

March Devotional: And Spiritual Gifts... By Jerry Furniss

Most people think that to live by love is the ultimate goal. Last month we talked about "*living according to the Spirit*". How do these two play together? Love is a commitment to meet the needs of others, but how can you do that without the power of God guiding and directing you properly.

The Great Commission was given in two phases, with two orders. Jesus told the disciples to go into all the world and Preach, which everyone knows for sure, but what else did He say? What was the other half of the Great Commission? Did He not also say, first, "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high?" (Luke 24:49) The disciples were to wait, until Pentecost; until they were anointed with Power... then they were to "Go." And how could they not Go after that... it came so naturally. After the Holy Spirit fell on the disciples at Pentecost they easily went. It was in their blood. It came naturally to preach and share and work for the kingdom. They were filled with the Holy Spirit, transformed by the power of God.

How many churches preach today that unless you are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit you will not be an effective witness for Christ? How many preach it is necessary to be filled with the Holy Spirit, with the Baptism of Fire like the disciples received on Pentecost? Did you forget what Jesus said in the Bible, "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues?" (Mark 16:17).

Many have sacrificed Spiritual Gifts for "Love," when Paul clearly told us to maintain both. "Pursue love, **AND** desire spiritual gifts, but especially the speaking of what God has revealed." 1 Cor. 14:1.

Many have sacrificed Obedience for Belief, when Jesus clearly told us, "Saying Lord, Lord, won't get you into heaven, but DOING the will of the Father "(Matt 7:21).

This is the one that really gets me. Many have sacrificed Righteous Judgment for Tolerance, even though we are clearly taught in scripture "to not keep company with immoral people who call themselves believers" (I Cor. 5:9-13).

And the list goes on and on. So there you go... these are the reasons so few see the truth today. They throw out much of the Bible, sometimes 95%. One verse is all many need today... to confess with your mouth and believe in your heart. I've done that, and that's all I need, right? Case closed, right?. Oh, really? If the Holy Spirit is not guiding you in the truth and the will of God, one can easily deceive themselves. And, as you know, the great deceiver Satan deceives the entire Earth.

Lent is a great time to come to the well to receive a fresh new in-filling of the Holy Spirit. God will keep his promise, will we? Are we ready to put the sinful practices of culture that have encroached into our lives behind us and to claim the new spiritual gifts God has for us? Are we ready to walk in true obedience and to faithfully follow His Word? If so, then there will be no stopping our witness for Christ in the world.

*Now, about our monthly devotionals... we are open to comments. Please send any thoughts or suggestions to my email below. If you would like to submit a devotional or comment, please contact me at: geraldfu@comcast.net