

Benefits of Belief VIII -- Brief Overview and Q & A.

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Date: 11 October 2009

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[0 : 00] We are going to have a kind of open forum today, and I'm doing this because I have been remiss in not providing you ample time for Q&A; in connection with the messages that I've been bringing of late.

So all I'm going to do is briefly run through a few things to bring you up to speed, and then we'll open it for Q&A; for the time that we have left.

But the series that we have been engaging has to do with the benefits that accrue to one who is a believer in Jesus Christ, and they begin immediately upon regeneration.

Regeneration is a work that is provided specifically by the Spirit of God, and there is no other power that can accomplish it. It is a divine act whereby the Spirit of God, in response to a believing individual in the finished work of Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God enters that life, regenerates the human spirit of that individual, and makes that human spirit a new creation in Christ.

With that, there are accompanying a renewed or a new kind of attitude, a new disposition, new interests, new desires, everything that one would expect in accordance with becoming a new person on the inside.

[1 : 29] This is what God does. He renews you on the inside. He changes you inwardly. This is the miracle of regeneration. It is found in Titus 3 and 5, and we've looked at it briefly, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

And in connection with that regeneration, we are also baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. We are placed into union with Christ. We are made one with Him. We become a member of His body.

I want to split theological hairs, but this is not to be confused with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or baptism with the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 2, that the apostles were participants of.

That is different. In that baptism, they were baptized with the Holy Spirit, with a view to power that they would need for the dissemination of the gospel at that time.

You shall be endued with power. After that, He, the Holy Spirit, has come upon you, and you will be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, Judea, etc. That's different. That is the baptism with the Holy Spirit that was in keeping with the ministry that was taking place at that time, and is not to be confused with baptism by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ.

[3 : 01] That's an entirely different thing. That did not occur until the body of Christ was actually in existence, and we know that had to do with the introduction of Gentiles on the scene, because that which makes the body of Christ the body of Christ is Jew and Gentile on the same plane in one body.

You are all children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. Then, in 1 Corinthians 6.19, we saw that we are anointed as well, or we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and we are anointed by the Holy Spirit. We are adopted, or placed as an adult son or daughter.

All of these are dynamics, spiritual dynamics, that take place at the point of salvation. And probably none of us were aware that these things were happening when we received Christ as our Savior.

But as you read the Scriptures, it becomes abundant that God has provided operating assets that we need for conducting ourselves in the Christian life.

These things enlighten, empower, encourage, ennoble. They provide all kinds of things that the believer is to need in Christ.

[4 : 14] And they are all part and parcel of the spiritual blessings wherewith he has blessed us in heavenly places in Christ. What are these spiritual blessings? They are truths.

They are realities that God has provided for us to be implemented by us once we are in the body of Christ. And we would refer you to Romans 8 that talks about, He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all.

How shall he not with him freely give us all things? What are those all things? These are the things that we're talking about. These spiritual realities, spiritual truths. These things are designed to equip, to stabilize, to instill confidence in you for living for Jesus Christ.

And they are all part and parcel for every believer. No exception. Tragedy of it is, many believers do not become aware that they have these realities provided for them.

Consequently, they never really seek to utilize them or draw upon them. And as a result, they go through much of their life impoverished compared to what they could be if they knew what they possessed in Christ.

[5 : 38] We talked briefly about the sanctifying ministry of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 1.13, Christ is made unto us righteousness, wisdom, and sanctification.

We have an intercessory ministry with the Holy Spirit. That's 2 in Romans 8. We know not how we ought to pray, but the Spirit of God prays with us or through us with groanings that cannot be uttered.

He understands the mind of God. These are just some of the benefits that we are considering. And by the way, the ministry of the Spirit of God is probably the least understood of all of the members in the Godhead.

Dr. Walter Wilson used to refer to the Holy Spirit as the unknown God. And for the lives of many believers, indeed he is.

And I'll grant you, there are unfortunate excesses. And there are all kinds of abnormalities and I don't know what else we could call them that are utilized or claimed in behalf of the Spirit of God.

[6 : 52] A lot of fanaticism and a lot of way out things that the Spirit of God in reality has nothing to do with. You need not fear the influence of the Holy Spirit.

He does not produce fanatics. The Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit in the life of the believer, which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, gentleness, meekness, temperance, etc.

Against these things there is no law. That's what the Spirit of God wants to produce in the life of every believer. And emotional excesses that you see and hear people going to, in my estimation, this is nothing but a generation of the flesh and human emotion.

And people are trying to convince themselves that God is alive and well and active in their life. So they go through a bunch of gyrations, emotions, fanaticism, etc. And Christians look at this and you see it on TV and the speaking in tongues and all the rest of the nonsense, the slaying in the Spirit, people falling down backwards.

And it is just so much nonsense. It is an embarrassment to the cause of Christ. And people look at this and they say, this is what Christianity is?

[8 : 08] This is weird. I don't want anything to do with this. Well, I don't want anything to do with it either because it is weird. And it is incredible the excesses that the flesh can generate that is attributed to God.

God has nothing to do with it. This goes on a lot. And we talked briefly about the earnest of the Spirit. And that has to do with the down payment. That means that when the Spirit of God comes into your life, you receive the Spirit as an earnest from God.

The Holy Spirit is a gift from God as an earnest. That means it's a down payment. In the same way that if you were to go out and make an offer on a piece of real estate that you want to buy, the realtor will likely say, well, you'll have to, along with your offer, you'll have to provide some earnest money.

What does that mean? That just means that if you're going to buy this property, you assure the owner that you are going to go through with the deal.

So you give him \$1,000 that's called good faith money or earnest money. That is your assurance to the owner that you will go through with the deal and you will complete the transaction that you have begun.

[9 : 36] So when you receive the Spirit of God as an earnest, that is God's guarantee to you that he who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

The down payment is God's assurance that there is more to come. And that more to come has to do with God completing the task he began in you.

What is that? It's a regeneration of the whole person. The whole person is not regenerated. You are not entirely regenerated.

The only thing that has been regenerated about you is your human spirit. The body, the physical body, awaits the completion of the task.

The human spirit is what God has begun. The body is what he will complete. I have one reference before I want to open it up for comment to you. And that is in Romans chapter 8.

[10:38] And I can see from the furrowed brows and the looks on your face that you need this. So let's go to here, if we may. In Romans chapter 8 and looking at verse 20.

We'll just have to jump in somewhere. Well, let's look at verse 19. And it is so good that we'll start with 18. The apostle said, For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

What is this glory? Remember our Colossians verse, Christ in you, the hope or the confidence or the absolute guarantee, the future glory. The glory that is to be revealed to us for the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

All of creation, all of creation apart from humanity is subject to humanity.

Humanity is under the jurisdiction of humanity. Just as Adam had dominion over the animals of the field, etc. Humans have jurisdiction over all of the animal creation.

[12:08] Man is the ultimate of God's creation on earth. Everything else is under us. And it too is awaiting redemption.

Creation has been subjected to the fall. All of creation has fallen just like man has.

Man is up here. Creation is under him. And when man falls, all of creation falls with him. We live in a fallen world. The animal kingdom has fallen.

The vegetable kingdom is fallen. That's why it produces thorns and thistles and weeds and briars. These are all part of the fall.

And we are told that creation is anxious or longing, waiting eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. That's us. How are we going to be revealed?

[13:09] The creation was subjected to futility, emptiness. Not of its own will, but because of him who subjected it in hope.

God did that because man fell. God could not have man as a fallen creature living in an unfallen creation. So, God subjected all the rest of creation to the fall as well.

So as to accommodate the head of it. That's man. And then he goes on to say, God subjected it in hope or in the absolute confidence, the future absolute certainty, that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

You know, plants and flowers die. Sure they do. You know that. But I don't think the originals did. They were not planted to die any more than man was not created to die.

So plant life is going to be completely regenerated. And I don't know exactly what all that's going to involve, but it's going to be incredible. Creation will be set free from its slavery to corruption.

[14:30] What's involved in the corruption? Death and the process of it and the corruption of our bodies, the decay of our physical bodies. That's all going to change.

The decay of plant life is all going to change into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation grows and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

All of creation that has fallen is just like a woman in labor. And the labor just goes on and on and on and on.

Just like a lot of women in actual labor probably wonder, when in the world is this baby going to make its entrance? It just seems to last forever.

All of creation is in labor now. All of creation is undergoing continual labor pains. Until now.

[15:37] And not only this, but also we ourselves having the first fruits of the Spirit, that's akin to the earnest of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves.

Anybody here groaning? Especially in the morning about 6.15 when your feet hit the floor? That's when my groaning begins.

Sometimes it continues on throughout the day. Sometimes I'm out in my workshop and I'm chugging on a board trying to get it out of a pile of lumber. And I tell myself, I probably shouldn't be doing this this way.

But I didn't listen quickly enough. And then I go over and sit down. You know what that is? That's groaning. That's your muscle in the back says, Marv, what are you doing to me? And it just goes on and on. We are groaning within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons. The redemption of our body.

[16:54] We're going to trade these in. It's going to be wonderful. The redemption of our body. That's the completion of what God has begun.

That's called the glorification of the body. This corruptible will put on incorruption. This mortal will put on immortality. And when that happens, death will be swallowed up in victory. Oh, death, where is your sting? Oh, grave, where is your victory? Victory is Christ's. Then we will be a completed, finished product.

But now we have this redeemed spirit and an unredeemed body. That's why even though we are Christians, we are still going to die physically.

The complete price of our redemption has been paid in what Jesus Christ did on the cross. And that's the meaning of it is finished.

[17:57] That transaction's over. So we are partially complete and we have the guarantee that we will be fully complete because of what he has begun in us.

So, and I'm not going to talk anymore about the filling of the spirit, but you may have some questions about that. And we did mention that that is the only thing that is not automatic. That is to the prerogative of the believer.

And that's in Ephesians chapter five. And we'll visit and visit it and talk about it. If someone has questions or comments, so we've got a roving mic back there somewhere. Anybody with a question or comment, feel free.

Well, if you don't have any questions, I won't preach. I'm going to let you go early. Okay. Anyone?

Well, I'll give you another five minutes and then you'll, don't say you didn't have your chance.

Okay. Okay. Gene has a question or comment. Get the mic. Would you speak more about the Holy Spirit?

[19:18] I am in, I don't know what to say about that, what I'm in with the Holy Spirit. Do we pray also to the Holy Spirit or not?

Do we pray just to the Father through Christ? Would you enlighten me, please? Okay. Good question. The Holy Spirit must be recognized as deity.

He is part of the triune nature of the Godhead. He is a full partner of the Godhead. And I know this is a difficult concept for us to grasp.

It's difficult for me to grasp too. And all we are suggesting in reality is that God exists, subsists, dwells on a higher plane than anything that we are familiar with.

And when we try to reduce God to terms that we are able to fully understand, we simply cannot do that. And it's a good thing that we can't because if we could, he'd really be no bigger than we are.

[20:26] The Holy Spirit is capable of being grieved. He is capable of being quenched.

He is capable of being lied to as Ananias and Sapphira. Why has Satan filled thine heart? To lie to the Holy Spirit. He is in every respect active and involved in creation.

All of creation was brought forth by God the Father who in the beginning created the heavens and the earth.

It was brought forth by Jesus Christ. All things were made by him. Without him was not anything made that was made. And it was the Spirit of God that brooded upon the face of the waters and brought forth the earth.

So all of these are active. All members of the Godhead were active at the baptism of our Lord.

When we had the Son of God being baptized and the Spirit of God descended upon him as a dove and John saw him and bear witness that indeed this is the Son of God and the voice of the Father was heard from heaven and that this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

[21:46] They were all active and involved at the crucifixion because Jesus Christ was on that cross and it was the Father who gave him or handed him over for us all.

And he was offered through the eternal Spirit. And all members of the Godhead were active and involved in his resurrection in that Jesus Christ said, I lay down my life.

I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again. And yet we recognize that he was raised by the power of God, his Father, and he was also given life by the Spirit of God when he came out of the tomb.

So all members of the Godhead are active. All are equal in every respect. We tend to relegate them to positions of authority or dominance and there is a distinction of order.

There's no question about that. But there is no rank in the Trinity. And we tend to think that, well, the Father, he's the one who is really most important.

[22 : 56] And then it's the Son and then it's the Holy Spirit. That's nonsense. That's just human reasoning and rationalizing the way we like to categorize things. These members are co-equal and co-eternal and co-operative.

And there is no jealousy in the Godhead. And there is no preferential treatment in the Godhead. There is an eternal, filial kind of cooperative relationship of love that exists between the members of the Godhead.

And this bears witness to the fact that God is a God of relationships. He is very high on relationships. And he has enjoyed from eternity past a relationship with multiple members of the Godhead.

There are not three gods. And don't let any Muslim tell you that Christians worship three gods. That's complete nonsense. There is one God subsisting in three distinct persons.

One God, three persons. How does that work? I haven't a clue. I don't know. But the scriptures very emphatically teach it. Old Testament and New Testament.

[24 : 08] Does that help, Gene? Okay. Other questions or comments? There is so much that could be said about this that the subject is inexhaustible, really.

Other comments or questions? In the back, Marvis. I wonder if you could speak a little bit more on what you were talking about from Ephesians on being filled with the Spirit.

Yeah, being filled with the Spirit. Okay, that's a wonderful passage in 518 where Paul admonished the Ephesian believers to avoid intoxication that comes from overindulging in alcohol and do not be drunk with wine or intoxicated with wine whereby you are brought under the influence of it and it controls your behavior and your thinking and we know that alcohol has this effect.

But rather be intoxicated or be under the authority, the domination, the power, the influence of the Spirit of God and that is an act of the will.

It is an important thing to note that it is not a suggestion. It is a command. It is in the imperative and a believer who is not under, a believer who is not filled with the Spirit is a believer who is living in disobedience.

[25 : 44] All being filled with the Spirit means is that we are under the control of the Holy Spirit. We relinquish authority over ourselves and we say I am not my own.

I am bought with a price. I belong to someone else. My subjection needs to be not to my own will but to the will of God and I live and serve and move by His pleasure.

Let me put it this way. There is no way that the will of God can possibly be improved upon.

And your main objective in life ought to be that that will will be operative in your life as a believer. God is so much wiser and so much stronger and so much more capable than we are.

Why wouldn't you rather turn your life over to one like that than to make a mess of it on your own? And that's exactly what we Christians do when we walk in the flesh.

[27 : 09] When you walk in the flesh you will fulfill the desires of the flesh. Paul said if you walk in the spirit you'll not fulfill the desires of the flesh. Why is that? Because you cannot walk in the flesh and in the spirit simultaneously.

It's got to be one or the other. You cannot have one foot in the spiritual and one foot in the carnal. Nobody can live that way. And as we submit ourselves to the authority of scripture and place ourselves under the control and the domination of the spirit of God that's how you can best look out for number one.

Is put yourself under the authority of the one who is far more capable than you are. And yet recognize that we all have this thing called the flesh.

We never completely are able to eliminate the flesh. I know there are some Christians who believe that and I don't question their sincerity.

They are people who are referred to of the holiness persuasion and they believe that as a result of a vigorous prayer life and seeking God etc.

[28 : 25] they have finally arrived to the place of where the old sin nature has been eradicated. They have received what they call the second blessing.

The first blessing is salvation. The second blessing is what they call complete sanctification and they arrive at the place where they no longer sin. The flesh is completely eradicated. And I've got a bridge I would like to sell you. We just do not believe that that is possible. We do not believe provision has been made for that. The time is coming when that will be true. But right now we have to deal with the flesh. And this is the struggle of Romans chapter 7. If Paul had this kind of conflict we may be sure that we're not escaping it. And he talks about that. It's a very powerful tug. There is within us the constant the constant drive to want to do your own thing.

[29 : 32] That's just part of our fallen humanity. And every time mine wins out I get into trouble. I just mess up big time. And I realize that I'm off the beaten path where I'm supposed to be. And you can be sure that you always realize the consequences from that. And we need to get back where we belong. So Paul talks about this. And of all of the ministries of the Spirit of God this is the only one with which I am familiar that is not provided automatically. Baptism, the indwelling, the sealing, the anointing, all of these by the Spirit of God, they are all God's prerogative and they all occur simultaneously at the point of salvation. But the filling of the Spirit is subject to your will. You can obey or you can disobey. That is why it is a command.

[30 : 42] It is a command because it can be obeyed or disobeyed. You have the option. And the ultimate way for a believer to travel first class and live first class and get the most bang for his buck out of this thing called life.

Enjoy it and live it to the hilt is to do so under control of the Spirit of God. That is the ultimate. And God has provided that for living in the here and now.

All too many don't even know about it. Many who know about it do not utilize it. More could be said about this but our time is gone. We will conclude our different type service this morning but you never really quite know what to expect when you come here.

It keeps everybody on their toes. Thank you for your kind attention and thank you again artists for being with us this morning. We appreciate it. Let's close with a word of prayer. Gracious Father we are so grateful for all of those spiritual blessings with which we have been blessed in heavenly places in Christ.

We realize that heaven is their origin but earth is where you want them enjoyed and lived out. We simply marvel that you have been willing to provide these precious assets for us.

[32 : 10] Lord help us not to be negligent in utilizing them. Thank you for every gracious provision that you have made for us that is more than ample and most of all thank you for the assurance of sins forgiven and the knowledge that to be in Christ is indeed our guarantee of ultimate and future glory.

Thank you for the redemption that we enjoy in him. Help us to be so excited about it we want to tell everybody. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.