

"You Don't Have To Do This"

We are still in the Mark Series, but the section we are in on Jesus' parables, and specifically on the "seed" parables, is causing us to look at other parts of the Bible.

Please go with me to Exodus 17 and perhaps the connection to a kernel of wheat will become apparent before long-

Exodus 17:1-7

¹ *The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ² **So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink."***

Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?"

³ *But the people were thirsty for water there, **and they grumbled against Moses.** They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"*

⁴ *Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "What am I to do with these people? **They are almost ready to stone me.**"*

⁵ *The LORD answered Moses, "Walk on ahead of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. **Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.**" So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the LORD saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"*

We have visited this passage before *but* not for the reason we are here today. There is a symbolism for us in the actual history of Israel wandering in the wilderness for 40 years before God would bring them into the "Promised Land".

They are no longer slaves to Egypt *but* they are, obviously, still **slaves to sin.**

They are rebellious, complaining and unbelieving. Never mind that God has just delivered them from Pharaoh by means of the ten plagues. Never mind that, they crossed the Red Sea on dry ground. Never mind that, after they were safe they watched while God clapped shut the two walls of water on Pharaoh's charioteers.

After all, they are getting thirsty, and God seems to be dragging His feet a bit. No wonder God calls His people "*children*", both then and now.

They challenged Moses with, *"Why did you bring us out of Egypt to this place; so we could all die of thirst?"*

Apparently, they would have stoned Moses! Okay, go ahead and stone Moses, then what? My question is, **"How much are we like this when God doesn't meet our schedule?"**

Nevertheless, God was merciful and He told Moses how to get water out of a rock. I remember asking my dad for money and he would say, "You can't get blood out of a turnip", then, "You can't get water out of a rock."

"Strike the rock and water will come out of it for the people to drink". And so Moses did this, and **water came out for them to drink.**

Thirty-Eight years later the Israelites came back around to this same place. They complained again about being thirsty and God gave them water out of a rock again. In that 2nd instance, recorded in Numbers 20, the description of what happened is more satisfying to the reader. It says,

"Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank."

The man who influenced me and Carolyn as teenagers often said, "If God can save your soul, He can give you a hamburger when you need one." We remembered statements like that when we were up here in St. Louis with two boys at the time, and with no visible means of support.

If need be, our God *can* get water out of a rock!

Let's run down the list of symbols and symbolism in these 7 verses:

#1. Their wilderness journey corresponds to times when we have wilderness experiences whether for 40 days or 40 years. We know that their journey did not *need* to take 40 years. It could have been over in weeks, but their unbelief in spite of many miracles kept on delaying their occupation and enjoyment of the Promised Land.

Correspondingly, our lack of faith keeps on holding us back, individually, as families and as a congregation, from experiencing the "Promised *Life*"- the abundant life, the victorious resurrected life that God has offered us.

#2. Moses, in striking the rock, symbolizes God.

#3. The rock represents Jesus. In Romans 9:33 Jesus is the "*rock of offence*". Paul quotes Isaiah saying, "*See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in Him will never be ashamed.*"

But I Corinthians 10:4 *specifically* refers back to this passage we are in.

I Corinthians 10:4-6

4** and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and **the rock was Christ.

#4. The water represents the Holy Spirit.

How do I know? The Bible tells me so.

Jesus spoke of the water that comes from Him when He talked with the woman at the well. He said, *"If you knew the gift of God and Who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked of Him and He would have given you living water."* (John 4:10) ***"Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*** (verse 14)

In John 7:38 Jesus said, *"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to ME and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within and in him."*

Acts 1:4b-5 Jesus said, *"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift My Father promised, which you heard Me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."* One symbolized the other.

So, the striking of and gushing out of the water from the rock represents God the Father striking Jesus-once, *"for it pleased the Lord to bruise Him"*. God offered His Son as a substitute sacrifice for our sins just like how Abraham was willing to offer up Isaac.

And out of Jesus' death on the cross the water of life, of eternal life, gushed out of Heaven to baptize men in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

So Now, let's think of the close connection between the cross of Christ and the pouring out of the Spirit upon believers just 50 days later.

Just as water is necessary for *physical* life, so the Holy Spirit is necessary for *spiritual* life. It is the Holy Spirit Who births us into eternal life in God's eternal Kingdom, and Who baptizes us into the body of Christ. It is the Holy Spirit Who was sent from Heaven by Jesus, and by the Father. This was shortly after Jesus had died for our sins.

The Father and the Son, jointly, sent the Spirit to the world. And what is it that the Holy Spirit does when He comes from Heaven to Earth?

It is the Holy Spirit that regenerates our human spirit when we believe and who gives us the new birth. It is the Holy Spirit who indwells us by taking up residence in our human spirit,

and who shares with us an intimacy which is so close and so personal that the Bible says, "*He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit*".

It is also the Holy Spirit who imparts to us the power we need to have power and victory over sins as we understand how to access it and have the faith to do so.

Since the gift of the Holy Spirit issued from the death, burial and resurrection of Christ it means that the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead is in you! And since the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one; your body is now the temple or housing of God.

And for our purpose in this lesson it means that **you have in your human spirit "resurrection power" to win over sin!**

And just here is our connection with the parable of a kernel of wheat, because a seed of wheat has important similarities to us.

The **innermost** part of the 3-part kernel is the **embryo**. This is a miniature wheat plant in germ form. When the **outermost** part of the kernel or seed of wheat decays and cracks open, or "dies", the embryo germinates in the soil and brings forth much wheat, and many more seeds.

We also have 3 parts, a spirit, a soul and a body.

When the Holy Spirit, fused with our reborn spirit, is released into the soul and our body is brought into subjection to God, we have power over sin, and our light shines and people are drawn to Christ by us and are born again.

This scenario that I am trying hard to describe is variously called the "Resurrection Life", the "Crucified Life", or the "Cross Life" or "Taking up your Cross."

The basis for all of these operations of the Holy Spirit is in the Cross. **You cannot have a resurrection or resurrection power without a death.** Re-surrection means you are re-animated. You are "brought back" to life. When Jesus returns the first resurrection will occur and the bodies of believers will be resurrected. Also, those who are alive will be changed. But for the resurrecting of the body, specifically, to occur the person has to have died.

Now, in the spiritual life, **if you walk in the Spirit**, in the power of your new birth and of the indwelling Holy Spirit, **you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh** (read this axiom, or promise, for yourself in Galatians 5:16).

But choosing to walk in the Spirit means you have also chosen to **not** walk in the flesh. There is a death to self in this. There is a recognition that you cannot re-create the life of Christ through the power of your outward man. You cannot live a holy life in the energy of the flesh or in the cleverness or capabilities of your soul. Let's call your body your outermost part, and the middle part your soul. **Let's call them jointly your outward man**, or simply your "self".

In order to live the Christian life one must reckon himself, or reckon his "self", as dead. We repeated over and over last week putting the emphasis on each different word, "*I-have-been crucified-with-Christ*"

We have a problem. Our problem, brothers and sisters, is that we tend to think that we can live the Spiritual life in the power of our mind, our will and our emotions, which is our soul.

No, the power for your Christian, or spiritual life comes from the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, shared with us by means of the Holy Spirit. He was dispatched back down to us to share with us the resurrection power that was manifested because of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

To access that power we have to "**reckon**" ourselves as dead, dead with Christ

"Are You Dead, Clint?" "I Reckon So"

Reckoning yourself as dead is the technique of the Christian life that will open up the floodgates to your soul *and* allow the water of the Spirit to gush out of your human Spirit into your soul and bring your body into the captivity of Christ.

Let's ask a simple question: What is stronger, the power of sin or the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit?

Answer: The power of the Holy Spirit of God, of course.

Now, what was it that got the Holy Spirit to come down from Heaven and indwell us Believers? The death of Christ!—Strike the rock and the water will gush out!

Okay now, what is it that gets the Holy Spirit *in*, and mingled *with* our new human spirit! And then, what is it that gets the Holy Spirit released into our soul so He can light up our life?

Our co-death with Christ in both cases, and the recognition that it is real. I, really, legally died with Christ.

God reckons it this way and you should too. After all God is the "Truth Master". He does not lie. You don't have to fully understand it at first to agree with God about it.

The Spirit is released into my soul

I am immediately filled with 9 things, "love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22,23). I am filled with the character of Christ. My sinful thought, my wicked intention, is crowded out and displaced and I no longer have the urge to sin.

NO STRIKING OF THE ROCK AT HOREB; NO WATER GUSHING OUT TO SLAKE THE THIRST!

The Holy Spirit has come to make the death of Christ practical to every believer.

Stop trying to win a battle against sin that has already been won. Jesus defeated sin 2,000 years ago. He defeated the long term penalty for sin—damnation, which lasts forever. *And* He defeated the short-term power of sin which only lasts a few decades for each of us.

I do not forecast for you sinless perfection from now on, because of the fact that our bodies are still fallen, mortal and imperfect and our souls are still in a process called "progressive sanctification."

But I am saying that the power that raised Christ from the dead is now in your regenerated human spirit and the Holy Spirit who loves you is capable of giving you consistent and habitual power and mastery over your soul and body, and over sins.

Last year a movie entitled "No Country for Old Men" won the academy award for the best movie. It is about a contract killer who is seeking to find a large amount of drug money that a Vietnam Vet came across accidentally. The Vet figures it's "finder's keepers". As one chases the other, the contract killer believes he has to kill anyone his path crosses who could identify him to the police. The vet realizes he's being pursued but has the confidence that he is capable of defending himself.

Each time a person encounters the stalking killer and realizes he or she is going to be executed they each say, **"You don't have to do this." Or "You really don't have to do this. I could just walk out of here and never breathe a word about you. You don't have to do this".**

The killer even says, "Why does everyone keep telling me the same thing – " don't have to do this?" And then he shoots them!

Here is something you can say to yourself the next time you feel tempted to "shoot yourself in the foot" by committing that favorite sin of yours one more time. Say to yourself, "YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS." "YOU REALLY DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS." You have no obligation to sin. You can walk away from it by reckoning yourself as dead to that sin.

Dead people respond to the temptation to sin differently than live people.