

The Spirit of Freedom

E. J. Waggoner

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together” (Rom. 8:14–17). The glorious truth every one of us ought to know is that God has given to us the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of adoption, and that we are children of God. God has given to us the Spirit, not of this world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God.

Jesus Christ came to His own; and even to this day, His own receive Him not; but O, what a glorious message there is, even in that reproof that they who did not receive Him, but who mocked Him, despised Him, plotted against Him, yes, helped to crucify Him, even they were His own, they belonged to Him! Is there not comfort in that for you and me? **Can you and I ever doubt our acceptance with God?** Can a shade of doubt ever come into our minds that we are the Lord’s, when these who rejected Him, who crucified Him, were His own? He came to His own. They were all His own; all live to Him; all live only by His life.

Jesus was born, not of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the flesh, but of God; so that every one who believes on His name, every spirit, every soul, that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God. So simple and so easy is it for us to step out of bondage into freedom, out of darkness into light, out of being sons of the wicked one to being the children of God. Every one who confesses the truth! **O, how easy it is for people to be saved! How easy has the Lord made the way of life!** It is not necessary to speculate and worry over some hard theory; all we need to do is simply to recognize the things that are, and to believe the truth. That which is, and the truth, is that we are living, not by ourselves, but by Jesus Christ, by the Spirit. This is the life of every man in the world. “That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world” (John 1:9).

And what you and I, my friends, want to understand and know and remember is our personal relationship with God. We want to understand our personal relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ,—that He came in the flesh. He has come in the flesh; but the glory of this is not simply that which it brings to Him. Our salvation does not end with the individual. Again and again I repeat that your salvation is only an incidental thing. **It is easy for the Lord to save us: but the glorious thing is that God can take you and me, and make us a means of salvation.** That is what brings out my gratitude more than anything else. When our minds are wholly absorbed in that, when we get that into our hearts, we do not stop half-way, we do not make the gospel as salvation end with our own individual cases: but we realize that God has given us light and truth, in order

that they may shine forth, through us, to others; and that God has sent us into the world, even as He sent His only begotten Son; that as Christ was in the world reconciling the world unto Himself, so has He put into us the message of salvation, as if God were beseeching through us, as He did through Christ, “Be reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:20).

When you and I get that message into our hearts, there will never be any more doubt about our acceptance with God. There will be tribulation,—far more than we have dreamed of yet,—but in the midst of it all there will be joy with the Lord Jesus Christ. “if indeed we suffer with Him” (Rom. 8:17). What a blessed assurance it is that we may go to every one who is suffering, downcast, and outcast, and assure him that he is suffering with the Lord Jesus Christ! He does not know it; and so the Lord in heaven said, “I will declare Your name to”—whom?—To those miserable outcasts? I will go and stand afar off? I will speak to them, and tell them that if they will do as they ought to do, they will be saved? Is that it?—No, no! “I will declare Your name to My brethren” (Ps. 22:22).

Thank the Lord that in heaven He did not act a part. He did not need to condescend to come down; for He was meek and lowly in heart. The mind that was in Christ—that mind which led him to take the part of a servant—was there. He was as a servant. All that was necessary was to change the form. He did not come down to lower Himself; He called us His brethren. O, the blessedness of the thought that the Lord looks upon every outcast, despised soul, and says, He is my brother! This is the message of salvation that you and I are commissioned to give to the world. We may say to every despondent soul, wherever we are: “You have a glorious heritage. The Lord Jesus Christ claims you. God has not given you up; He is long-suffering; He loves with an everlasting love.” There is an inexpressible joy in carrying to others the gospel of peace. When that is in our heart, we lose sight of our own salvation. We cannot think of it: it is so certain. *“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:16, 17). Knowing this, we know that our own salvation is sure: it is the salvation of other people about which we are anxious.*

But have you got these lessons learned so well that out of the depths you can find virtue! -that whatever your distress, whatever the tribulation, yes, whatever the weakness of your own disposition, you can find strength and victory? Have you learned that? *Have you learned the relationship of the Lord Jesus Christ to us,—that He is one with us,—so that you certainly know that there is no separation between Him and us?* Jesus Christ was tempted in all points like as we are, suffering with us, made in all points like His brethren, one with us, so that **He is our life,—not simply your life and mine, but the life of all flesh.** “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ down from above)” (Rom. 10:6). Christ is the Word, the manifestation of the Word, that is written in the Old Testament. Moses was moved to write the word, saying, “For this commandment which I command you today,”—speaking

to rebellious Israel, who had rejected the Lord, who were stubborn,—“It is not in heaven, that you should say, “Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, “Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it” (Deut. 30:11–15).

So is the word to the soul who is not doing the word of God,—it is there, nevertheless, that he may do it.

The apostle, by the same Spirit, takes up the word: Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will go up to bring Christ down’; for He is down, even in the very depths. He descended into the very lowest place of human misery, and sin, and degradation. “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven!’ ” (Rom. 10:6). He is there also: He has arisen from the dead, and is exalted far above all, that by His might He might fulfill all things. “The word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it” (Deut. 30:14).

Very well, then. He is our life: there is no sensation, even, but of Him. In Him we live, and move, and have our being. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Not one thing touches a soul, but that it touches Him. *Think of it! We do not have the power to feel, to think, to act, except by the life that God has given to us, and that is in us.* He is our life. Everything, whether it be physical pain, the blow that comes to us, or whether it be the pain that is in the body, the temptation,—there is not one phase of suffering, but that we feel it simply because Jesus Christ feels it. He is in us¹, He feels it; therefore we feel it. And this, in order that we may know the power that is within us, that we may overcome. Is not this a glorious gospel? Is it not glorious that the Lord Jesus Christ has given us the power, not only to become the sons of God, but to declare His name to His brethren—to declare a gospel of freedom?

We were bound. How Satan has bound us! You know the woman in the synagogue, who had been bowed together for eighteen years, and could in no way lift herself up. But when Jesus saw her, He said to her, “Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity. . . . And immediately she was made straight, and glorified God” (Luke 13:12, 13). It may be that some of us have been bound twice eighteen years. O, how many of us have been bound, and have been unable to do the things that we should do! We were bound in chains which, it seemed to us, could not be broken,—inherited tendencies, dispositions, habits, appetites, whatever might hold us,—and we could not break the chain. We felt our slavery. We groaned under the lash, in bondage. But **Christ has set us free**. Glory to His name! And God has not given us the spirit of bondage, but the Spirit of freedom, that “He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2:14, 15).

¹ Waggoner, in *The Glad Tidings*, has explained that the “Holy Spirit, [is] His personal presence.”

Do you know what power the Lord Jesus Christ has given to us? God was with Him, and He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the devil. “Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs” (Acts 2:22). By whom was this done!—By a man. God did by Him miracles, wonders, and signs. “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?” (Heb. 2:1–4). And not only to Him, but the message is to all that hear. “Let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ ” (Rev. 22:17). So all of us who have heard the message confirmed to us by those who heard Him, are equally commissioned with them to carry it onward; and God Himself will bear witness with us, that we are the children of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ,—having everything that He has, and at the same time reigning with Him.

“If indeed we suffer with Him.” These sufferings are His sufferings; this temptation that we endure is His temptation; these trials that come to us, these tribulations, are all His.

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