

Melva's Corner

POWER TO SOLVE PROBLEMS?

October 30, 2006

(Romans 8:28)

Central Truth: You have available to you the power that's necessary to solve the real problems of life. He is Jesus Christ. And once you have the Savior, you also have the Holy Spirit

When Peter delivered the opening sermon on the Day of Pentecost, he promised the "gift of the Spirit" to all who would "repent and be baptized" (Acts 2:38). The Apostle Paul also wrote to the Romans and said, "But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him" (Romans 8:9).

What fruit do we look for in true Christians?" Jesus gave a very clear way to determine whether the influence in a person's life was good or bad. He said, "For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit" (Luke 6:43). So there you are, fruit is the thing one looks for in this matter.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

Do you want to know if a life is truly filled with the Spirit? Then use the yardstick of the Spirit's own words. If you do not see love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in the life, then you are not seeing a life producing the fruit of the Spirit.

Words will not prove the test! A tree can easily be called "apple" but if it does not produce apples, it is one of two things. Either it is an apple tree that fails, and Jesus tells us it will be "cut down and thrown into the fire," or it is not an apple tree and calling it one won't change it.

Paul builds on this thought with these powerful words: **"Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its**

passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another" (Galatians 5:24-26).

One of the wonderful things about the Holy Spirit is that He brings light into our lives. Many of us have experienced an evening devotional with young people where one person lights a candle and passes it to others while singing, "It only takes a spark to get a fire going and soon all those around will warm up to its glowing."

Images of light permeate Scripture. If we look closely we see a mirror image of light in the Old and New Testament. God is light (Psalm 27:1; 43:3) and calls His people to be a light to the nations (Isaiah 42:6-7; 49:6; 60:1-3). Jesus declares Himself the light of the world (John 8:12) and Paul instructs the church to live as children of light (Ephesians 5: 8-10).

What would happen if we took this charge seriously and decided to truly bare the fruit of the Spirit and live in the light? What would it look like for us to be agents of light in a world which is full of darkness?

Several things come to mind:

- 1. The workplace would be illuminated. In today's climate we often find workers who are competitive, suspicious, and fearful. With cutbacks and layoffs common, gender and civil rights issues at the forefront of concern and technology changing the work climate, it is no wonder that workers often are less productive, more critical and unable to support one another adequately.**

As Christians, we can bring light into this difficult situation. We can pray for our co-workers, offer words of encouragement, listen to their troubles and concerns, help in times of stress. These simple acts can brighten the office, schoolroom, or marketplace in significant ways.

- 2. Our homes would be warm and glowing. In a period of history when many husbands and wives are estranged, when children are frequently caring for themselves, when even the**

best of families are stressed and strained, Christian homes should be radiant examples.

Instead of always bringing our worst selves home at the end of the day depleted and short-tempered, Christians should hold in reserve a measure of light for those we love most - our own families. Even when exhausted, the Christian has the illuminating presence of God's Holy Spirit to revive and to comfort. We should take time to listen, to express love and concern, to laugh and enjoy life, to rest and be restored, to pray and experience God's love.

- 3. Our own lives would be more brilliant. Many will be tempted to think in terms of success when speaking of personal brilliance, but for the Christian it carries a different meaning. It signifies a life which is wholly surrendered to the Lord.**

Believers realize that they must be dependent on the true source of light. This means time spent with God, reading His word, pouring out one's heart to Him, reflecting on His character and praising Him for being God.

- 4. We would be a lamp unto the world. Just as the covenant people of old were called to be the light of God to the nations, so are His people today. If we lived as children of light all those with whom we come in contact would see the illuminating power of God in us. They will recognize the fruit that we bare.**

The Christian practices being light to others at the grocery store by simply smiling, being courteous, or paying attention to the cashier or carryout attendant. At the gas station, the dry cleaners, the movie theater and the next-door neighbor. We must be conscious that we may be the only reflection of God that people see in their lives that day. We may be selected by God to deliver His words of life to any of these individuals when the time is right. We are God's agents of light in relation to those around us.

You have available to you the power that's necessary to solve the real problems of life. He is Jesus Christ. And once you have the Savior, you also have the Holy Spirit. He will come inside you to help you; not simply to cry with you over how strong the temptation is but to empower you to overcome it. You can do all

things through Him who keeps on pouring His power into you. Even if you have never done it in your life, you can begin a life of power today. There's no checklist. There's no probation period. There's no long list of responsibilities that you must fulfill before God will give you the power. If you've never met the Savior, power begins at the cross, where Christ paid the penalty for sin. Receive Him now! And with Him the empowering force of the Holy Spirit. Welcome to the first day of your new life.

Scriptural References:

"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them" (Romans 8:28 NLT).