

Devotional Thoughts :: The Sweetest Fruit is on the Higher Branches - Winslow**The Sweetest Fruit is on the Higher Branches - Winslow - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2010/12/24 21:14**

"Beloved reader, the richest ore lies buried the deepest, the sweetest fruit is on the higher branches, the strongest light is near the sun. In other words, if we desire more knowledge of Christ, of our full pardon and complete acceptance, if we desire the earnest of our inheritance, and even now would taste the "grapes of Eshcol," we must be "reaching forth unto those things that are before," we must "press toward the mark," and rest not until that is found in a clear, unclouded, immovable, and holy assurance of our being in Christ; and this is only experienced in the sealing of the Spirit.

"Again we say, with all the earnestness which a growing sense of the vastness of the blessing inspires: seek to be sealed of the Spirit; seek the "earnest of the Spirit"; seek to be "filled with the Spirit"; seek the "anointing of the Spirit"; seek the "Spirit of adoption." Say not, it is too immense a blessing, to high an attainment for one so small, so feeble, so obscure, so unworthy as you."

-O. Winslow

Re: The Sweetest Fruit is on the Higher Branches - Winslow - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/12/28 8:59

And the best fruit is produced on plants that have been pruned... Pruning causes pain and then heals. But OH! the rewards!

Beautiful analogy, don't you think?

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2010/12/28 13:25

Ginny, you would like this. The other day I was watching a program on winter flower gardening and the host mentioned something about the "past blooms", and how by removing them the "new blooms" would come in more abundantly and radiantly. The "old blooms" were the flowers on the plant that had begun to wilt and slightly fade. The host said you should remove them, in order to make way for the "new" even though the "old" bloom was still recognizable and fragrant.

I thought of how poignantly that could be illustrated in the spiritual: Yesterday's blessings and anointings and how marvelously God used me in the past to bless others need to be removed from my ego like the "old blooms", if the "new blooms" are to come in with increased freshness and abundance. The old fragrance of Christ in my life must be removed to make way for new fragrance. The Apostle Paul put it like this: "Forgetting that which is behind...", and the Lord in John 15 spoke of removing existing fruit so that even more would come. Amazing. The world of botanics reveals divine precepts so perfectly, so irrevocably true and faithful to its Creator.

We are the only ones that waver and send out mixed signals, it seems.

Re: The Sweetest Fruit is on the Higher Branches - Winslow - posted by UntoBabes (), on: 2010/12/28 16:36

Mr. West, Did you experience the filling of the Holy Spirit?

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2010/12/28 17:17

Yes, I have, by the grace of God. But unfortunately I "leak" (to coin Spurgeon), and so I seek to be continually filled (as opposed to a once-and-for-all "fill up" experience). Why do you ask?

Re: - posted by UntoBabes (), on: 2010/12/28 18:01

I have gone to Baptist/Reformed churches since I became a christian and they believe that the filling of the Spirit is a Charismatic thing. They believe that every Christian automatically have the Holy Spirit when they are converted.

In the last 2 years I was introduced to this site, different books about revival, the testimony of many liable believers/ great saints in the Lord, even the fathers of the Baptist/Reformed faith who affirm there is such thing as the filling of the Spirit that is more than what we receive when we are converted.

Well, I have asked God many times to fill me but He did not, at least not yet. I had times where I got something that is more than human power to answer a question or defend the faith, or live a victory, but I have heard some testimonies of people who said they were filled with something they could not contain, like a bomb of love, peace, praise, intimacy with God. They felt His presence. I have also read the book "I dared to call Him Father" and she describes it differently. She says it was like a river of gushing water that went through her whole being.

Oh, I want that. I want to feel one with God like she did.

Re: - posted by UntoBabes (), on: 2010/12/28 18:13

What was your experience like?

Maybe this should be an open post for everyone to share their experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2010/12/28 23:04

It's hard to explain the filling. It wasn't some galvanizing moment where I knew I was suddenly filled and equipped to do miracles and herald the gospel to the ends of the earth. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is essentially to walk in the Holy Spirit, and to walk in the Holy Spirit is a lifestyle rather than a one-time experience. The obvious evidence of being filled usually manifests during times of ministry, with noted power and authority upon your words, but it can also manifest quietly in unseen acts of love and in a profound concern for others. It is evident in deep, unfeigned humility and self-control. Jesus said to "learn of me for I am meek and lowly of heart", and we know Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit. It is an inner awareness of a divine joy, of an intimacy and authority and deep wisdom of God that pervades the innermost chamber of your being, validated by the witness of the selfsame Spirit by which you are filled.

If you are filled with the Spirit, I believe your life will evidence the fruit of the Spirit, even if you never once speak in another tongue or work a miracle. Sin will no longer have dominion in your life, but you will need to be continually filled, daily, regardless of any outward manifestation of power. Like Manna in the desert, the filling does not last overnight. The next day, the cross again must be taken up, the self-life denied, and the Spirit of the Lord given free reign in the surrendered heart.

It is by "emptying" ourselves of self that we are "filled" with the Spirit. This is an area where I think Pentecostals and other charismatics have missed the mark and erred in their teaching by fixating on tongues and other "outward" surface signs rather than the inner crucifixion. But that is for another thread :)

Re: - posted by UntoBabes (), on: 2010/12/29 0:02

I see all that you are saying, but being filled with the Spirit definitely has to do with the effectiveness of witnessing to make the message effectual to the ones you are witnessing to. I know I am not filled although I see much of what you are saying because of the lack of effectiveness. I am not interested in miracles and all that but I know that initial speaking in tongues is a must.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2010/12/29 0:09

Quote:
-----I know that initial speaking in tongues is a must.

All right then. I hope you find what you're looking for. Thanks for the discussion.

Re: - posted by UntoBabes (), on: 2010/12/29 0:32

Mr. West, I thank you for the original post. It was very encouraging to me. If we don't agree on anything more than the fact that we need to seek God more and draw closer to Him, that would still be enough.

Re: - posted by StarofGOD (), on: 2010/12/29 0:36

Quote:
-----The obvious evidence of being filled usually manifests during times of ministry, with noted power and authority upon your words, but it can also manifest quietly in unseen acts of love and in a profound concern for others.

I like how you put this brother Paul.

It is not only in the "extreme" times of much ministry that He (the Holy Spirit) is present. But also in the "low" times, though not always as "evident." But in some ways should be more evident all the more, depending on how we perceive Him.

Quote:
-----unseen acts of love and in a profound concern for others.

Re: , on: 2010/12/29 0:44

I believe the LORD deals differently with all of us - just as He did while on earth.

When I was first saved, when I knelt to pray, I began to pray in King James English. That startled me because of what a wretch He saved. My native tongue was street-talk before I first heard the Gospel and responded - so "startled" is far from an over-statement.

For over two years after, I feared "tongues". I read every Classic that I could get my hands on and I believed the Book of Acts type Church was the Norm - yet I feared 'tongues' because I was acutely aware of counterfeits.

Finally, the LORD showed me Luke 11:11-13 until I didn't fear seeking anymore so I went up for prayer.

After what seemed like an hour of praying and being prayed with I got 1 word in 'tongues' - just one word, but a joy overwhelmed me that I knew wasn't from me and when I got home, all I wanted to do was devour His Word - overwhelming desire for all that I could get of His Word.

The prayer language came some weeks later while praying privately, without any effort or thought of it - I was just praying and praising and there it came. Another surprise.

The LORD showed me that the King James was the first touch because He knew I'd fear tongues for a while - and the touch at Church was the next step - straight into His WORD.

Both experiences confirmed to me that the Book of Acts type Church is the norm, as long as The WORD of GOD is held up as high as it should be.

I know that everyone's experience is as different as He created us to be as unique as snowflakes or flowers, no two the same, yet perfectly fitting together to make up His Body. GOD is So GOOD to all of us, equally.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2010/12/29 11:02

Quote:
----- If we don't agree on anything more than the fact that we need to seek God more and draw closer to Him, that would still be enough.

When the initial power of the Holy Spirit came upon me and equipped me for ministry, I never spoke in tongues. Truthfully, I didn't know I "had" to. I hadn't read the Acts of the Apostles yet for I was still a very new Christian. I simply loved the Lord fervently and had an intense desire to serve Him in whatever capacity He had for me. The first time His power came upon me, it took me to the floor in wave after wave of glory. All I could do was weep aloud and cry "Jesus!" over and over again. My wife was there, she can attest to it. I had to be driven home from the assembly of believers and put to bed. I am not a man given to extreme shows of emotion, so this shocked many people.

Shortly after this event, God called me to preach His word with signs and wonders following both in the church and on the street. I will not go into details here, for I am uncomfortable speaking about these things with the fear of taking the glory from God. But I can put you in touch with some of the people who were there, and will tell you of things the Holy Spirit did that will absolutely amaze you. And throughout it all, no one - including myself - ever spoke in a tongue.

Seeing all the signs and wonders and power on the ministry, I was eventually approached by a pastor who wanted to plug me into the Assemblies of God. He brought me to an annual conference/convention in Waxahatchie, Texas along with my wife and a few others from our church. One of the "workshops": "The Baptism in the Holy Ghost". A man taught that unless you've spoken in tongues you were not genuinely filled with the Holy Spirit according to scripture. So convincing was he, that I and about 70 others believed him, and went forward for him to lay his hands on us and pray that we would receive the genuine infilling. He coached us and encouraged us to just focus on Jesus, and let any syllable roll off our tongues that wanted to. Only make sure it wasn't English. It had to be a foreign sound.

After about 20 minutes of standing up there and having people shout over me and catchers standing behind me, I began to become disillusioned and just wanted to go back to my seat and sit down. Ah, but people were watching me! Youth from my church! So I faked it. I spoke some words praising God in Russian (my second language), and the man coaching me was satisfied. When we returned to our home church that Sunday, the pastor told everyone that Brother Paul was now "filled with the Holy Spirit" and everyone cheered and applauded. But I knew it was a fake, and I never told anyone but my wife. And now SermonIndex.

A few years later I was accepted into the Assemblies of God as a certified minister and given the title "evangelist" and "reverend". My pastor vouched for my Spirit Baptism before the board, and attested to the subsequent power connected to my ministry. But he forgot that these signs and wonders were present for years in my ministry before going to Waxahatchie and being coached to speak in a foreign tongue.

I have since relinquished my credentials with the AG due to various issues, but believe they are a good organization and mean well. All throughout the Bible and church history we see that God is sovereign in His dispensations and giftings, and that when we try to put Him in a mold He confounds our theories with present, irrefutable reality. He does what He pleases when it is said and done, and no one can command, categorize or legislate His sovereign will otherwise -- especially when it comes to the moving, birthing-again and filling of the Holy Spirit.

Re: - posted by UntoBabes (), on: 2010/12/29 11:21

Wow, I think we finally agree. Let God be God.

On the other hand, I know I do not have the Holy Spirit baptism and it is getting to me because I believe that any effort to evangelize would be a work of the flesh and will not produce true Holy Spirit conviction.

I have gone to some pentecostal churches but have not felt that the Spirit is even there. I know the time right now is a time of apostasy but are there any genuine Pentecostal preachers around that still do that? I don't want to receive something foreign, and with all the holy laughter and nonsense that is going on now, I am afraid to just go some place where I regret it.

I also heard that some people have received the baptism directly from God. What is the difference?

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2010/12/29 12:36

Quote:
-----I have gone to some pentecostal churches but have not felt that the Spirit is even there. I know the time right now is a time of apostasy but are there any genuine Pentecostal preachers around that still do that?

Yes, I believe that there are Pentecostal churches that have the genuine moving of the Holy Spirit. But the vast majority of churches today are operating in soul power rather than Holy Spirit power. A deception that is almost impossible to differentiate from the real if you do not have the gift of discernment.

If you're looking for tongues and making that a requirement from God (in other words, legislating how God must perform His sovereign will), don't be surprised if you find yourself searching and searching. God has His own plan for your life, and it may be similar to D.L. Moody's or Finney's experience of Holy Ghost baptism - with no tongues at all, but a definite "infilling" after their initial salvation experience. Or God may choose to endue you without a distinct, heralding "baptism experience" like he did with Whitefield and Wesley and suddenly give you such supernatural authority in evangelism where men flock in droves to hear the gospel and cry out in repentance and fall to ground as if dead. There are no cookie-cutter patterns with God, and you'll need to unprogram yourself from expecting God to go a certain route with you in terms of the moving of His Spirit. The other alternative is to hold to your already-settled convictions and continue on in the path you're going. It doesn't matter how many books you read by Wigglesworth or anyone else: God's sovereign will for your life is God's will, and nothing can change it. But I think you can restrict it, or delay it, with the wrong mindset.

I received power when I understood not that I needed to be "baptized"; God saw my heart and met me where I was and filled me with His Spirit. It was only after the fact that I realized what had happened. The process was reversed with me, I guess you can say.

Re: - posted by UntoBabes (), on: 2010/12/29 12:59

Quote:
-----God may choose to endue you without a distinct, heralding "baptism experience" like he did with Whitefield and Wesley and suddenly give you such supernatural authority in evangelism where men flock in droves to hear the gospel and cry out in repentance and fall to ground as if dead.

No flocking in droves necessary.

I think we all need power in our witnessing, be it to our families, neighbors, or church members.

Many think they are saved but they are not, and nothing will convince them until they experience what true salvation looks like.