

Christ is Victor

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The “Spirit of Fear” vs The “Spirit of Adoption”

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” (Romans 8:15)

What is the Spirit that we have received? Is it the Spirit of adoption or the spirit of bondage? The Spirit of bondage is trying to recapture people. Paul is fighting to release these people from their bondage. Somehow, we like some bondage. Somewhere some bondage takes hold of us. Bondage of fear is a very common thing and our fertile imaginations multiply our fears. So we keep on imagining things — things which do not exist. That is the spirit of bondage. The Spirit of adoption makes us to focus on the throne. We are told that we are ‘joint-heirs’ with Christ. The Spirit bears witness that we are joint-heirs with Christ. This Spirit of adoption makes us cry, “Abba, Father”.

“And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.” (Mark 14:35, 36) This was in the garden of Gethsemane, and there Jesus cried, “Abba, Father”. This cry appears to be an undefined expression of a strong relationship. Something which you will tell only to a father in great confidence, confiding to him, “Abba Father, what can I do now?” Here Jesus faced the cup of man’s sin. What a moment, the sinless Son of God, faced with this cup of sin! So this heart cry, this sigh, comes from the heart of Jesus. Those who do not carry the cross will never have such a heart cry. We do not like humbling and do not like to own up our sins, or the sins of our nation. I do not think that it has brought pangs of sorrow to us that thousands have perished without the Gospel ever preached to them. We shut our eyes to the crying need of the nations today.

We are very busy with our own work and have no real burden for the world around us. Our Lord Jesus could have been very busy with His service. Organizational work has this great danger. It depends upon your work, so you have to work harder and it is not God at work. This is human regeneration; it has no “Abba, Father” in it. It has no cross, and no blood drops as great sweat drops. No, it is a physical exertion and zeal. Is that what we see? Are those the steps what Jesus teaches us? The burden for souls, the burden for the sins of others is what you should have. If that cry “Abba, Father” goes away, I can tell you that there is a big vacuum, and anything can come into that vacuum. Your thoughts, fears, evil inclinations and lusts, those old habits of speaking lies and half-truths will flood your heart.

But what is the spirit which Jesus gives His children? He says, “I have brought you out of bondage. So your spirit of bondage is gone. Now you have the spirit of adoption. Is there not the cry, “Abba, Father” in our hearts? What kind of spirit has taken hold of us? The spirit of the world is at enmity with God. It makes you think, “How can I get rich quickly?” Where is Gethsemane there? Where is the cry, “Not my will but yours be done” there? Have we lost that cry? We have got to be honest before God and speak no half-truths.

The spirit of truth is the spirit of God and the spirit of adoption is the package of the spirit of truth. It is terrible if you do not want to face the truth. Truth does not spare anybody. But is truth good for you? To know the truth, you should undergo some tests and the truth is not palatable to anybody. I have always proclaimed in England and other countries, that unless a Fellowship has revival ever so frequently, at least every five or ten years, that Fellowship will become dead. In ten years little children become teenagers, and if they do not know revival, if they do not walk in the truth, they have no chance. The fifteen-year-old teenager becomes a new entrant into the job market. When he enters the job market, and money comes into his pocket, he never learnt how to put first the Kingdom of God and he never cried, “Abba, Father” and he is like a sitting duck to the world. Do you see the need for revival? Your heart needs to get that cry for revival. You cannot force it, and you cannot work it up.

Charles Finney spoke of a businessman. He would come from his business and immediately he would enter into the Spirit of prayer of the prayer meeting. Mr. Finney said, “This man is such a busy man and has got such responsibility. But how does he maintain the Spirit of prayer?” He happened to be the guest in his house and so one night, when Finney’s child needed milk or something, he came down from his bedroom at about three in the morning and he found this man lost in prayer and waiting on God. He said, “Now I know the secret, how this man has this Spirit of prayer.” The man said, “The only way in which I can keep in close communion with God is to rise in the middle of the night, to spend time with God.” You know the discipline that it takes.

You can understand that such people have the cry Abba Father. They may be in the world but not of the world; the world never seems to get into them. The Lord Jesus said this twice that, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” That gives me a knockout blow. We have been talking about perfection; there is no use talking in the air: “Be ye perfect even as your father in heaven is perfect.”

We are really like immature little children when it comes to any crunch or crisis. We just speak what we like, give vent to our fears and we just say, “I want my will”. That is not the Spirit of adoption, that is not the Spirit of truth. The Spirit of adoption makes you cry, “Thy will and not my will.” It may be hard and it may be wearisome; it may even kill you. But the Spirit of adoption gives you a firm entrenchment in the will of God, an unbending commitment to the will of God.

God has got a fixed deposit for us. What is that? Heirs to God! Are we running to get it? Have we got the Spirit of adoption? The Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of His Son is sent into us crying Abba, Father. Is that cry coming out of us? When you have that cry, all other cries and compulsions are excluded, because you are a son and your place is with Jesus. Your cry becomes the cry of the heart of Jesus. After so many years of Christian living, where is our maturity? After receiving so much light, we ought to be walking in the heavenlies, walking with God. May God help us!

-Joshua Daniel

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“This is The Way”

“And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.” (Isaiah 30:21)

Have your thoughts become God’s thoughts? After prayer in Peniel, Jacob returned to his family with God. Have you met God? The mother of Samson met an angel. She came and told her husband. Then their thoughts began to rise higher and higher.

When you and your wife pray together everyday, one day you will pray only God’s thoughts. You feel you are swimming in the current of God’s thoughts. What a great blessing it is! When you pray, you pray the will of God. Rebellion pulls us away from God’s thoughts.

David’s beautiful son Absalom never came to reach the level of God’s thoughts. Thus he was full of pride. He daily looked into his mirror at his own reflection. He never wanted God’s thoughts. He was full of rebellion. His father loved him. It was a kind of faulty love. What he did not repent for murder, he kissed him. It was a wrong kiss. God doesn’t do like that, but He follows you with His goodness which leads you to repentance.

God followed Paul and one day overpowered him. One day God’s grace will overpower you. He is at your heels. All the power you imagined and wished for is there with Him. David wanted to be the king’s son-in-law, but God gave him the kingdom itself.

Daniel’s thoughts began to rise higher and higher. One day he prayed in God’s presence to see whether he was right with God and an angel came and said, ‘You are dearly beloved’. As he began to pray an answer was coming. But on the way, the powers of darkness hindered and delayed the answer.

There are powers of darkness around you, but you will conquer. The rebellion in your heart should die and then God’s thoughts and yours will become the same.

It happened so to Abraham. When God asked him for his son there was no resistance in him. The whole Heaven rejoices when a human heart comes to that level. God will bless the whole world through your family. Do you believe that?

Are you sure that by God’s grace the rebellion in your heart will die and God’s power will work through you

to change the whole land? Have you conquered? Has the resistance to God gone from your heart? If God says, ‘Go this way’, will you say, ‘Yes I will go!’ If rebellion dies in your heart, you will hear God’s voice always. He will follow you with his guidance.

In monasteries Luther learnt good discipline and good habits. He did some mistakes. Yet, he was cleansed in the Blood of Jesus. Then he became an apostle. He made great self-sacrifices. He risked his life when he condemned sin in the Church. He expected death at any moment. The whole world may be against you. Yet your spiritual courage will be unparalleled. You can say with St. Paul, “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”

When you are born again, God’s aim is that you should become like one of His apostles. His aims and purposes are very great. But you can be distracted and turn away from His way. The world is alluring you. Remember the saints who kept the world away. Press forward towards His high calling.

- N. Daniel

“Lame Huang”

On April 15, 1981, an elderly man of God named Huang Detang was lowered into a grave in Xiangshan County near Ningbo City. Huang had never been an ordained pastor, but had lived out his faith as an uneducated farmer. The surrounding communities had such respect for Huang that more than 400 people paid their final respects at his funeral, even though it had not been advertised.

Huang first believed the gospel when he was in his forties. Years later, he developed painful boils on his feet which caused him great agony and prevented him from working. Locals gave him the nickname, ‘Lame Huang.’

In his desperation, Huang cried out to Jesus for healing. A short time later he received a vivid dream, in which the Lord told him: “You must truly believe in Me, and I will heal you. You must witness for Me.”

In his dream, Huang thanked Jesus for the help he would receive and promised that once he could walk again he would share the gospel widely. Huang said the Lord told him: “A verbal promise is not enough. You must write a contract of indenture by which you offer yourself up as My servant.”

Huang had only a primary school education and didn’t know what a contract of indenture was or how to write one. He again cried out for God’s mercy and help, and received another dream, in which the Lord showed him how to word the contract. Huang composed the following document:

“I, Huang Detang, sign this indenture by which I offer myself up forever.

Because of my own uselessness, I have boils on my feet. They are very painful and I have nowhere to turn. I can only ask my gracious Savior, my Lord Jesus, to be merciful to me, a great sinner.

I now receive the precious Blood of the Lord as the ransom price which has redeemed me from death to life, and I know that the Lord will heal my feet, take my soul to the heavenly kingdom forever, and I will become a child of God with honor and glory.

Because I have nothing to repay the grace of God, I will most gladly dedicate my body and soul to Him. After

my dedication, I am totally at the disposal of the Lord. No matter where I am sent, I will go.

Whether it is to the east, south, west or north, whether it is climbing mountains or crossing seas, cold or hot, whether I am hungry or thirsty, or if I suffer want and persecution, I will follow the Lord to the end and not be disheartened. No one in my family or among relatives and friends will be able to pose any obstacles or cause me to go back on my promise.

This indenture is the common wish of both parties and neither of them raises any objection. I sign it as evidence of my willingness. Huang Detang.”

A short time after signing his unique contract with God, the boils on Huang’s feet disappeared and he was able to walk freely again.

Over the years, each of the points in Huang’s solemn contract was sorely tested, as God took Huang at his word and stretched his faith by sending him on dangerous adventures that resulted in thousands of people hearing the gospel. From the 1950s to the 1970s he ministered during the darkest days of Communist persecution, and was arrested and tortured by the authorities on several occasions.

Huang’s ministry was characterized by many instances of God prompting him to do things that made no rational sense, but with his indenture in mind, Huang obeyed the guidance of the Holy Spirit and remained true to his pledge, even when it resulted in great personal hardship.

On one occasion when Huang was preaching he heard the inner voice of the Spirit of God tell him, “Love the one in the last row!”

That night he was unable to sleep, and at dawn he met with the pastor and enquired who the person was that had been sitting on the last row of the church. Huang was taken to a tiny shack, where he saw a bedridden man with only a tattered blanket on his bed and dirt covering every inch of the room. The man’s limbs were pale, and only when Huang saw the man in the light did he realize he was a leper.

Brother Huang asked the man how many years he had

believed in Jesus, but he just shook his head to indicate he was not a Christian. He asked the leper why he had gone to the church service the previous night, and he replied that he had received a dream instructing him to go to the meeting because Jesus wanted to save him. On the day of the meeting he was able to get out of bed for the first time in months, and a neighbor helped him to the church.

Huang Detang didn’t know how he could help the man’s dire situation, as he was impoverished himself. Then the Lord told him, “Take off your jacket and give it to him.” Huang was afraid. His padded jacket was the only one he owned. It kept him warm as he walked through the mountains in winter, and he slept in it while on his preaching journeys. “Surely not, Lord. I have great need of it,” Huang argued.

The Holy Spirit said to him: “If you do not give it to him, what you preach is like a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If you don’t have love, what use is it? If you don’t have love, you are not serving Me.”

Huang had to obey in tears, but as soon as he had given his jacket away he felt immensely relieved. He was without a jacket for many years and yet not once did he suffer frostbite.

Sometimes the demands that God placed on Huang were too difficult for other Christians to cope with, and they refused to be involved. For example, once the Lord directed him to share the gospel and demonstrate God’s love to a dishevelled prostitute, who was near death from syphilis. Huang shared the gospel and provided her with food and clothing. The ladies in the local church, however, did not want to stoop so low as to help such a wretched person, but due to God’s love demonstrated by Huang, the woman died a short time later as a follower of Jesus.

Huang continued witnessing for his Lord right up to his death in 1981, at the age of 96. Few people outside his home region in Zhejiang have ever heard of ‘Lame Huang,’ but in heaven he is known as the man who kept his contract with God.

—Excerpt is from Paul Hattaway, Zhejiang: The Jerusalem of China (SPCK, 2019), quoted in Newsletter #160 of Asia Harvest – www.asiaharvest.org

REALITY CHECK!

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” Revelation 20:12

“The Young Diver”

A young man who had been raised as an atheist was training to be an Olympic diver. The only religious influence in his life came from his outspoken Christian friend. The young diver never really paid much attention to his friend’s sermons, but he heard them often.

One night the diver went to the indoor pool at the college he attended. The lights were all off, but as the pool had big skylights and the moon was bright, there was plenty of light to practice by. The young man climbed up to the highest diving board and as he turned his back to the pool on the edge of the board

and extended his arms out, he saw his shadow on the wall. The shadow of the body was in the shape of the Cross. The man felt a strange feeling, like someone was speaking to him at that time. He remembered his friend telling him about Jesus and how He shed His blood and died for us on the Cross. He felt convicted of his sins and so instead of diving, he knelt down and prayed to God to forgive him and asked God to come into his heart and life. Then and there, he felt true peace in his heart.

Just then, as the young man stood, a maintenance man

walked in and turned the lights on. Lo and behold, there was no water in the pool! The pool had been drained for repairs. He felt great joy at the love of God towards him in saving him from sure death and thus bringing him down to his knees to get right with Him.

Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. (Psalm 33:18-19)

-Selected

“True Repentance”

Not too many years ago newspapers carried the story of Al Johnson, a Kansas man who repented and came to faith in Jesus Christ.

What made his story so remarkable was not only his conversion but what followed.

As a result of his new-found faith in Christ, he confessed to a bank robbery he had

participated in when he was nineteen years old.

Because the statute of limitations on the case had run out, Johnson could not be prosecuted for the offence. But because of his complete and total change of heart, he not only confessed his crime, he voluntarily repaid his share of the stolen money!

That’s repentance—radical reconstruction of the heart.

The Holy Spirit changes you through the Word. It’s visible, because you become empowered to show your repentance in your life, just like that former bank robber.

-Selected

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This Fellowship is an inter-denominational missionary and prayer group working for revival in churches and amongst students in several countries. We invite every layperson to become God’s ally in changing his or her corner of the world. We train people in evangelistic work and to be self-supporting missionaries

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“Remarkable Providence”

God never gave me what I wanted. He always gave me more. As a proof, I will tell you the following anecdote:

When I married, I was a working man, and consequently, I had not much money to spare. In about three months after my marriage, I fell ill, and my illness continued for more than nine months.

At that period, I was in great distress. I owed a sum of money, and had no means to pay it. It must be paid on a certain day, or I must go to jail. I had no food for myself nor my wife; and, in this distress, I went up to my room, and took my Bible. I got down on my knees, and opened it, laid my fingers on several of the promises, and claimed them as mine. I said: “Lord, this is Thine own word of promise: I claim Thy promises.” I endeavoured to lay hold of them by faith. I wrestled with God for some time in this way. I got up off my knees, and walked about some time. I then went to bed, and took my Bible, and opened it on these words: “Call upon me in the time of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.” I said: “It is enough, Lord.”

I knew deliverance would come, and I praised God with my whole heart.

Whilst in this frame of mind I heard a knock at the door. I went and opened it, and a man handed me a letter. I turned to look at the letter; and when I

looked up again, the man was gone. The letter contained the sum I wanted, and five shillings over. It is now eighteen years ago: and I never knew who sent it: God only knows. Thus God delivered me out of all my distress! To Him be all the praise!

I would also like to narrate another similar incidence that took place in one of my friend’s life.

He had been out of employment for a considerable time, and was, in consequence, so circumstanced as only to be enabled to keep himself from dying of hunger; in fact, he was left with but eight pence half penny in the world. Nor had he one friend, but the Friend that “sticketh closer than a brother.”

He went to chapel, thanking God for that which was past, and trusting Him for that which was to come, and heard Dr. Newton preach a sermon in aid of a missionary society that was under perplexing circumstances. Sensibly feeling the solemn appeal which the Rev. Doctor made to the liberality of the audience on behalf of the society, he at once gave the whole of his eight pence half penny. But he still trusted in Him who delivered the Israelites out of the hands of Pharaoh.

He rose next morning penniless. But very soon after terminating the duties of his closet, a message came to him,

saying that he was to commence work that morning. He has been in constant employment ever since; and God, in His infinite goodness and mercy, has raised him to a state of respectability. Truly the words of the Lord were verified in this man: “Them that honour me I will honour.”

—W. Robinson

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