice the first step, "listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation", not some truth about secular history or psychology or philosophy or any other area of human learning. "After listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having also believed what did you do first? Listen, believed what happened? Step number 3, you were sealed in him with the Holy Spirit of promise who has given as a pledge the first down payment, what we call the earnest. You want to buy something, you give it as an earnest money, you want to seal a contract. "Who was given as a pledge of our inheritance with a view to the redemption of Gods own possession”. The full amount of it's going to be given later on. We have the first down payment, we are going to see the full payment of it when we get to the glory, to the praise of his glory. Ephesians 1:13-14. And then Ephesians 4:30, "do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God", you'll remember in our earlier study we saw the Holy Spirit must be a person because you can't grieve an abstraction. "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed", S E A L E D, "for the day of redemption". That's not all, in Galatians 4:6, "because you are sons, God sent forth the spirit of his son into our hearts, Crying", what are the telltale signs? How do we know that a person is sealed? Why when he talks to God he says, "Abba", that's the Aramaic, "Abba, father". The Aramaic and father is a translation of the Greek parterre. Yes Both Jew and Gentile saved have the same way of addressing their precious Heavenly Father. Romans 8:14-16, "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, These are the sons of God. For you haven't received a spirit of slavery or bondage leading to fear again", But like in a family, "you have received a spirit of adoption as sons, by which we cry out", in prayer or even in rejoicing, in adoration, "Abba Father". The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we're children of God. Notice how beautifully the sealing takes place. And 2 Timothy 2:19 and 21, look at the
both sides of this coin, Nevertheless the firm foundation of God stands. Oh God's work doesn't wobble, doesn't waver, it doesn't shift, it doesn't fluctuate. It's a firm foundation, it stands. Well what is it? It has this seal. Oh, I see it, God sealed it. The Lord knows those who are his, "I can tell that's mine". Remember how in days when you lived away from home and all the laundry was put into one pile? You remember how you had to have your own laundry marking? You could tell it by the seal on it. Yes we should be able to be told from everyone, we should be recognized separate from the unsaved in the world by the seal of the law. The Lord knows those who are his.

Well you say, Well then let's not worry about anything we can just live any way. Wait a moment. That's not where the passage ends. The Lord knows those who are his. Well how's anybody else going to know it on the outside? Ah here's the other side of the coin. "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness act like it". You are sealed, act like a sealed one. Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, that's pottery. Some to honor and some to dishonor some, for instance, you use to make your food, vessels like that. Others you may use as a pail to scrub the floor or to wash down the driveway. Some to honor some to dishonor, well that's not such great honor. Therefore if a man cleanses himself from these things, that is things that are dishonoring, he'll be a vessel for honor, sanctified, set apart, useful to the master. Oh, beautiful words, "useful to the master". That's a life motto, friend. UTTM, put it down, make it a life motto. "Useful to the master, prepared for every good work". Now what is a seal for? I've indicated it, it's for a twofold purpose, to indicate divine ownership. You've got God's name on you, you belong to him. And to ensure the believer's security. Things won't wobble out, the package won't break loose. You've sealed it right. You've put enough scotch tape on it. You’ve put enough masking tape on it.
You've put enough and oh they get some things today, I get some packages from publishers and the like and I have to admit to you I despair of ever being able to get the contents out. You have to use a scissor, I've tried to use screwdriver and all, and they really are secure. They're right, what would a book like that be worth if it began to be bounced around and the edges of it became dog-eared or all broken open? It's to ensure security and here we are divinely owned and we are divinely secured.

A dear Negro brother, he'd accepted the Lord, he didn't know much about theology, but he knew the Lord. He'd accepted the Lord Jesus as his savior. He knew what it meant to belong to the Lord Jesus, it meant everything to him. And he wasn't ashamed to tell whom he belonged. He used to say in moments of trial or temptation, somebody asked him once, "You're just a young believer and you seem to be so happy and walking so circumspectly and properly before the Lord. Aren't you tried? Aren't you tempted? What do you do in times like that?" He said, "Well I'm not perfect, far from it. I'm not sinless but I tell you, in moments of trial or temptation I just simply look up to heaven and I say, 'Master, your property be in danger.' And God sure knows how to take care of his property. Yes, we're sealed. We're not only regenerated with the spirit of God, we're not only baptized by the spirit of God, not only indwelt, but we're sealed as well.

With regard to these ministries, the believer needs to become aware of them, lay hold of them by simple faith thanking God fervently for them and especially for the blessed Holy Spirit. The great, as he's been called, the great executive, the great administrator of the godhead. And I want to say before I close, a very important truth. Regeneration is once for all. You need to be born again but not born again and again and again, it's not a broken record. Regeneration is once for all. Baptism is once for all. Indwelling is once for all. Sealing is once for all. Thank God for
the blessed Holy Spirit. Oh may he mean more, evermore in your life and mine. Oh May we study these truths, we'll be talking about error in later studies, May we learn truths about the Holy Spirit and cherish them and seek to walk circumspectly. What a blessed, blessed one is the Holy Spirit. We should be pure because you wouldn't think of putting trash in front of the pulpit in a church. And yet that's only a building, Oh its set apart for a proper purpose. But the real church, the real Temple, is our body. Let's not put all kinds of trash and refuse and garbage there. Remember our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Thanks be unto God for this wonderful gift, not only of Christ, but of that Holy Spirit who is ours. From the moment we believe, he is our portion, he in us.