

THE CHALLENGE

1. THE BEGINNING
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"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then,

with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."

(Ephesians 6:10-18)

At the University of Chicago Divinity School each year they have what is called "Baptist Day." It is a day when all the Baptists in the area are invited to the school because they wanted the Baptist dollars to keep coming in.

On this day each one is to bring a lunch to be eaten outdoors in a grassy picnic area. Every "Baptist Day" the school would invite one of the greatest minds to lecture in the theological education center. One year they invited Dr. Paul Tillich. Dr. Tillich spoke for two and one-half hours proving that the resurrection of Jesus was false. He quoted scholar after scholar and book after book. He concluded that since there was no such thing as the historical resurrection, the religious tradition of the church was groundless, emotional mumbo-jumbo, because it was based on a relationship with a risen Jesus, who, in fact, never rose from the dead in any literal sense. He then asked if there were any questions.

After about 30 seconds, an old, dark skinned preacher with a head of short-cropped, woolly white hair stood up in the back of the auditorium.

"Docta Tillich, I got one question," he said as all eyes turned toward him. He reached into his sack lunch and pulled out an apple and began eating it.

"Docta Tillich..., " CRUNCH, MUNCH... "My question is a simple question," CRUNCH, MUNCH.... "Now, I ain't never read them books you read..." CRUNCH, MUNCH... "and I can't recite the Scriptures in the original Greek..." CRUNCH, MUNCH.... "I don't know nothin' about Niebuhr and Heidegger..." CRUNCH, MUNCH... He finished the apple. "All I wanna know is: This apple I just ate,-----was it bitter or sweet?"

Dr. Tillich paused for a moment and answered in exemplary scholarly fashion: "I cannot possibly answer that question, for I haven't tasted your apple."

The white-haired preacher dropped the core of his apple into his crumpled paper bag, looked up at Dr. Tillich and said calmly, "Neither have you tasted my Jesus."

The 1,000 plus in attendance could not contain themselves. The auditorium erupted with applause and cheers. Dr. Tillich thanked his audience and promptly left the platform.

We have "tasted" of the Lord and His blessed Holy Spirit. (I Peter 2:3) We can be like five frogs sitting on a log. Four decided to jump off. How many are left?

Answer: Five.

Why? Because there's a difference between deciding and doing.

So, what will we do? I pray this has not been just one more study course, but by application we will produce much fruit.

EXERCISE 81

Fill in the blanks from the American Standard translation:

"But ye are not in the flesh but _ _ _ _ _ , if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, _ _ _ _ _ ."

(Romans 8:9 ASV)

The most important thing in the life of any Christian is to be filled with the Holy Spirit! The Lord Jesus said, "Without Me ye can do nothing." Christ is in believers in the person of His Holy Spirit. Therefore, if we are filled with His Spirit, He works fruitfully through us. If we are not filled with the Holy Spirit, we are unproductive.

It is almost impossible to exaggerate how dependent we are on the Holy Spirit. We are dependent on Him for convicting us of sin before and after our salvation, for giving us understanding of the Gospel, causing us to be born again, empowering us to witness, guiding us in our prayer life--in fact, for everything. It is no wonder that evil spirits have tried to counterfeit the work of the Holy Spirit and confuse His work.

There is probably no subject in the Bible upon which there is more confusion today than that of being filled with the Holy Spirit. There are many fine Christian people who seem to equate the filling of the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues or some emotionally ecstatic experience. There are other Christians who because of excesses observed or heard of in this direction have all but eliminated the teaching of the filling of the Holy Spirit. They just do not recognize His importance in their lives.

Satan places two obstacles before men: (1) he tries to keep them from receiving Christ as Savior, and (2) if he fails in this, he then tries to keep men from understanding the importance and work of the Holy Spirit. Once a man is converted, Satan seems to have two different approaches. He tries to get men to associate the filling of the Holy Spirit with emotional excesses, or the opposite swing of the pendulum, to ignore the Holy Spirit altogether.

STAND

Lord help me to stand on the truth of your word.
Let me not stumble from the lies of this world
but let me know the truth so the truth can set me free.

Help me to stand on my knees and bow down to You and only You.
Let me give prayer, praise, and thanksgiving to You in all things
and let me hear your word, ask and receive,
seek and find, knock and have the door opened.

Help me to stand in the gap of an unbelieving world.
Let me not give up or give in
but let me stand firm with the full armor of You, God.

Help me to stand at any cost for You.
Let me never fall down,
but let me take up my cross daily for you and endure all hardships.

Help me to stand in all ways in all circumstances.
Let me not forget my reasons for standing or Who I'm standing for,
but let me always give all the glory to You who gives me strength.

By **John E. Wright** of Perry, Kansas
Written July, 1996 while attending CIY Conference
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"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."
(Deuteronomy 31:6)

Sir Winston Churchill took three years to get through eighth grade because he had trouble learning English. It seems ironic that years later Oxford University asked him to address its commencement exercises. He arrived with his usual props. A cigar, a cane and a top hat accompanied Churchill wherever he went. As Churchill approached the podium, the crowd rose in appreciative applause. With unmatched dignity, he settled the crowd and stood confident before his admirers. Removing the cigar and carefully placing the top hat on the podium, Churchill gazed at his waiting audience. Authority rang in Churchill's voice as he shouted, "**Never give up!**" Several seconds passed before he rose to his toes and repeated: "**Never, never, never give up!**" His words thundered in their ears. Once more with tears in his eyes and a rock firm voice he shouted, "**Never, never, ever give up!**" There was a deafening silence as Churchill reached for his hat and cigar, steadied himself with his cane and left the platform. His commencement address was finished. So short, yet never to be forgotten!

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." (Galatians 6:9)

