

## Rediscovery in 2010 Part 4

We've been rediscovering some important truths for our lives this year. I'm trying to help all of us see some bedrock truths from a new perspective. We've talked about rediscovering the love of the Father, the father heart of God. We talked about rediscovering the sovereignty of God and his great purpose and plan for our lives. We talked about the fact that his strength is revealed in our weakness. We talked last week about rediscovering the biblical Jesus, not just the one we've created in our own mind or out of our own opinions, but the one revealed to us in the gospels.

This morning I want to talk to you about **Rediscovering the Role of the Holy Spirit in Your Life**. I know when I mention rediscovering the role the Holy Spirit plays in our life, some of us, the ones who have a background in a Pentecostal or Charismatic church, think in terms of speaking in tongues, charismatic gifts of the Spirit like words of knowledge, prophecy, healing, or more demonstrative expressions of worship and praise. And I know that for some of you who have a background in non-Pentecostal or non-Charismatic churches, you think of the Holy Spirit as the third person in the Godhead or perhaps you have no thought or image whatsoever. There is just nothing there. You never heard anyone say anything about the Holy Spirit. Who is he? What does he do? He was seldom mentioned in your church service except as part of a benediction or blessing.

If you want to know more about the Holy Spirit, about who he is and what he has come to do, I recommend the book I wrote some years ago for that very purpose. *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* was written as an introduction for those who are perhaps unfamiliar with the Holy Spirit or with the teachings of the Scripture concerning the gifts of the Spirit and other things that are often taught in the Pentecostal/charismatic tradition. Copies are available at the information desk.

But for our purposes this morning, I want us to rediscover the importance of the Holy Spirit in the daily life of the believer. We aren't going to talk specifically about Spiritual empowerment or the Baptism in the Holy Spirit today. Instead, I want to focus on the presence of the Holy Spirit in our daily walk with the Lord. While he deflects attention from himself and towards Jesus, the truth is the Holy Spirit is involved in every aspect of our spiritual life. He takes what Jesus has secured for us at Calvary and

delivers it to our heart and into our life, he activates the blessings of salvation and makes it all real to us. When we say we have asked Jesus to come into our heart and life as our Savior and Lord, it is the Holy Spirit that takes up residence in our life. When we talk about growing in Christ, it is the Holy Spirit that is at work producing that spiritual growth. It is the fruit of the Spirit growing in our life that is evidence of his abiding presence. The Holy Spirit is bringing that spiritual life of Christ to bear in our lives. God dwells in us by his Holy Spirit! When we realize that, we begin to realize his presence is within us, walking with us, leading and guiding us. If you wonder where God is, you need to rediscover the importance of the role of the Holy Spirit in your life. God is here with us, with you, today, this moment, by His Holy Spirit.

This is why Jesus said **“It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”** **John 16:7.** The title Counselor or Comforter refers to the Holy Spirit. Jesus said it was for our good that he was going away because he would send the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit would be with us and within us. The Holy Spirit leads us into all truth and takes everything that belongs to Jesus and makes it known to us. The Holy Spirit brings the life of God to us in a very real, ongoing, moment by moment, day by day basis and that is for every follower of Christ, not just Pentecostals or Charismatics, but everyone who has given their life to Christ.

I want you to **Be aware of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in your life.** Be aware of the nearness of his presence, and remain open to cooperate with all that the Spirit of God desires to do in and through your life. This is for all of us. My desire is that all of us will become more aware of his presence today and more aware of his desire and will for us.

I want us to look at three different passages here in the first part of the gospel of John. All three of these involve Jesus and water as a metaphor. Turn to John 3.

One of the Pharisees named Nicodemus came to see Jesus. He was a member of the ruling council, the Sanhedrin and he respected the ministry of Jesus. In response to Nicodemus' comments about the ministry, Jesus told him no one could see the kingdom of God unless he was born again. Of course this was news to a Pharisee who knew himself to be one of the chosen. But Nicodemus wasn't put off, instead he

pursued the subject.

Look at verse 4. **“How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!” Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.” John 3:4-6**

You must be born of water and the Spirit. What does he mean by water? Some believe he is referring to the water of birth, that you must be born of the flesh and then you must be born of the Holy Spirit, made clean through faith in Christ and through the washing of the Spirit of God and his word. Some might suggest the water was referring to the waters of ritual cleansing of the Jews or to the waters of baptism. The truth is, and I believe this is what Jesus wants us to understand, it’s as simple as this: no amount of ritual baths, no amount of physical water, no amount of water baptisms can save your soul and bring about a spiritual change or conversion in your life. Something more is needed and Jesus explained it. You must be born again, not just of water, but of the Spirit. Paul spoke of us being saved **“...through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.” Titus 3:5-7** (Again we have these images of water, washing, being poured out.)

Flesh gives birth to flesh. Your parents conceived you and your mother gave birth to you, but it is the Holy Spirit that gives new birth – a new life – to the spirit of man. To come to Christ in repentance and in faith, believing and trusting him to be our Savior and Lord is to be born again and by the Holy Spirit we become partakers of the nature of Christ.

Being born of a righteous mother won’t save you. Scrubbing with water or taking a ritual bath or being baptized won’t cleanse your soul, but believing in Christ and allowing the Holy Spirit to take up residence in your life will. This is where we begin. If you have not repented of your sins and asked Jesus to come into your heart and life, to save you and grant to you his new life, you can do that right now. This moment. Do this and you will know what it means to be born of water and the Spirit.

We receive Christ as Savior and Lord and the Holy Spirit takes up residence in our life and begins his work of making us more and more like Jesus. Remember I told you that God's will for your life is that you would be made conformable to the image of Christ – that we would all reflect the nature and character qualities of Christ. That process occurs through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit as we allow him to work in our heart and life every moment of every day.

He wants us to participate and to be aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit all the time. It isn't just at church or at moments of religious formality or ceremony. It's while you are working and playing and driving and thinking you are also fellowshiping with the Holy Spirit and sensitive to what he wants to do, aware of the life he brings to you.

Let me show you a couple of things that I believe the Holy Spirit desires to do in our life. We know this, but I think we can rediscover a couple of things this morning. Turn back to **John 2:1-11**. This is the story of Jesus first miracle, when he changed the water into wine at a wedding. Let me read these first verses to you (read v1-5).

**“Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, ‘Fill the jars with water’ so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, ‘Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.’ They did so and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine.”** (Read v9-11).

It is an interesting miracle isn't it? Turning water into wine. It's not like raising the dead or healing the sick or even walking on water if you ask me. A wedding celebration in those days would last seven days and running out of wine would be a social embarrassment so Jesus saved the family from humiliations galore, but he also did something else. Notice what the Scripture says about the water jars. They were used for ceremonial washing by the Jews - a most important ritual and tradition of the Jews – and Jesus had them use those same jars and then turned that water into wine. Those waterpots were reserved, set apart for ceremonial purification. There was enough water here to fill a Jewish immersion pool for ritual cleansing, but Jesus did something that demonstrated his values. Craig Keener wrote in his commentary, “To

transform that water into wine profaned the normally holy purpose of the pots as far as Jewish tradition was concerned, but Jesus was not concerned about ritual purity or tradition. He had higher priorities than honoring merely ritual uses of water.”

I believe Jesus wanted them to know that there was more to life than ritual. He wanted us to know there was more to our spiritual life than just religious ritual, rules, regulations, traditions, etc. There is more to a relationship with Jesus than just keeping the rules and trying to stay clean. He wants us to experience a new life in the Spirit. He wants to turn dead rituals into sparkling wine. He wants us to allow the Holy Spirit to breath life into lifeless tradition. He wants us to experience not just washing or cleansing of our flesh, our outer man, he wants us to be transformed and cleansed on the inside by the presence of the Holy Spirit. It's not about lifeless religion, it's about a relationship. It's about new life in Christ. He wants us to know that he has a more important use for the clay pots than us filling them with water and trying to wash away our sins by our own best efforts. Instead, he wants us to come to him in faith, to believe upon him and obey him, and he will wash our sins away and fill our life with his Holy Spirit and with his abundant life.

Wine in the Scripture, when used in a positive sense, represented the blessings of God upon the land, the blessings of God and his favor. Notice this was the best wine, coming from the richest and most flavorful grapes. When you think of the blessing of the Holy Spirit in your life, it's not just speaking in tongues or spiritual gifts, it is the rich blessing and favor of God's presence and grace in your life. You that are a little timid about the Holy Spirit's work in your life, how could you be reluctant to ask God for the blessings and favor of the Holy Spirit to be upon your life?

Take the jars that represent all the tradition and the efforts at correct religious actions and behavior, bring them to Jesus and then do whatever he commands you to do. Let him fill your life with the rich blessings of the Holy Spirit. I dare you to surrender yourself to the Lord and see what the Holy Spirit will do for your life.

Turn to **John 4:1-26**. This is the story of the Samaritan woman that Jesus meets at Jacob's well. Let's look at this story quickly. (Read John 4:1-26). Jesus speaks to her of living water (v10). He tells her **“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water**

**I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” John 4:13-14**

Jesus is talking about the life of the Holy Spirit when he refers to this living water. He is telling her that she can have eternal life, salvation, a new life bubbling up on the inside of her if she will come in repentance and faith and believe. She eventually does just that and then brings many of her people to meet Jesus and they too believed.

But notice this in the story. The woman began to argue with Jesus about this place. **“Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”** Jesus is addressing another form of this ritualism and tradition that says, “you can only worship God here at this place or at this holy site. You only do this on Sunday morning at Church or Sunday school. Faith and religion belongs in the church but not out in the public.”

Jesus wants us to rediscover the fact that the Holy Spirit is that living water that is within us all the time. It's not something we have to come to a certain place at a certain time to draw from, but instead it is like a spring of water that is forever welling up within us. It is the presence of God always at work within us. It is the Spirit of God always leading us and guiding us.

The woman argued as to which place would be the holy site for worship but Jesus told her, **“Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.” John 4:21-24**

God is seeking for people who are ready and eager to worship in spirit and in truth. He is looking for folks not bound by tradition but made alive by the presence of the Holy Spirit within us. It is the Spirit within us offering praise to the Father and to the Son. Worship and rejoice and love and share and live and give as the Holy Spirit flows through your life like an ever bubbling spring of living water. Don't damn this up. Release it and let it flow!

And understand that you can't draw deep enough or work hard enough to earn this living water, but if you will ask... Jesus told her, "if you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." If you will ask, he will give you living water. Eternal life. Go ahead and ask!

Rediscover the important role of the Holy Spirit for your life. God wants to give you this abundant life in the Spirit in place of trusting in lifeless ritual. He wants to give you living water springing up inside of you all the time instead of some kind of contact you can make with him at certain sites and places and times. He wants you to come to him in an experience of worship made alive by the work of the Holy Spirit. He wants you to know this spiritual life. If you've known it and lost it, if that living water isn't springing up like it used to, that's what these messages are all about. Jesus told the Samaritan woman to ask of him. Ask him and he will give you that living water. Ask him for a real and living experience and don't be afraid of what he will do.

I've got to wrap this up, but let me show you one more thing. Turn to **John 7:37**. This seventh chapter of John's gospel tells about the Feast of Tabernacles. This was one of the three most important festivals of the Jewish year and was celebrated for seven or eight days (depending on how you look at it) in Jerusalem. The people made booths on their rooftops or in the yard and would live (sleep and eat) in these booths (hence it was also called the feast of booths or sukkoth) to commemorate God's faithfulness to his people when they lived in the wilderness.

For the seven days of the feast of tabernacles the priests had been walking from the temple, all the way down to the pool of Siloam. They have actually found now a tunnel that went all the way down to the pool of Siloam from the temple. For seven days the priests would march in procession from the pool back up to the temple. On the last day they would recite prophecies about rivers of living water that would someday flow from the foundation stone of the temple to bring life to all of the earth. They would recite Zechariah 14 - that the day of the Lord would come when the Lord would go out and fight against the nations. **"On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west forming a great valley....On that day living water will flow out**

**from Jerusalem...the Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and his name the only name.” Zechariah 14: 1-9**

And they would recite from Ezekiel 46 where the prophet Ezekiel told of seeing a day when water was coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east. There was so much water coming out that at first it was ankle deep. They went 1500 feet and then it was knee deep. Another 1500 feet and then it was waist deep. And another 1500 feet and it was a river that they could not cross, a river you could swim in. It was a river that wherever it flowed it brought life. **“So where the river flows everything will live.”** This water from the sanctuary, from the temple, would bring healing and life to everything it touched.

Now look at John 7:37. While all this was going on and the procession of the priests, carrying water from the pool back to the temple, to act out this prophetic passage of the healing water of life that would flow from the temple of God, Jesus stands up in the midst of the crowd and says in a loud voice, **“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him. By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.” John 7:37-39.**

Where is that living water coming from? Jesus is the source of that water and by the Holy Spirit that living water is flowing through us and touching the lives of others around us with healing and life. The priests had just read the text about the water flowing from the cornerstone of the temple and Jesus is the cornerstone. He is the source of this water.

You may feel dry and thirsty in a spiritual sense. Life may have just overwhelmed you and has beaten you down and you don't know if you can make it. Jesus said if you are thirsty to come to him and drink. If you've been just going through the ritual, going through the motions or church, Jesus wants you to drink from the wine of his Spirit and be refreshed with something alive and real. If you've been coming to the well but the well seemed dry, ask of Jesus and he will give you living water that will well up in side of you like a spring of living water. You'll discover the presence of the Holy Spirit at work in your life to restore and renew and refresh your spirit, all the time,

every day as you look to him and draw upon him.

He wants your spiritual life to be characterized by living water flowing through you, always fresh, always new, alive, refreshing, moving, vital, life giving. This is what he has for his people as we allow the Holy Spirit to move in and through us.

Is that how your spiritual life is or is it stale, lifeless, stagnant, dead, dying? I want to invite you to open your life to the working of the Holy Spirit. Come and rediscover the living water of the Holy Spirit that flows from Jesus the Son and from the Father of Life. I believe he wants to refresh you today with his holy Presence.

Open your heart to him today. Open your life to him. Invite him to come in, in all of his fullness and favor and blessings and power. You can trust him to fill your life today.

Come Holy Spirit I Need Thee