

# LIFE IN THE SPIRIT SEMINARS

## SESSION THREE NOTES: "NEW LIFE"

"I came so that they may have life and have it in abundance." (John 10:10)

The Father wants everyone to have new life. He sent his son Jesus into the world so that we could be given the source of new life, the Holy Spirit.

- Often the Christianity with which we have come in contact has not been spiritually alive, but God is continually renewing his Church by a fresh outpouring of his Spirit. Pope Francis has frequently commented that everyone should be "baptized in the Holy Spirit."
- Jesus is Lord; if we accept his lordship, we can experience a new freedom and a new life.
- In him all our sins can be forgiven (no matter what we have done), and every barrier between us and the Father can be taken away.
- After Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to the Father, he sent the Holy Spirit to bring us new life. (Acts 1:1-5)

When the Holy Spirit comes to a person, they become a changed person. (Acts 2 or Acts 19:1-7) They are given the power to know God and to live a new life:

- Experiencing in a new way God as your Father who loves you and cares for you; who speaks in your heart, teaching and guiding you.
- Knowing in your heart that Jesus is your personal Lord and Saviour; putting him at the centre of your life so that his principles shape your life.
- Praying in a new way, more centered on God than yourself; more often prayer of praise and thanksgiving; discovering you can pray in tongues; the gift of tongues is a means of spiritual growth and of praising God; it allows the Holy Spirit to pray within you when you cannot pray adequately.
- Discovering that the Bible, the liturgy and the sacraments come to life. Noticing that the fruit of the Spirit develop within you (love, joy, peace, etc. Galatians 5).
- Understanding that you can receive the gifts of the Spirit to serve God (prophecy, healing, discernment of spirits, inspirations to speak etc. (I Corinthians 12).

There is no need for anyone to be the kind of Christian who is not in vital contact with God or who does not experience the power of the Holy Spirit in their life. Everyone, even beginners in the Christian life, can be baptized in the Spirit.

- For most of us, this is not our first reception of the Holy Spirit, but a release of his power that is already within us through baptism and confirmation.
- Different people see different changes happen to them: many may consciously experience the Holy Spirit in them for the first time. Others who have already consciously experienced something of the Spirit's presence in their lives can receive a fuller experience, may become aware of new effects, new changes which the Spirit brings about in them. Everyone can experience a new presence and working of the Spirit.
- Those of us who have been Christians before will see that our years of Christian living have provided us with many resources that will be brought to life by the new presence of the Spirit in us.

Baptism in the Spirit is only the beginning of a new life.

- With the help of committed Christians as our brothers and sisters, we can grow to spiritual maturity; we can develop a daily dialogue and friendship with Christ; experience a new peace and joy, see ourselves being healed, becoming loving people, develop better relationships.

# LIFE IN THE SPIRIT SEMINARS

## DAILY SCRIPTURE & REFLECTION WEEK THREE – “NEW LIFE”

Fri 11<sup>th</sup> June

**“By His stripes we are healed and made whole” Isaiah 53/5**

This verse comes immediately before yesterday’s scripture and speaks prophetically about the stripes laid on the back of Jesus as He is scourged for our sake as part of His passion and death. The emphasis is not on how terrible it will be for Him, but what we will gain from it – healing and wholeness and not just spiritually but physically as well. How much of our culture yearns after “wholeness” and “wellness” and never thinks to look in the very place where it is guaranteed us.

Sat 12<sup>th</sup> June

**“Behold I make all things new” Revelation 21:5**

The words of Jesus in John’s Revelation where He says that there will be no more death, mourning, crying or pain as He renews the whole creation. This is our future, but it begins here and now with us if we let it; then, like ripples on a pond, spreads to our families, to where we live and work and on and on...renewing and healing and restoring.

Sun 13<sup>th</sup> June

**“In the last days, God says, I will pour out My Spirit on all people” Acts 2:17**

Here Peter quotes the prophet Joel to explain to the astonished crowds the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all the apostles and others gathered in Jerusalem, that we read about yesterday. They had waited in the Upper Room for nine days in prayer, in obedience to Jesus words, until they received the gift promised by the Father of His Spirit. These weeks of the Life in the Spirit course are our praying and waiting on the same promise, have you a sense of anticipation yet?

Mon 14<sup>th</sup> June

**“and I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh” Ezekiel 36:26**

Here God promises a renewed heart and spirit and in the next verse explains that it comes through the gift of His Spirit, so that we will be moved by Him to keep His laws and decrees, our hearts softened to those around us. So how are we to receive this great gift of the Spirit??

Tues 15<sup>th</sup> June

**“Whoever believes in Me, as scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them. By this He meant the Spirit whom those who believed in Him were later to receive...” John 7:38-39**

Here Jesus promises us this gift of the Holy Spirit, the rivers of living (flowing) water welling up inside of us to renew and refresh us – if we believe in Him. Note - it is possible to believe in Him without receiving this flowing of the Spirit from within ourselves, so we need to ask for it.

Weds 16<sup>th</sup> June

**“If you then...know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” Luke 11:13**

Jesus reassures us that, when we ask something good of our Father in Heaven, He will not refuse us, especially if that thing is the Holy Spirit - any more than we would refuse our children if they wanted something good from us. This is of course not just a statement but a promise of Jesus that we can “stand upon,” because He was not just honest but is Truth Itself.

Thurs 17<sup>th</sup> June

**“...’Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ They answered, ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit’” Acts 19:2**

Paul, asking a group of 12 believers in Ephesus about their experience of the Holy Spirit, is surprised to discover they have had a baptism of repentance, which is a good start, but hadn’t realized that there was more to be had, so he tells them about Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Often today we can even hear about Jesus but not realize there is still more to be had for the asking - are you hungry for more?

# LIFE IN THE SPIRIT SEMINARS

## SESSION TWO NOTES: "SALVATION"

We need a Saviour because there is something seriously wrong with the world (with society as a whole and with individual lives) which cannot be resolved without God's help.

- God made the world to be a place of peace and justice and happiness, a place in which he would reign. He still wants the world to be that way (Isaiah 2:1-5).
- But everyone agrees that there is something seriously wrong with the way the world is now (war, poverty, riots, racial conflict, generation gap, exploitation).
- There is a growing realization that there is more than just a number of individual problems-- society as a whole has something wrong with it.
- Individuals suffer from the situation and from lack of help, and they experience many problems (loneliness, isolation, depression, anxieties, insecurities, lack of direction, meaninglessness, personal relationships characterized by fear, suspicion, mistrust, exploitation. Filling the emptiness with drugs, sexual immorality, pursuit of money or fame).

Since the cause of what is wrong (Satan, sin, and the dominion of darkness) is bigger than mankind can handle on our own. we need God to find the new life that is needed.

- Human efforts to improve the world are not succeeding. Even the most educated people and the most highly placed executives in business experience problems in their own lives, work, and relationships.
- Religions developed by mankind such as Buddhism, Yoga, Transcendental Meditation, Scientology, Freemasonry, New Age etc. do not provide a solution.
- Even some forms of Christianity amount to being human efforts to find a good life and change the world. But these are based on human wisdom; God's wisdom is needed (Isaiah 55: 8-9).

God tells us in the Bible that we are not just confronted with particular wrongs in society or in ourselves; behind the particular things that are wrong there is something bigger than we can handle:

- The pervasive power of sin (Romans 3:9, 23)
- A kingdom, the dominion of darkness (Colossians 1:13)
- A force in rebellion against God, at enmity with him (Ephesians 6:12)
- Satan is behind it (I John 5:19)
- We are not free, nor is our society (people are in spiritual bondage, under the oppression of evil) (Ephesians 2:1-3)

Mankind was created to need God to achieve true peace, justice, and truth:

- The spiritual realm is not an optional extra. (John 15:5c)
- Only in God's kingdom (under his rule) are these things possible. (Isaiah 2:1-5, Isaiah 45:22)
- Under God's rule, life can be changed now. (Isaiah 48:17-18, Mark 1:14-15)
- There is a choice before us: to live under the dominion of darkness or in the kingdom of God.

God sent his son Jesus to break the hold of Satan and give us new life through his death and resurrection. Jesus is the Lord and Saviour, the Christ, the Messiah, the one God sent. (Colossians 1:13, John 11:21-27, Matthew 16:13-17).

- Jesus died to free us from our sins. (Isaiah 53:4-6, Hebrews 9:11-28)
- He rose to give us new life (Romans 4:25, Colossians 1:20, Titus 3:3-7):
- He broke the hold of Satan. (John 12:31, 1 John 4:4)
- Salvation is more than just going to heaven: it is a whole new way of life on earth as well. (John 10: 10b, John 4:14)
- Jesus is Lord: God gave him full power and authority to bring freedom and new life to those who accept him. (Matthew 28:18, Philippians 2:5-11). Jesus lives in his church and acts through it and in it to bring life to those who are his followers. (Ephesians. 2:17-22)

# LIFE IN THE SPIRIT SEMINARS

## DAILY SCRIPTURE & REFLECTION WEEK TWO – “SALVATION”

Fri 4<sup>th</sup> June

**“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” John 3:16**

Where it says: “the world” it means “you” (and me of course) but try putting your name in there instead: “For God so loved (your name) that He gave His one and only Son that (your name) who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life”. So, all we have to do to receive His love **and** have eternal life, is to “believe in Him”. Simple!

Sat 5<sup>th</sup> June

**“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.” John 3:17**

Phew! Thank Goodness! But what does it mean to “believe in Him” so we can be saved? The Amplified Bible expands the words “believe in” to “believes in, trusts in, relies upon”. So, more than just mentally acknowledging Jesus exists (which after all even Satan does!) it is more about incorporating His existence and activity as a major factor into our lives.

Sun 6<sup>th</sup> June

**“...Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool” Isaiah 1:18**

So, no matter how bad it looks, He will sort it out for us if we bring our lives to Him - even Jesus’ name in Hebrew “Yeshua” means “Saviour.” He came to save us from ourselves, from the sin that clings so readily to us and messes up our lives.

Mon 7<sup>th</sup> June

**“Jesus answered ‘I am The Way, the Truth and the Life. No-one comes to the Father except through Me’” John 14:6**

In other words, there is only one **way** to this “life to the full” - in this life now and into eternity - and that is Jesus! This means that we can’t get there under our own steam, that we aren’t saved from ourselves and our sin by our own efforts - but by what Jesus has done for us. We just have to receive what He has done but, as we have seen, this will take some adjustments in our lives not just in our thinking.

Tues 8<sup>th</sup> June

**“Be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect” Matthew 5:48**

If it were down to us, this command of Jesus would be scary because we know it is impossible; but if it is a perfection of sinlessness, it is possible (at least temporarily!) because Jesus has won this for us. He has paid for every sin on the cross and, as we come to Him for forgiveness, we receive it completely and utterly.

Weds 9<sup>th</sup> June

**“The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love, He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities - as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” Psalm 103:1**

So, our sins are dealt with completely if we bring them to Jesus - we don’t have to go back over them again (and again), despite what the enemy may say!

Thurs 10<sup>th</sup> June

**“We all like sheep have gone astray; each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” Isaiah 53:6**

Jesus accepted from our Father the burden of all our sin so we could be reconciled to the Father and come into His presence cleansed and forgiven. This gift is free to us, but cost God everything, so let us make the most of the gift on a daily or even hourly basis.