

Christ in Resurrection

Part 1

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[00:00:00] Well, it's certainly good to be back with you again after an absence of four years. Shall we turn together to Luke chapter 24?

The world can never be the same now that Christ has suffered and died on the cross of Calvary. Everything has changed. God has seen fit to change everything so that every knee is going to bow to the name of the Lord Jesus in a coming day. A wonderful thing now to bow to Him and receive Him as Savior. And it's good to know of every soul here who is saved by the grace of God, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who suffered and died on the cross. But now, in this chapter, we are reading of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And I just want to read the last part of the chapter, but I'll give you a few words by way of introduction. [00:01:04] The disciples had last seen the Lord taken from them, subjected to every kind of scorn and abuse and shame, mocked, derided, and then hung up on the cross of Calvary.

And there, suffering agony.

Of course, they didn't know how much He suffered. Couldn't possibly imagine it at the time.

And even later on, even today, you and I don't know how much He suffered there. Nevertheless, we know that He suffered not only as a martyr, not only as being hated by mankind, but He died there for our sins as being judged by God.

However, the disciples then had seen Him taken from them this way. They were absolutely downcast and had no idea that He was going to be raised again. Should they have?

[00:02:02] Of course, they should. The Lord had told them He would be. They couldn't believe it when He died, and wouldn't believe it even when they heard that He was raised. The women who were early at the sepulchre came back and gave the news, and they would not believe it. However, there were two on the way to Emmaus, going back to their own home, whom the Lord drew near to and met one evening.

That afternoon, pardon me.

It was on the same day that He rose from the dead. And the Lord spoke to them, finally made them realize that Christ should suffer and then later enter into His glory.

The sufferings of Christ had to take place first, and then the glory would follow. [00:03:06] However, these two invited Him to come into their home. They didn't know who He was at the time He told them this. They invited Him into their home, and in the breaking of bread He was made known to them. He took bread and broke it. He took the place of the host, which of course was not exactly becoming for anyone except the Lord. And when they saw this, they recognized Him.

And immediately He vanished out of their sight. Now, the reason He vanished out of their sight is simple. It's a wonderful thing to have the Lord Jesus come and have an interview with us. But it's a much more important thing that we should be gathered with the Lord's people. And they recognized that. And they recognized immediately that they should be back in Jerusalem where they had left. [00:04:02] And they went back.

They rose up the same hour of the night and walked all the way back to Jerusalem, perhaps seven or eight miles, and found the disciples gathered together.

And this was absolutely electrifying to them, that Jesus, who had been crucified, now was actually living, raised again from the dead.

What a marvelous thing to even think of this, that He is actually really raised from the dead in bodily form.

Now, they find the disciples gathered together.

And they told what things were done in the way and how He was known of them in breaking of bread.

And as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them and said unto them, Peace be unto you.

[00:05:01] But they were terrified and affrighted and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, Why are you troubled? Why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see.

For a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet. And while they yet believed not for joy and wondered, He said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb. And He took it and did eat before them. And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. [00:06:01] And said unto them, Thus it is written. And thus it behooved Christ to suffer and rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you, that tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endeared with power from on high. And he led them out as far as Bethany. And he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he had blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen. Now, this last part of the gospel is a very beautiful picture of what is actually true of this entire dispensation

in which you and I live.

[00:07:07] God has given us this in order that we might see something of His divine principles as operative today all the way through this present period of time until the day the Lord comes to take His people home to glory. Now, there are some things right on the surface here that I would like to deal with. And first of all, these are the characteristics, then, of the Church of God, the assembly, identified with Christ at the time of His rejection.

What a wonderful thing to be linked with Christ when He is rejected, cast out, and despised by the world. This is the only opportunity we're going to have for it. What we're going to have for it is the only opportunity to suffer with Christ, to be willing to take a place of rejection with the Lord of glory. It's a marvelous honor to be linked with Him while He is rejected and despised. [00:08:06] I really believe it with all my heart. We won't have the opportunity when we're in glory. So right now is the opportunity. Take advantage of it. However, now, in verse 36, they're speaking together in the upper room, and suddenly Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them and said, Peace be unto you.

Now, that would be rather a startling thing to see, wouldn't it? Here, the door is closed, and suddenly the Lord Himself appears in the midst. This is the proper place.

Luke, by the way, uses the term in the midst a number of times. I think if you consult a Greek lectionary, it's ten times.

But at any rate, the first one is the Lord Jesus in the midst of the doctors, [00:09:01] hearing them and asking them questions.

But in the midst speaks of the place of central importance, central attraction.

And so it was at that time in the first case and near the last case. Now, there are others in the midst all the way through because attention is sometimes drawn to people because they're in need. And they're put in the midst. Remember, the man with the withered hand was told to stand forth in the midst. Now, whether he liked it or not, he had to do it. But you see, he was in need, and when his need was met, he didn't have the place in the midst any longer. So the Lord Jesus goes through the whole gospel practically and showing people set aside, many in the midst for a brief time, and eventually the Lord Jesus now Himself being in the midst, but no longer in His body of flesh and blood.

[00:10:05] Now in a body of flesh and bones, as He tells them here. Now He comes, stands suddenly in the midst, says, Peace be unto you. And were they very peaceful? I should say not. Just the opposite. But the first point that I want to press is this. Jesus in the midst.

I hope we all realize that it's a most marvelous thing that when believers are gathered together to the name of the Lord Jesus, when it's actually to His name, He has promised, There am I in the midst of them. And to really sense the Lord's presence is a marvelous thing for every one of us. He has a place of absolute supremacy. Give the Lord that place. I'm sure it's a vitally important matter for every one of us. As we come to gather in the Lord's people, to remember He Himself has the place of absolute supremacy in everything. [00:11:06] He's there in the midst to draw the attention, the hearts of every one of His people. Now, peace be unto you. It would speak of His seeking to give them calmness, quietness in His presence. He doesn't want anyone to be ill at ease in His own divine

presence.

Now, the second point is, He asks them, Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold, my hands and my feet, that is I myself. Handle me and see. For a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. I believe that this is the first time we read the Lord Jesus, using those words. Peace be unto you.

Why? He had accomplished peace by the death of the cross. He can announce it to them.

And, however, they were terrified, afraid.

[00:12:03] They didn't understand. Hey, this must be a spirit.

And they suppose they had seen a spirit. Well, I suppose probably some of us would be rather troubled too if the Lord just suddenly appeared and amazed us. Actually, we should be full of unspeakable joy if that were the case. But, at any rate, He said, Why are you troubled? Why do thoughts arise in your heart? Is there anyone here now who would be really troubled if the Lord Jesus suddenly appeared here in the room?

Would it bother you?

Would you be afraid?

Frightened to see Him?

He doesn't want you that way. If you're a non-believer, I can imagine you would be afraid. And you should be afraid. But if you're a believer, what a different thing. Anyone who is really born again should be glad at the prospect [00:13:02] of just beholding the glory and beauty of the face of the Lord Jesus. We're looking for Him.

Aren't you looking for Christ to come? Wouldn't it be a marvelous thing if He should come right now and translate believers home to His own glory? Well, it certainly would. But, why are you troubled? Why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Now, He said, Behold my hands and my feet. It is I, myself.

Handle me and see.

A shirt doesn't have flesh and bones as you see that I have. Now, here was an actual literal body of flesh and bones. The Lord had died, yes.

That body had gone into the grave. It was the same body that came out of the grave. Now, it was in an altered condition because He said a body of flesh and bones.

And there were nail prints in His hands still, not just scars.

[00:14:03] The nail prints had not been healed over. Now, blood, of course, in the body would have healed it. It would have worked, at least, to the healing of those wounds. But, however, here are the nail prints. He says, Handle me and see. A spirit has no flesh and bones as you see that I have.

Now, the fact of the Lord Jesus being actually literally raised in bodily form is something that many, many souls just cannot accept, or they will not accept.

But, thank God, it's as true as can be. I know there's one group of people who claim to be Christian, and they're absolutely not. They're on totally false ground. But they say this, that actually it wasn't really a real bodily form in which the Lord appeared there. It was just an apparition for the time being, [00:15:03] so that the Lord just wanted to show them that He was raised. But He was only raised spiritually, and His body evidently evaporated in gases after this.

You know what a horrible thing. As much as to say the Lord is not actually trustworthy.

He wasn't deceiving His disciples. He was there showing them absolutely and perfectly. Yes, He does have a bodily form. I know people ask, well, now if that's true, if He has a bodily form, you mean to say He's up there somewhere in the heavens in a body? And I say, yes, He absolutely is.

But where is He?

He's at the right hand of God.

Scripture tells me that.

But as to explaining what that means, that's a very difficult thing. He went up, yes.

He's gone up.

But then some will say to me, yes, but after all, if He went up from Jerusalem, [00:16:05] why, up from Jerusalem is a different direction than up from the United States.

So which direction is it? It doesn't make a particle of difference to me, or to you either.

The fact is, the very fact of His saying up implies He is altogether above us. And it has a moral significance, and a spiritual significance. It's not a question of the actual physical significance.

It's the significance of being infinitely above human understanding.

And that, of course, is true as regards the physical body.

Now, how He'd get through the room, through the walls of the room, in a literal body?

I can't tell you.

But the fact is, He did it.

[00:17:03] He appeared there, and there's no doubt about it. The believer just simply accepts it because it's the truth of God, because the evidence is there as clearly as can be.

God has told us this in His Word. And God's Word stands absolute.

There are many, many other things about the things of God that I don't understand. Many things about God, they're just beyond me.

But I do understand this, that when God speaks, He means it.

And we have the Word of God as clearly as can be.

Well, why are you troubled? If you're troubled at your sins, if you're troubled at the thought of having to face the Lord Jesus, if you're not saved, how are you going to be saved? Look at the Lord Jesus as the One who suffered and died on the cross, the One who was raised from the dead, no longer in the grave, [00:18:02] the One who holds out His hands, as it were, toward you, and invites you to trust Him as your personal Savior.

The disciples here were troubled.

How was their trouble taken away? Look at His hands and His feet.

Has He suffered enough for your sins and mine?

Thank God He has.

So the believer can say, yes, the sufferings of Christ were sufficient to take all my sins away.

I can look at Him, I know Him as the Living One who became dead and is alive forevermore.

So I look at those hands, I look at His feet, His side, all these wounds, they tell me the work is finished and I am accepted in the value of that blessed work of Calvary.

So why be troubled?

[00:19:01] Why are you troubled? Why do thoughts arise in your hearts? The second point is that He wants to give thorough, full assurance to every believer to be absolutely certain that you are saved and saved for eternity. He doesn't want anyone to have the least doubt about that matter. In the Church of God, this is the actual fact of truth.

All those who are members of the Body of Christ, the Church of God, are secured by the grace of God for eternity. So there is a second point. And if you're not clear about that, if you're not absolutely certain that you're saved, don't for a moment rest until you know it and can say, yes, by the grace of God, I know my sins are forgiven by virtue of the sacrifice of Christ. So He showed them His hands and His feet and then He also took a piece of a honeycomb and of a boiled fish and ate it before them.

[00:20:02] Now that was to further prove to them that it was a literal body that the Lord Jesus had here.

Now, of course, I don't suppose it's necessary for the spiritual body to have to eat material food.

But the fact is it was clear that He did it. He was able to do it.

So here was a literal body that actually ate literal food.

I don't think that necessarily implies that in heaven we're going to have to go fishing or anything like that to find food for ourselves. It doesn't imply any such thing.

But at any rate, it was just to show them, to give them the certainty of the fact that He is raised from the dead. Your eternal salvation is vitally bound up with this, [00:21:01] that Christ rose from the dead according to the Scriptures.

How can you be sure you're saved?

A believer can look up and say because Christ is at the right hand of God. Christ has done the work. He's raised. He's no longer dead.

God is satisfied with the work that Christ accomplished and therefore I am accepted in the value of it and blessed for eternity. Now, in verse 44, he told them, These are the words which I spoke unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms concerning me.

That's an important verse, isn't it? All things must be fulfilled which were written throughout the entire Old Testament. The Psalms too? Yes. Many of the Psalms are prophetic of the Lord Jesus.

But, I read in a magazine a while ago [00:22:01] that there was a certain man who thought he was a very wonderful man who claimed that he had 80% of his predictions come true.

You know, that proved something to me. It proved two things to me.

It proved that he was not of God and it proved that he was of Satan. Where did he get his intelligence?

Now, it's not normal manhood to be able to do that, to predict something and make it come true. But, all the predictions concerning Christ were 100% fulfilled. 80% is not good enough.

So, the truth of God is seen only perfectly fulfilled in the person of the Lord Jesus.

Now, all the prophecies that are connected with his first coming [00:23:03] have been fulfilled.

And all the prophecies that are connected with his second coming are going to be fulfilled. And there's no possible doubt about it. So, the Lord Jesus said all these things must be fulfilled.

They're written in the Law of Moses or the Prophets or in the Psalms. All of them must be perfectly fulfilled. Now, I say that the man must have had some contact. That man must have had some contact with evil spirits. Satan does not know the future.

But he makes good guesses. And he can guess at the future in many cases. And so, he's had a lot of experience.

And so, he can communicate this to people too.

Be careful of those kind of people who are foretelling the future. They're very commonly, I think practically in every case, linked with demon worship.

[00:24:02] That is, there are demons behind it. And all of these prognostications and so forth that they give. However, with the Lord Jesus, how wonderful to see everything perfectly fulfilled in Scripture. Verse 45, Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. Now, here's a third point of very real importance. The understanding is opened to understand the Scriptures.

In the Old Testament, believers did not understand even the Old Testament itself.

Old Testament believers didn't understand it. Now, this shows it, doesn't it?

They didn't understand the Old Testament Scriptures. The Lord opened their understanding. You and I, who are believers today, [00:25:01] have a most wonderful position in contrast to those in the Old Testament. We have even more than they had at this time. When he opened their understanding, the point that is important here, and this is the third point, is a vital understanding of the Word of God. When he opened their understanding, he realized on this, that thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day.

Now, this is one reason the disciples didn't understand the Word. They didn't understand prophecy. Why? Because they couldn't accept the fact that prophecy told of the death and resurrection of Christ.

They just couldn't see it. Their minds were blinded. Now, that was true even of believers, so that in the Old Testament, [00:26:01] many believers could understand a few things, but nothing like the truth concerning the Messiah having to suffer and die and rise again.

They just never ever did their minds. Of course, even the question of the salvation of souls and the way in which people are forgiven is one thing that would never have entered into any man's mind naturally.

There was one of the three philosophers, I think it was Socrates, who claimed that it was impossible to conceive of a Creator forgiving any infraction against his creation. That's impossible.

Now, that was good philosophy, too.

But there's one thing that Socrates forgot, and that is that God is greater than Socrates, [00:27:05] and God knows more than Socrates does.

Well, how much do you and I know?

Of course, an infraction against God's creation is a dreadful thing.

How could God ever possibly forgive it? And that answer is a most amazing and marvelous one. And I think we should never, never forget, never cease to marvel at the wonder of the cross of Christ as being a means of the complete forgiveness of sins on the part of mankind. That Christ's sacrifice is sufficient to take away every guilt, every stain of sin, and to bless the believer for eternity. Who would

ever have imagined it? Nobody could have.

And, of course, the question of resurrection [00:28:02] was something that men in the past could never imagine.

So the Lord says this, that, Thus behoove Christ to suffer, to rise from the dead the third day. Now, I think that this is actually what is called in Scripture the key of David. Do you remember Revelation chapter 3, where it speaks there of believers?

The Lord Jesus said, He that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth, that shutteth, and no man openeth. The key of David. Why?

Because David is a type of Christ at a time of being rejected even while he was anointed.

David was anointed king, remember, by Samuel. And then he didn't reign for years.

And Saul was hunting him in the mountains to put him to death.

He is despised and rejected.

[00:29:02] Just as the Lord Jesus, too, is despised and rejected. People generally don't like the idea of Christ being rejected.

Peter didn't like it. Do you remember what Peter said when the Lord Jesus told him that he was going to die and be raised again the third day? That would be far from me, Lord.

What? Well, just a minute, Peter.

What? Far from the Lord to be raised again? Well, he was thinking of his death. He didn't hear of the second part at all, I think, but resurrection. I think all he heard was just that the Lord was going to die. And that would be far from thee.

And do you remember what the Lord said? Get thee behind me, Satan. Thou savest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

So it's vitally important to recognize, [00:30:01] you and I, to recognize that we are linked with a Lord who has been cast out and rejected, but thank God has been raised again, glorified at the right hand of God. So the believer today has a place of marvelous blessing, altogether dependent upon the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Well, there is the vital understanding of the Word of God as connected with the suffering and glory of the Lord Jesus. Those two things.

Now that's something that's important in the Church of God today.

You remember in John's Gospel, Chapter 10, where the flock is spoken of, the sheep, the Lord calling His own sheep by name and leading them out.

And then after He leads them out, we're told, they shall go in and out and find pasture.

[00:31:04] Now before that, while they were in the fold, they didn't find any pasture. And that's Israel under law in the Old Testament. Now they had the Word of God. They had just what was practically fed to them from their leaders.

Shall we say dry hay.

But now that Christianity has come, now that Christ has come, He has taken His sheep outside the fold.

And they can get the fresh grass of the green pastures for themselves. You can meditate on the Word of God for yourself. You can find real blessing for your own soul in the Word of God.

And that's what every Christian should be doing. Occupying his time that way. Jews in the Old Testament couldn't do that. But you can.

When you have the Spirit of God, when you have the Spirit of God, you have an additional reason for understanding. [00:32:03] But the base of the understanding here is seen in the sacrifice of Christ. And then in verse 27, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Now here is another point that is a wonderful one too. Proclaiming the grace of God not only to Jews, but among all nations.

And so the grace of God is being proclaimed today. The gospel of God's grace. You know, that's another wonderful privilege that you and I have.

I wonder if we take advantage of it. Do we want to see every soul we meet with brought to Christ, saved for eternity? It would be a grand thing if we had an attitude like that.

But it should be so for all believers. All believers should be, in one respect, evangelists. Now I don't mean to have the gift of an evangelist, but you can nevertheless give the gospel to somebody. [00:33:02] It may only take a few words to speak. It doesn't require a great deal. Oftentimes just a few words. Tell a person you wish he knew the Lord Jesus as his Savior.

And tell him that Christ died for his sins. Well, there are many souls that have been saved by the most simple messages. So thank God for it.

I know people often have wrong ideas, wrong thoughts about the gospel. They say it's a wonderful thing to have a great campaign, a gospel campaign. Well, yes, fine.

You have a tremendous-sized campaign. Supposing you get 50,000 people at that campaign.

Well, I think it would be pretty safe to assume that 40,000 of them would likely be Christians at this gospel campaign. Well, supposing that 1,000 people are saved at that campaign. [00:34:01] Well, that would be wonderful, wouldn't it? I should say, 1,000 people being saved? Wonderful.

However, just supposing that each of those 40,000 Christians went and talked personally to two people and told them how to be saved. And supposing that 10% of their energies were rewarded by people being saved.

Just 10%.

That would be 8,000 people, wouldn't it? 8,000.

You see, God looks at things a little different than we do. Just one-on-one is often a way of the greatest blessing. And the Lord Jesus, [00:35:02] in the gospel of John, is seen speaking to individuals over and over again.

Individuals.

And yet the gospel of John speaks of his deity. He is God, manifest in flesh.

One preacher a while ago said, he's a kind of popular preacher, said he was far too busy a man to have personal interviews.

Well, that certainly is too busy, isn't it? To have personal interviews.

The Lord Jesus, of all the people who should be busy, what about the Lord Jesus? He's busy enough to be concerned about his entire creation, every individual personally.

Not just having great crowds to listen to him, but he's concerned about every individual. And we see that in John's gospel particularly. [00:36:01] I think it's beautiful to see that. So it's good to have a care for souls. So the repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Now that's the fourth point. And in this case, repentance and remission of sins.

Luke especially emphasizes repentance.

Do you remember one chapter of Luke that does? Particularly?

Very important one.

Chapter 15.

There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repented.

And ye are witnesses of these things. Verse 48.

So a wonderful thing to be a witness of the grace of God.

Verse 49 now. And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you, that tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.

[00:37:04] Now we know what this refers to, don't we? The promise of my Father, and that is the coming of the Spirit of God, which took place 50 days after the resurrection.

The Lord Jesus accompanied with the disciples for 40 days following his resurrection, at least during 40 days, and then he went back to glory.

And 10 days after that, the Spirit of God came. Now what about this? The promise of my Father.

Now again, you and I are blessed with such great blessings, we just can't fathom the wonder of them.

But the Spirit of God actually dwelling within you. If you're a believer, the Spirit of God is dwelling there. God dwelling within you by the power of the Spirit of God. Do you get discouraged with yourself? Do you get upset with yourself?

[00:38:02] Do you get so downcast and think, well, I'm no good?

Well, maybe all that's true.

What about the person who dwells in you? Is he good or not?

Well, I should say, I should say, and what you are in Christ is marvelous in God's eyes.

So every believer is put in Christ, and this is by the power of the Spirit of God, so that you have much more than you realize you have. That's true for all of us. We know a lady who had been converted from Russellism, you know what that is, of course, it's a Jehovah's Witnesses so-called, and we were certainly thankful to see what a change took place in her. She didn't have to be told anything about the bad doctrines of Russellism. She threw them all overboard as soon as she was saved, [00:39:02] and she wanted to know more of Christ. And we gave her the book by Mr. Samuel Wrioughton, The Person and Work of the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit. It's an excellent book. If you've never read it, read it.

It's worthwhile.

And when she began to read that book, she told us that she just wanted to just sit down and think and meditate upon the wonder of what it meant to have the Spirit of God actually dwelling within her.

Well, it's good to think about that. That's true for every believer. The Spirit of God makes the things of God real to you.

It's the Spirit of God who is there within you that makes you love the things of Christ, and it gives you understanding concerning the things of Christ.

So here was also power from on high.

There's power to discern, power to understand, power also for testimony [00:40:01] before the world.

Don't be ashamed of Christ because you have the living presence of the Spirit of God within you. Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. So there's no reason for the believer to be ashamed of Christ whatever.

I should say not. You should be filled with unspeakable joy at the thought of being able to bear some witness for the Lord Jesus. Now this is the fifth point, the promise of the Spirit of God.

And they were to just simply wait.

The Spirit of God would come at precisely the time that God had decreed that He would come, the day of Pentecost. Now that's typified in Leviticus 23, and it's just the same as the Passover.

The Passover in the Old Testament typifies the actual day of the death of the Lord Jesus. And so Pentecost is the actual day of the descent of the Spirit of God. [00:41:02] And the Spirit would not come sooner or later. The Spirit came at precisely the time God intended.

Now they were told to pray for the coming of the Spirit, yes, because God had decreed that the Spirit of God was going to come. But however, you don't pray for the coming of the Spirit any longer. You don't have to do anything like that. After all, the Spirit of God has come to dwell in believers. And for a believer to pray for the Spirit of God is not really honoring to God, because the Spirit of God dwells in you already if you're a believer.

And therefore, He will give you the grace to act for Him.

But thank Him, thank God, that the Spirit of God does dwell in you.

There is one thing, too, in reference to the question of the Spirit of God, and that is people sometimes get so occupied with the work of the Spirit within them that they forget [00:42:02] that that isn't the thing to be occupied with.

It's important to realize it as being true.

But the Spirit of God within the believer directs the heart of the believer heavenward toward Christ to realize that Christ is His power. That's where the power comes from.

In fact, you remember when Stephen was martyred.

Looking up steadfastly toward heaven, he saw the glory of God and Jesus standing in the right hand of God. Now, at that day, he gave such an amazing presentation of Israel's guilt in having rejected Christ, boldly, firmly standing there before Israel.

If you'd asked Stephen, well, Stephen, how can you speak this way?

What do you suppose he would say?

[00:43:03] Would he say, well, can't you see I'm filled with the Spirit?

Is that what he would say?

No, he certainly wouldn't. He would say just what he did say. I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing in the right hand of God. Now, he was filled with the Spirit. There's not a bit of doubt of it. But he wasn't thinking about that. If anyone ever tells you he's filled with the Spirit, then you'd be very sure he's not.

He exposes himself because he's not thinking of that at all. But if he's enjoying Christ and delighting

in Christ and speaking of Christ, then you can have more confidence, yes, that person is filled with the Spirit.

Mr. Paulson, probably most of you have met him, haven't you? He's told of a case when he was a young man, of an older man saying to him, [00:44:02] young man, you're too serious.

Your face should be shining like mine.

But even though he was only a young Christian, he knew enough to be able to answer him and say when Moses' face was shining, he didn't know it.

And that's true.

You're not thinking of the fact of the Spirit of God filling you at the time that you're acting for Christ. You're thinking of Christ. And the Spirit of God is the one who draws you to Christ. But it's good for the believer to have confidence, yes, the Spirit of God will do this. The Spirit of God backs up the truth that I find in Christ.

Well, now, in verse 50, he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And he came to pass while he blessed them, departed from them, and carried up into heaven.

[00:45:03] Now, this necessarily took place later. It was 40 days after the Upper Room visitation here.

But when he led them out to Bethany...

Bethany, by the way, means the house of affliction.

And he leaves them in the house of affliction, the house of trial. And that's true for all of us.

If you found out that Christianity is not altogether a bed of roses, after you were saved, did you find out that everything wasn't going altogether perfectly as you hoped it would?

I hope you found that out. Most of us do.

You find out there are lots of real trials and difficulties and sorrows. But to have the Lord with you in the midst of them is the thing that counts.

So, here, a house of affliction.

He takes them out that far, and then he lifts up his hands and blesses them. And while he is blessing them, [00:46:01] he's parted from them and carried up into heaven.

And the Lord is in that same attitude towards us today, blessing his own believers.

But they are still in the same place, in the house of affliction. In the world, there will be trials, there will be afflictions. But to have the Lord's blessing is certainly marvelous.

And he was parted from them and carried up into heaven. Now, this is the sixth point that we have

here, and that is Christ, the object in the glory.

Now, we saw that in regard to Stephen. Christ is the object now in the glory to look up to, to realize he is there, God's right hand. He is my support. He is my strength.

He is everything.

And so the Spirit of God and the Lord Jesus, the Spirit of God works in perfect conjunction with the fact of the Lord Jesus now being glorified at the right hand of God.

[00:47:05] And they worshiped him, verse 52, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.

Now, here's the last point, overflowing worship.

Their hearts just overflowed.

Why? Because they've seen him return to the glory.

They lost him?

Well, no, they knew perfectly well they hadn't lost him, no. Remember what had been said before. The Lord says, because I've said these things unto you, that he was going to die and rise again too.

Sorrow has filled your heart and here when he actually does leave them, he told them he was going to leave them. Sorrow has filled your heart because I'm going to leave you. But when he actually did leave, [00:48:01] there's no sorrow there at all.

They are filled with great joy.

Now, is there any reason why you and I cannot have the same joy today as they had then?

Is there any reason?

As soon as you start looking inside of yourself, you'll lose your joy.

But if you're looking out at Christ, looking at Christ at the right hand of God, there's where the joy is.

And so there's great joy for the believer in realizing that Christ is glorified at the right hand of God. Actually, the very fact is that you and I are so very close to the time when the Lord himself is going to come again that we should have greater joy even than the disciples had.

The prospect of the Lord's coming. But these things are things that should be characteristic of the Church of God.

[00:49:02] There should be a real wholehearted joy in the Lord continually on the part of the Church of God.

But there's no reason for us to go around with long faces by any means. Just the opposite.

No matter what the trials are, no matter what the sorrows are and the distresses, all those things are working together for our good.

And the heart of the believer can rejoice in the face of the trials.

Of course, we don't rejoice because of the trials exactly, but rejoice in the Lord. So our joy is to be in the Lord himself. I wonder if we can sing number 314. 314. Everlasting glory unto Jesus be.

Sing aloud the story of his victory. How he left the splendor of his home on a high, came in love so tender on the cross to die.