

Message given on St. Luke's Sunday, 17.10.2021 at St. Paul's Church, Kandy, at the virtual Holy Eucharist by **Dr. Himali Jayasekera** as led by the Holy Spirit.

GOING UP TO THE NEXT LEVEL IN OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY.

The trumpet call of our Lord goes out to the Church, His Bride, "*Come up here*" – *Revelation 4:1*.

"And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His image with ever increasing glory (from one degree of glory to another) which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit"(2 Cor.3:18).

This verse makes it clear that the Lord wants us to enter into the glory of the divine life (the spirit life) and become like He is. It is His Holy Spirit in us that enables this transformation.

Life is Spiritual. As stated in *Genesis 1:27*, "*God created man in His own image*". So God being Spirit, created man a spiritual being. Man is a spirit, who has a soul (mind, emotions and will) and lives in a body.

Then in *Genesis 2: 7*, "*God breathed into his nostrils the breath (spirit) of life, and man became a living soul*". So an image made of clay (dust) was made alive by the Breath of God. So we see that life originates from the Spirit of Life, who is God.

We came from the spirit realm and we go back there after natural death (death of the body or first death). *Ecclesiastes 12:7* says, "*and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it*".

(The second death is death of the soul which is separated from the spirit of life. Since the spirit lives eternally, spiritual death is a state of perpetual suffering which comes as a result of being separated from the life-giving Spirit of God, and is called eternal death).

We know that after creation, man was placed by God in the spirit realm, in the Garden of Eden. Then Satan, the spirit of death, brought man under his own subjection by deceit. Man was then banished from the spirit realm and fell

down to the natural realm. *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23)*. In the natural realm, we experience the negativities of life, such as defeat, disease, destruction, decay and death. *“The thief (Satan) comes but to kill, steal and destroy” (John 10:10)*.

But thanks be to God, Jesus Christ came to lift man back up to the spirit realm, to the divine life lived through His Spirit, which is called Eternal Life. This is what the Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension and Glorification of Christ has achieved for us who believe. *“He rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of His beloved Son” (Col.1:13)*. What a glorious Salvation!

But why is it that we who have received this salvation by faith, and are sealed with the indwelling Holy Spirit of God, do not experience His divine life here and now?

Proverbs 3: 5-6 says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding”. We need to realize that the understanding of our minds is limited to the natural realm. We need to have spiritual truths revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. In other words, we have to enter fully into the faith realm.

We need to go deeper than the understanding of our minds. Trust builds up in our hearts as we experience the works of God in our lives. Then trust becomes faith, when with our will we choose to act on the Word of God, rather than on the understanding of our minds. Thus we prove the truth of the Word of God by our faith filled actions and conviction develops in our spirits. This gives us boldness to proclaim the Word of God. *“Everyone born of God overcomes the world (natural realm). This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith” (1John 5:4)*.

The Bible is very clear about the spiritual basis of disease and death. Jesus clearly demonstrated this in His ministry on earth, bringing healing through deliverance from demons (spirit beings) and highlighting the connection between sin and disease. But Satan has pushed this concept out through science, which has still not caught up with the spiritual realm. *“The god of this*

age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light.....” (2 Cor.4:4).

While on earth, we are in “Spirit School”, to learn how the spiritual realm operates and interacts with the natural realm. There are spiritual laws just as there are natural laws, and we need to find these laws, hidden in the stories of the Bible, in which we find God interacting with human beings. These Biblical accounts show us that it is possible to experience heaven on earth.

We pray daily, “Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). God saved us to manifest heaven on earth. But how can we do this? It is by allowing the Holy Spirit within us to flow out through us to display His divine attributes. At Salvation, the Spirit of God indwells us and transforms us from within to the extent that we cooperate with Him. At the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God flows out and immerses us, and manifests His power for all to see. This is how we become His witnesses.

Jesus asked His disciples to wait for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is only after that, that they were empowered to be His witnesses. Witnesses are empowered to give evidence of the truth of God’s Word. *Mark 16:20 says, “The disciples went everywhere and preached, and the Lord worked through them, confirming what they said by many miraculous signs”.*

Now, this may be hard for us in mainline churches to accept, but the time has come to face the facts and make things right. Without the manifestations of the power of the Holy Spirit, Christianity is just another religion. And without the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the church is a powerless church, unable to witness effectively. Little wonder then, that we remain to be 1% of the population of this country, after 500 years of Christianity in this nation.

Another fact we need to come to terms with is that our battle is with spiritual forces. *Ephesians 6:12 says, “for our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world and spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places”.* The Scripture is clear that we cannot contend with spiritual forces using natural means.

2 Corinthians 10:4-6 says, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal (natural), but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds".

What are the two offensive spiritual weapons given to us to combat our spiritual enemy? As mentioned in *Ephesians 6:17-18* says, "*Stand therefore,.....with the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit".* Praying in the spirit means praying in spirit language, given to us at the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. This lifts us to the spirit realm, opening us up to have spiritual experiences and enabling us to do spiritual battle.

So what must we do?

1. First and foremost, we need to repent:

- a) For choosing to rely on the understanding of our minds and re-interpreting Scriptures naturalistically to suit our mindset.
- b) For restricting the action of the Holy Spirit in and through us by refusing the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

2. Believe the Word of God as it is, and ask for the revelation of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all the truth.

"The natural man does not accept the things of the spirit..and is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned"(1 Cor.2:14).

Science is the study of the natural realm and relies on experimentation.

Scripture is the study of the spiritual realm, and requires revelation.

We need to develop our spiritual senses to grasp spiritual knowledge.

3. Cast out fear of the Spirit realm.

"God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7).

What is a sound mind? It is a mind that is transformed by the Word of God- or reprogrammed to have a spiritual perspective. If our mindset is worldly, we are carnal (natural). If our mindset is spiritual, we are spiritual.

- 4. Desire and ask in earnest for the fullness and baptism of the Holy Spirit** with all His gifts and manifestations. He has given Himself to us fully and is longing for us to allow Him to manifest in all His fullness in and through us, so that we will experience His divine power at work in our lives, and that we may be effective witnesses for Him. We have a gracious promise from the Lord in *Luke 11:13*, “*How much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him*”.

So let's heed the trumpet call of our Master to come up where He is, and see things from His perspective, from above down. For too long we have been content to be in the natural realm, looking from below up. *Ephesians 2:6* says, “*God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus*”. Let's ask Him to open our spiritual eyes to see this. And “*May the God of all grace, who has called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered awhile, make you perfect, establish, strengthen and settle you*” (1 Peter 5:10-12). May God bless you all. Amen.