

The Blowing of the Wind: The Work of the Holy Spirit

I would like to share something that helped me many years ago. I had heard much good preaching on the experience that the apostle Paul had on the Damascus road. He was suddenly and dramatically changed from one who vehemently hated Christ and Christianity into one who ardently loved and served the Lord Jesus.

The precious brother who baptized me on July 18, 1954, Elder E. C. Holder, had a similar experience. He had been a rough neck. He had been a brawler and drinker who cared nothing for the things of God. When he was in his early twenties he had a dramatic experience of grace. He was plowing in a field and suddenly he saw his sins, was granted repentance, and his life was immediately and drastically changed. He became an ardent lover and follower of the blessed Lord Jesus.

When he would preach he would tell of this experience and just weep with tears of joy and thanksgiving. I enjoyed his telling this, but it began to bother me because I had not had such a dramatic experience of grace. I knew that I loved the Lord, or thought that I did, but I had not had a dramatic change in my life that I was aware of. One Sunday Brother Holder said something that greatly comforted me. He was preaching from John 3:8 about the wind blowing where it pleases. That Scripture says that "so is everyone that is born of the Spirit of God." Brother Holder said, "Folks, sometimes the wind blows with hurricane force. That is the way it was with me and with the Apostle Paul. At other times the wind blows so gently it is almost imperceptible. That is the way it was with John the Baptist. However, it is the same wind."

That greatly relieved me. Some of you have had dramatic experiences of grace and some of you have had experiences of grace that were not so dramatic. The experience is not what we should focus attention on. The comfort comes from seeing the evidences of the Spirit of God working in our lives. Where are some good places in the Scriptures to go to look for these evidences? I would suggest several:

1. Look at the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-12. Those with these characteristics are pronounced "blessed" by our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Look at Galatians 5: 22, 23. It is very comforting to us if we can see the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives. If we see the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives we can be assured that we have been given spiritual life by this same precious Holy Spirit!
3. Do we enjoy the gospel? Does it come with power to us? Then, according to Paul in 1Thessalonians 1:4, 5, we can be assured that we are in the number of God's elect family.
4. The wonderful epistle of 1 John abounds in evidences that identify God's children. In fact, this book was specifically written that God's people might gain assurance. What are some of the identifying marks of God's people in this great letter?

A. Obedience to the commands of Christ-1 John 2:3," And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."
1 John 2:29," If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him."

B. Loving the brethren-1 John 3:10," In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."
1 John 4:7," Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

C. Believing in Jesus Christ-1 John 5:10," He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son."

May our dear Lord give us the great assurance of our salvation as we see the evidences of grace in our lives.

I know that we will stumble and fall many times but even then He has made gracious provision that our fellowship with Him can be restored. One of my favorite and most often practiced Bible verses is 1 John 1:9," If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

May God bless these thoughts to His glory and to the comfort of his people,

Zack Guess