

WHAT THE SPIRIT
SAITH TO
THE CHURCHES

BALANCE, HOLINESS
& UNITY

DR. J. T. PARISH

Foreword

On the Fourth of July, my wife, Brenda and I drove about 100 miles to the Kentucky Lake resort area to look at some lakeside property. The lake was beautiful and the property expensive. All was not lost, however, for they had given us a free cooler just for looking at the lot.

With the cooler in the back seat, I asked my wife, “Why don’t we look up Dr. J. T. Parish? He lives down here somewhere.” I had only casually met him once before. Brenda said that was the last thing she wanted to do — meet a preacher — especially the way she looked. But I was determined and persisted.

Soon we found ourselves parked out front and I was knocking on his door. Little did I know the profound effect this little “spur-of-the-moment” side trip would make in our lives. Meeting and talking with Bro. Parish and his wife, Noretta, was the beginning of many blessings that were to come into our lives through them.

Already knowing that God was leading us into the ministry, I knew that day I had found a pastor whom I could follow, a man of God from whom we could draw wisdom.

Dr. Parish told us that the devil has many side ditches for Christians to get off in and that he had already been in most of them. I knew then that he could help us stay out of ditches by his various experiences. How true that has been as we took heed to warnings and admonitions that he spoke to us over the following years.

God has revealed many things by the Spirit to this great man of God. We have watched his life. He not only preaches the Word of God, he truly lives that Word.

May we have ears to hear and eyes to see what the Spirit is saying to the churches through him now.

*Mike D. Herron of Sheep Shed
Corydon, Kentucky*

Introduction

In the Book of Revelation, John received a message for each of the seven churches of Asia. These messages were from the risen, glorified Christ. He spoke the message to the whole church and then applied it to individual members by saying,

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.”

Revelation 2:7

The Spirit is still speaking to His churches today. His message is usually simple, to the point, and easy to be understood.

Many years ago, Kenneth Hagin, Jr. was ministering at Christian Fellowship Church when he said to me, “I have a word for you. The word is DON’T PUSH.”

I didn’t understand. For the life of me, I couldn’t think of anyone I was pushing. At the time, we were in a building program at the church.

One day I reached for the phone to tell the manager of the construction company that we wanted our hired carpenters to work on the pretty, sunny days. Just then the Holy Spirit spoke those words again, “Don’t push!” Very simple, easy to understand, but not so easy to obey!

I realized God must have a reason, so I didn’t push and the work was delayed a few weeks. Then one Sunday, all the money came in to pay for the building. If I had disobeyed the Lord, we would have had to borrow money at that time. It always pays to obey the Spirit of God.

In a different scenario, the Trinity Baptist Church in Louisville Kentucky, and Pastor Roy Lamberth were hosts for a great Charismatic conference. Twelve speakers brought messages. None knew the subjects the others were preaching. Yet, the Holy Spirit distinctly gave a theme — a message to the churches. He spoke three words:

Balance

Holiness

Unity

I pray that you have your spiritual ears tuned into Heaven and will hear “*what the Spirit saith to the churches.*”

— Dr. J. T. Parish
Founding Pastor
Christian Fellowship Church
Benton, KY

Chapter 1

BALANCE

When driving your car, the secret to getting to your destination is “staying out of the ditches”. Stay on the road! And remember . . . there is a ditch on *each* side.

The devil specializes in “under-emphasis” and “over-emphasis”. He will try to pull you back from the truth of God’s Word. But if you insist on following the Lord, the devil will then try to push you over into error of one form or another — the side ditches.

Heresy is simply a truth taken to extreme and driven out of balance.

FAITH

In past years, many churches had their faith damaged by unbelieving preachers and churches. They were taught that God would not heal, that the day of miracles ceased with the death of the twelve apostles, and that the Scriptures that speak so clearly about the supernatural power of God do not apply today. The church was out of balance.

Yet, in their hearts there arose a hunger.

They found the answer to that hunger and experienced the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Jesus became real now — not just a historical figure. The Word came alive. Worship became enjoyable. The church didn’t have enough services to feed their hunger. They began attending Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowships, Ladies Aglow, and various teaching centers, and visiting Charismatic churches during special meetings.

The messages were faith-building:

God is omnipotent! God can save, heal, fill, deliver!

God can do anything — and He will!

(After an intensive study of the great faith-building passages, a person feels like he can almost walk on air!)

Everything became balanced again. Thank God for faith. Without it, we cannot please God. Faith surely is better than doubt and unbelief. You can believe and receive or doubt and do without.

But then the church headed into the other ditch of “hyper-faith”, or “harsh faith”. Preachers taught, and many accepted the teaching, that all doctors and all medicines are evil; if you take aspirin, you have sinned according to the faith message in the side ditch. They didn’t know that “faith works by love”.

One man told me that I should tell people that I would not pray for them unless they agreed to quit all doctors and medicines. My answer was, “I will never do that.” People are on different levels of faith. One person may live in divine health, but he must not bring condemnation upon a brother who has not attained to his place of spiritual maturity.

“Now abideth faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.”

I Corinthians 13:13

Faith is a wonderful truth. It is not the only truth, but it is one truth. The faith message is a great message, but it is not the only message.

You keep your faith balanced with love and compassion. Don't become a specialist ignoring everything *except* the faith scriptures. Study ALL of the Bible and you will be able to minister the “*whole counsel of God*”.

DELIVERANCE

Charismatics find themselves swinging like a pendulum on a grandfather clock. Many start with a liberal theology of almost unbelief. They believed the devil was a myth, a figment of the imagination.

Then came their New Birth. With this personal experience with Christ came the fundamentalist belief in the inspiration of the Word of God. Now they understand that the devil is a real being, but still think he's probably in China or India; that if he's in America, he would only hang around saloons, night clubs or, perhaps, the race tracks.

Then the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is experienced. Jesus becomes even more real, but so does the devil. Spiritual warfare becomes a reality. We discover that the devil has an entire army of little demons. We learn about deliverance — the casting out of demons. Suddenly deliverance becomes the one and only ministry — the “cure all”. If a light flickers, you must rebuke the devil. If the house pops as it settles, it's a demon.

Do you see the extremes? In one side ditch, we see the liberals and fundamentalists who either don't believe the devil and demons even exist, or don't believe they have to be dealt with at all.

In the other ditch, to the other extreme, are all those people who see a demon behind every tree.

We need balance.

There is a devil. There are demons. They are evil, intelligent, spiritual beings who afflict, harass, vex, oppress, depress, and possess people.

Deliverance is a real ministry. (See Mark 16:17.) However, it is not the *only* ministry nor an automatic cure all for all problems. You cannot cast out the flesh, neither can you crucify a demon. You need discerning of spirits.

A great argument has arisen as to whether or not a Christian can have a demon. It would be difficult to imagine a more fruitless argument. It is almost based on the use of terms. Those who say a Christian cannot have a demon admit a Christian can be depressed, oppressed, vexed and harassed — but not possessed.

What difference does it make whether a demon is inside your body or sitting on your shoelaces? If he is bothering you, you need to get rid of him!

A Christian should do all the normal disciplines of the Christian life. He should read the

Bible, pray, witness, and worship regularly. If a certain problem will not yield to those normal Christian disciplines, then perhaps some deliverance is needed.

But deliverance is not a one-shot cure all with a lifetime guarantee. Deliverance is a walk. The demons will attempt to return. But you can keep them out by being filled with the Spirit and by walking daily in the Spirit and in the Word of God.

The Spirit is speaking to the churches. He is saying, "BALANCE." Believe and practice *all* the Word of God. Stay on track! Stay out of the ditches.

Chapter 2

HOLINESS

The Holy Spirit has another word for the Body of Christ — HOLINESS. This word means different things to different people. We must come to understand what God means by “holiness”.

OUTWARD

One person may be concerned with “looking” holy or “acting” holy. Really, we don’t need any more “acting”. We need some **“being.”**

It is possible to wear your sleeves the right length and fix your hair just right, take off all the jewelry and makeup, and be as mean as a snake in your heart. You can have such outward holiness that you won’t even have a ring around your bathtub, but still be a long-tongued, cruel, and critical gossip who brings havoc to the body of Christ.

“A root of bitterness” in your heart puts you a thousand miles from real holiness — no matter how many church rules you obey.

IN THE HEART

The Psalmist said God “desires truth in the inward parts”. (Psalm 51:6) The Bible tells us to

“perfect holiness in the spirit and the flesh.”

II Corinthians 7:1

God is a Spirit. He deals with man in the spirit. He creates us as a new creature in Christ. He changes us on the inside. A real inward change will cause an outward change. You don’t get your mouth washed out to get rid of filthy speech. You get your sins washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ. When your heart is clean, the speech from your mouth will be pure as well.

GOD'S PURPOSE

God has purposed to populate the world with a holy race of people. Adam sinned and marred God's perfect creation. God brought in the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, to regenerate the descendants of Adam. Jesus is the head of a redeemed race. God is yet going to succeed in having a holy race of people on earth.

YOUR REASON FOR BEING

You are on Earth for one a reason. In Revelation 4:11, we are told that we are here for God's pleasure. In Ephesians 1:4, we are reminded that we are not saved just to go to Heaven. The purpose of our salvation is that we should *be holy*. Naturally, we will eventually go to Heaven for where else could a holy person go?

SANCTIFICATION

Holiness and sanctification are terms used interchangeably. The first meaning is "set apart". You have to be set apart *from* something and be set apart *to* something. Christians are set apart from the world and set apart to God.

WITHOUT SPOT

The Bible makes it clear that Christ is coming back for a church

"without spot and without wrinkle."

Ephesians 5:25-27

You can be sure that He intends to remove some spots and wrinkles in the near future.

Jesus is coming back in the clouds, but it won't be a cloud of cigarette smoke. I hope you also know that His bride won't be a beer guzzler or even a social drinker. His bride will be dressed in fine linen, clean and white, at the Marriage Feast of the Lamb.

If real repentance and a clear-cut break with sin bothers you, then check to see where you are headed.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

An unsaved person would be more miserable in Heaven than in Hell. He doesn't have the nature for it.

The sad thing is that we see people today who don't like to go to church. They make all sorts of excuses. Yet, they imagine they are going to Heaven when they die. How could anyone who dislikes worshipping here on earth enjoy Heaven?

But for those who do go to church regularly, remember, it is not "how high you jump" nor "how loud you shout". The thing that counts is how straight you walk when your feet hit the ground.

HONESTY

Holiness becomes very practical. We need a baptism of honesty in the everyday business world. We had a Watergate government because we have been a Watergate people. But Christians must be truthful, straight, and honest. God requires “clean hands and a pure heart.”

The Spirit is speaking to the church. The word is “HOLINESS”. Do you have your ears on?

Chapter 3

UNITY

The third word the Holy Spirit is speaking to the church is UNITY.

The church is plagued with enough disunity to make angels weep. Yet, Jesus prayed for unity in His great high priestly prayer. (John 17) Jesus gets answers to His prayers. This prayer is also going to be answered.

Men quite often try to answer Jesus' prayer for unity by devising their own plans. But man has always been a colossal failure when he attempts things on his own.

Instead of unity, a program of "union" has been proposed. But you can have union without having unity. If you tie the tails of two tomcats together and throw them over a clothesline, you have union. However, it won't take a close observer to detect a lack of unity in the two cats!

Union is an attempt at conformity. Real unity comes in diversity.

A BODY

The Bible says that the church is a *body*. (I Corinthians 12:12-15) Harmony is the body in good health. Disease may be seen as "dis-ease".

The human body is remarkable. It is made up of multiplied millions of cells. Cells of a certain kind make up a tissue. Certain tissues together produce an organ. Several organs working together compose a system. The human body has eleven such systems.

When one cell refuses to work with the others and begins to go wild and multiply itself, we have a disease known as cancer. Any sickness is death in its early stages. Cancer is an especially deadly disease.

When one member of the body of Christ begins to promote himself or build a personal kingdom, he creates a spiritually-cancerous system that damages the entire body of Christ.

Some want unity like the snake. The snake said to the frog, "Let me swallow you and we will be one." But real unity will come when we unselfishly desire the welfare of our brethren. We must quit using others for the advancement of our own causes.

UNITY OF SPIRIT

We have unity already! We are born again with a spiritual unity with all other born-again believers. We are told to “KEEP” this unity.

“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Ephesians 4:3

Whether you know it or not, the African Zulu who accepted Jesus Christ last week is your brother in Christ. He may be a different color and live on the other side of the world. He may come from a tribal, primitive culture. But he is your brother. He is a member of the body of Christ. What difference does it make what missionary of what denomination took the Gospel to him?

PREJUDICE

Prejudice is the problem. We can have prejudice of *race* or prejudice of *grace*. Prejudice is based on the fallacy that “all nice people like us are *we*, and everyone else is *they*.”

So many different groups claim to be the “true bride of Christ” that surely the angels are weeping. Arguing doctrine will never bring unity.

FIVE-FOLD MINISTRIES

The five-fold ministries will eventually bring unity of faith. When unity of the Spirit becomes unity of the faith, we will be ready for the rapture of the church and the return of Christ.

“And he gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the UNITY OF FAITH, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

Ephesians 4:11-13 (Emphasis added.)

END RESULT

The Spirit is speaking to the churches, saying: Balance, Holiness and Unity. His purpose is that we may be conformed to the image of Christ. He wants us to be Christian — “Christ-like”.

He wants us not only to *do* witnessing, but He wants us to **BE** witnesses for Christ.

Do you have your ears on?

Do you hear what the SPIRIT is saying?

More importantly, will you obey His Word?

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We recognize the truth that ALL Christians are ministers -- EVERYONE -- and, therefore, we each need to be equipped to serve the Lord in whatever calling or area He has placed us. Further, some are called into specific full-time ministries.

Paul's admonition to Timothy is still good for us today. ***“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” II Timothy 2:15***

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