

Outpouring of Divine Love



The Holy Spirit in You (Part 9)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we continue with our theme, "The Holy Spirit in You."

We've been studying together various ways in which the Holy Spirit gives us supernatural help to lead the kind of Christian life that the New Testament reveals is God's plan for His believing people. So far, we've looked at the following specific forms of help we receive from the Holy Spirit. First, revelation and interpretation of God's Word, both the written word (the Bible) and the personal word (the Lord Jesus Christ). Secondly, through the Holy Spirit we're lifted onto a supernatural plane of living; we taste the powers of the age to come. Third, the Holy Spirit gives us supernatural direction, power and ability in prayer. Fourth, the Holy Spirit imparts supernatural life and health to our physical bodies.

Today I'm going to speak about the greatest and most wonderful of all the blessings the Holy Spirit offers us: the outpouring of God's divine love in our hearts. I want to turn, first of all, to Romans 5, and read the first five verses:

> "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."

Notice the climax there in the fifth verse, the last verse that I read:

> "Hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."

Paul outlines some stages of spiritual progression in those five verses, which I would just like to go through very briefly.

The first stage is we have peace with God; second, we have access into God's grace through faith; third, we rejoice in hope of God's glory, hope of something in the future; fourth, we rejoice also in sufferings (and that's because of the results that sufferings, rightly received, produce in us). And Paul then lists three successive results of suffering, rightly endured: the first, perseverance; the second, proven character; and the third, hope. I'll just go through that list without pausing to explain any details: peace with God, access into God's grace, rejoicing in hope of God's glory, rejoicing also in sufferings, perseverance, proven character and hope. And then we come to the climax: God's love is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The word for "love" there is the Greek word agape which, in the New Testament is normally (not invariably) restricted to God's own kind of love which is unachievable except through the Holy Spirit. In the natural, in most cases, we cannot ever produce agape out of our own nature.

A little further on, Paul then goes on to define the nature of this kind of love, agape love. And he explains how it was manifested in God and in Christ. Romans 5:6-8:

> "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us [His agape love for us] in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

When Christ died for us, according to Paul's words there, there were three words that described us: powerless, ungodly and sinners. That's agape love. It's self-giving, it doesn't lay down any prior conditions, it doesn't say you've got to good, you've got to do this or do that; it's simply freely given out even to the most undeserving, the most helpless, the most unworthy.

Now, I want to just trace with you in the New Testament the various phases by which agape love is produced in us. First of all, it's the product of the new birth. In 1 Peter 1:22-23, Peter writes this to Christians:

> "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God."

The possibility of loving with agape love originates with the new birth—the new birth from the eternal, incorruptible seed of God's word produces in us a new kind of life of which love is the very nature.

Let's look also at what John says in his first epistle, chapter 4, verses 7 and 8:

> "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."

You see again, that kind of love is the mark of the new birth. A person who has been born again has it, the person who has not been born again cannot have it.

Now, the next phase of this process of imparting divine love to us is described by Paul in Romans 5:5. We've read the words but we'll look at them again:

> "...hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."

After the new birth, on that new nature that is produced by the new birth, the Holy Spirit pours out the totality of God's love into our hearts. We are immersed in love. We are brought in contact with an inexhaustible supply—the total love of God has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. I want to emphasize that it's something divine, it's something inexhaustible, it's something supernatural, it's something that only the Holy Spirit can do.

Compare what Jesus says in John 7:37-39:

> "On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'If a man 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 [capital 's,' the Holy Spirit], whom those who believed in him were later to receive."

You see the contrast. We have, first of all, a thirsty man who doesn't have enough for himself; but when the Holy Spirit comes in, that thirsty man becomes a channel for streams of living water. That's the love of God poured out into our

hearts. It's not human love, it's not a portion of God's love; it's the totality of God's love—we're simply immersed in the love of God. The whole, endless and infinite love of God has a channel to flow through our lives by the Holy Spirit. A thirsty man becomes a channel of streams of living water.

Now I'm going to turn to the famous love chapter of Paul in 1 Corinthians 13. At the end of chapter 12, he says:

> "...I show you a still more excellent way."

That "still more excellent way" is unfolded in the opening verses of chapter 13. And this is what he says in the first three verses:

> "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love [agape], I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing."

It's very, very important that we see that. All the gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit are intended to be channels or instruments of divine love. If we do not use those gifts, if we do not make them available to the love of God, we frustrate God's purposes. We may have all the other gifts, but we're simply left like a clanging cymbal or a noisy gong. We are nothing, we have nothing.

I think it's important that we see the words that Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 13:1. He says:

> "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal."

I believe when the Holy Spirit comes in, He comes into a heart that has been purified by faith and that's turned toward God. But later it's possible to dry up; it's possible to miss God's purpose and misuse what God has made available to us. And in that case, it happens as Paul said, "I have become a clanging cymbal or a noisy gong." I wasn't that way when I received but through missing the purpose, I have become like that and I frustrated God's purpose.

I'd like to compare with that what Paul says in 1 Timothy 1:5-6:

> "The goal of all Christian ministry is love. The purpose of God for the Christian is the consistent expression of divine love."

So let me just sum up the three phases as I see it in this process of imparting God's love to us. First, the new birth. When we're born again we become capable of that kind of love. Second, the outpouring of the totality of God's love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who's given to us the inexhaustible resources of God made available to us. And third, the expression of that love worked out in daily living through discipline and character training. That's when that love that comes from God is through us made available to our fellow human beings.

I remember once looking at Niagara Falls for the first time and thinking that tremendous quantity of water poured out that it was like the love of God poured out. And then I thought to myself, "Nevertheless, its real purpose is not fulfilled merely in the outpouring but when that power is channeled and used to bring light and heat and power to the inhabitants of many of the major cities of the North American continent, then the purpose is achieved." And that's how it is with us. We receive God's love when we're born again; it's poured out over us by the Holy Spirit; but it becomes available to our fellow human beings as it's channeled through our lives in discipline and training.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow, I'll be explaining just how you can open up to the Holy Spirit and receive Him in His fullness.

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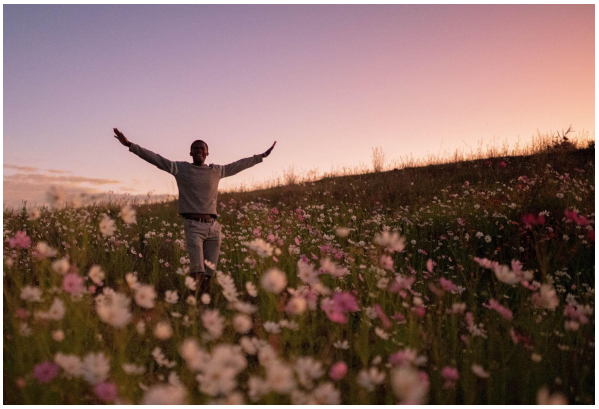
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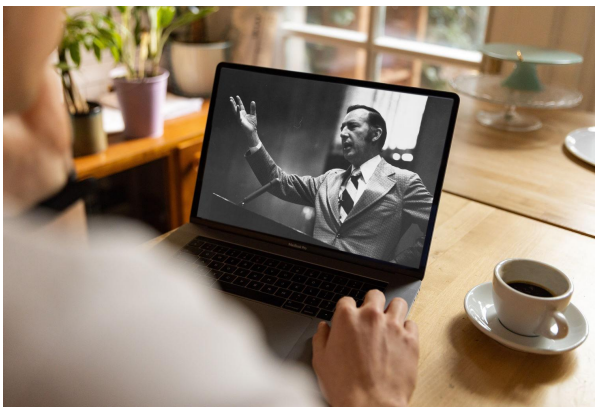
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