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The Work in You Is Greater

We can see in the Old Testament that David had a beautiful relationship with the Holy Spirit. He had just been confronted by the prophet Nathan over his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba. His heart of repentance is clearly revealed in Psalm 51:10–12:

*"Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from Your presence,
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,
And uphold me by Your generous Spirit."*

The cry of his heart wasn't to keep his position as king or to hold on to power. He only wanted to preserve his relationship with God, the Holy Spirit. He had a personal relationship with Him, one that was intimate and real. David had known and loved Him since he was a young boy shepherding the sheep. It was during that season of his life that he experienced the Person of the Holy Spirit working alongside him. Anointed at a young age by the prophet Samuel, David fell in love with God's presence. He was empowered by God for specific roles, but he learned that the presence of the Holy Spirit was worth more than anything else in this life.

Moses also had a deep relationship with the Holy Spirit throughout his life. God's presence meant more to him than the miraculous displays of power they witnessed in their midst. Let's read in Exodus 33:11–15,

"So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle. Then Moses said to the LORD, 'See, You say to me, "Bring up this people." But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, "I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight." Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people.' And He said, 'My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.' Then he said to Him, 'If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.'"

The thunder and lightning on Mount Sinai were for the people to revere God—it wasn't for Moses. He had already established an intimate relationship with Him.

There are many men and women throughout history before the cross who shared that common thread of intimacy with the Person of the Holy Spirit. The disciples also experienced that same relationship with Him as they walked with Jesus. They too, were before the cross and, therefore, not yet born again. All of these Old Testament saints experienced the power of the Holy Spirit and were able to know Him in a personal and intimate way.

In fact, it is a staple of our teaching today that each of us should build a personal relationship with Him. We are taught to surrender to Him, die to ourselves, and allow Him to pour into us. We even sing songs like "I want to dance as David danced," expressing our desire to know Him more closely. While this is beautiful and important, Jesus made it clear that this personal relationship was only to be the beginning, not the focus, of our walk with Him.

Many believers have missed this point and remain frustrated that their lives do not reflect the life of Christ. Why would we settle for something made available before the cross when so much more has been made available to us after it? Jesus told the disciples in John 14:16–17, *"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."*

He told them that, at that moment, before they were born again, they knew the Holy Spirit from the outside. This is how many in the Church still seek Him: as a personal relationship. While that is powerful and precious, it is also what the saints of old experienced. But, Jesus said, "and will be in you." This is where I believe the modern Church has missed the mark. Jesus was telling His disciples that after they were saved, they would receive something entirely new, a work of the Holy Spirit within them. This is greater than an encounter.

Encounters are powerful, but they are momentary. The work He does within us is lasting. It is what transforms us and builds Christ in us, His love, His joy, His peace, His holiness. This is not received from the outside in but built from the inside out.

This does not come simply from basking in His presence or attending a church service. This is a work that happens when we allow the river of living water to flow through us. You can enjoy a live football game from the stands, but it doesn't change you. You can stand in the sun and feel its heat, even get a tan, but if you could take the power of that sun, compress it into a small ball, and place it inside of you, that would be something entirely different.

In the same way, the Church has placed too much focus on what the Old Testament saints had and neglected the path to true transformation. When you pray in the Holy Spirit, that is where the deeper work begins, not just around you, but in you. Let's do both: love and experience His beautiful presence on the outside and allow Him to establish Christ within us.

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