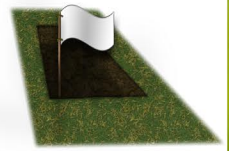


# The Infilling Word

## O Grave, Where is Thy Victory?



**So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption,  
and this mortal shall have put on immortality,  
then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.  
55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?  
1 Corinthians 15:54-55**

It was such a strange occurrence that Wednesday morning ten years ago! My daddy was simply having a medical procedure that he had had before – no big thing! What was weird was that my sister and I both ended up at the hospital where the test was being conducted. The next strange thing that occurred was that our husbands arrived! There had been no plans for us to meet; but, since we were there, we joined Mother in the waiting area.

There was a delay before the procedure, so my sister and I – one at a time – were allowed to go back and see Daddy. He was being his usual self – entertaining the nurses with his good humor and his “song.” My daddy had a song for every occasion and he didn’t mind sharing it!

Back in the waiting area, we were joined by a cousin and were occupying the time with stories of our family’s history when a voice sounded over the loud speaker, “Code Blue, code blue!” My mother’s voice never changed as she continued with her story. My eyes met my cousin’s and shared a silent communication – my Daddy had left the building!

Soon we were asked to join the doctor in a private room and were officially told that my daddy had gone home to be with the Lord. The doctor received quite a surprise as my mother reached across, touched his forearm and comforted him. There was sadness in the room – and a little bit of shock at the unexpected departure – but there was no grief. If my father had been in the room, he would have told the physician that the Lord had come and “kissed his breath away.” That’s what he had been saying for years – the way he wanted to depart. We were all sure that he had received his desire: he had had such faith for it. What a way to go!!!

What we had merely thought was a “weird” occurrence was actually the guidance, direction, and provision of the Holy Spirit. You could say that we were allowed to say “See you later.” The family that lived locally was all there and my mother had companions and support for the situation. Unknown to my sister and me, my father had talked to my mother on that Monday about “going home.” My mother didn’t know that it was a settled “move”. But, after hearing the physician’s story of what happened, I think Daddy just got a vision of what was ahead and decided to go home.

Wednesday morning – the Wednesday before Resurrection Sunday – and I was supposed to preach that Sunday morning! We held his graveside service on Good Friday and on Sunday morning I delivered the morning message, “O Grave, Where is Thy Victory?” I would like to share that message today. A message of victory, of comfort, and of promise!

The promise of resurrection is one of our most precious promises of God. In the resurrection lies one of the most awesome privileges ever purchased on earth – and, it was a very costly gift. The price was the blood of our Savior and His death on the cross.

Why would “resurrection” be such an awesome privilege? Because only in resurrection do we attain the “body” that is required to rule in both dimensions – earth and heaven. While in the “body”, we are limited to the earth – we are subject to corruption and to mortality.

I am a fan of Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary and I consult it often. When I was researching the meaning of corruption, I found that the origin of “corrupt” means to thoroughly break. Then I looked up the meaning of “break” and found some eye-opening ideas that gave me even greater insight into the work of the devil. You do know that he is the one who corrupts, don’t you?

Here are some meanings of the word “break”:

- \* to separate into parts
- \* to disable by shattering or crushing
- \* to destroy the order, continuity, or completeness of
  - \* to diminish the force or effect of
  - \* to overcome by opposing
  - \* to put an end to
  - \* to interrupt the course of
- \* to reduce in spirit or health, as by toil
  - \* to make bankrupt
  - \* to become unusable or inoperative

We often think of the word “corruption” as “decay.” But, “decay” simply points to the “breaking down” of organic (living) matter into separate, small fragments. This action of “decay” results in the failing of health, beauty, quality of life, mental ability, etc. And, it points to the separation that results when sin enters the picture and we lose our conscious contact with God.

Until the gift of Jesus, mankind was subject to death – the state of being disconnected to the life-giving origin of mankind. Sin was the channel by which death entered – the way we were separated from Almighty God. Jesus “became” sin, paid its penalty and arose, conqueror over the grave. Then, He made that same conquest available to all believers.

Romans 10:9-10 gives us the way to get victory over sin and death: *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”* Hallelujah! Being subject to death – mortality -- is swallowed up in victory if we believe!

The declarations of Hebrews 2:14-15 points out another specific benefit to the victory we received in His resurrection. *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”* That’s right, our adversary no longer has the force or might that he once had to keep us in bondage – bondage to death and even the fear of death. We are free!!!

That Friday morning, when we placed my daddy’s earth-suit into its “suitcase” and placed it in the ground, our family led the crowd in singing two of my daddy’s favorite songs – While Ages Roll and I’ll Meet You in the Morning. We sang with joy; we sang with confidence that we would truly meet him again.

Every year that Resurrection Sunday comes around, I like to think the scene in heaven looks something like this:

My Daddy, His Lord, His Heavenly Father, the Holy Spirit, the “great cloud of witnesses”, and all the host of heaven joined in that one triumphant shout:

**O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?  
Happy Resurrection Sunday!**



# The Infilling Word

## RIGHTEOUSNESS

### The Third "R" of the New Covenant



Have you ever done a study on righteousness? It is an exciting and thrilling exercise in understanding the mighty work that Jesus accomplished by His shedding of blood and eventual death for us – for all mankind.

My first book, *The Devil Knows You're Right!*, was based on the reality of the righteousness we have in Christ Jesus. Our righteousness is what gives the devil night terrors, so to speak, and the reason why it does is because it is not our righteousness at all. Our righteousness is actually the righteousness of God Himself, in Christ Jesus. "For he (God) hath made him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

1 Corinthians 1:30 states that Jesus the Christ is made, or is become, unto us righteousness. It is so wonderful to know that we don't have to guess at God's ways of being and doing right. God took the guesswork away by giving us Jesus. If we seek His kingdom and righteousness first, God promises that all other things will be added to us. Colossians 3:1-3 proclaims, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

If our life is hid with Christ in God, then tell me with what power the enemy can effectively overwhelm us? Take a look at the declaration of our standing with God that is given in Romans 8:28-39.

*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God,  
to them who are the called according to his purpose.  
29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed  
to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.  
30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called:  
and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.  
31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?  
32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,  
how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?  
33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.  
34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather,  
that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God,  
who also maketh intercession for us.  
35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress,  
or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?  
36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long;  
we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.  
37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.  
38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers,  
nor things present, nor things to come,  
39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature,  
shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Just think of it! The precious blood of Jesus bought all this for us. He literally provided the righteousness we needed to be able to stand in the presence of God. However, there is a problem associated with this truth – unbelief.

John 16:8-10 speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit in convincing us of the truth of the righteousness that is available to us. It says that the Holy Spirit will "reprove" those caught up in Satan's system. He will "reprove" (the world) of righteousness.

That statement always confused me a little. I could understand how the Spirit could "convince" me of righteousness, but I had difficulty understanding how He could "reprove" me. Maybe you have had the same question. So, let me tell you what I have come to understand.

The work that Jesus accomplished for us through His death, burial, and resurrection can seem so incredible that the enemy has an opportunity to get in there and mess things up. In the natural, it is difficult to believe the spiritual aspects of any of the work of the new covenant. How could the "sacrifice" of Jesus purchase right-standing with God for us?

The Holy Spirit is the one who takes on the task of "proving" to us that righteousness is ours. He imparts to our spirit the veracity of the work that Jesus accomplished at the throne of the Father and underlines it with the guarantee that the Lord "ever liveth to make intercession" for us. In the above Romans 8:34, we are assured that absolutely nothing can separate us from the efficacy of the precious blood of Jesus to obtain right-standing for us with the Father. Romans 3:25 declares that righteousness is ours simply through faith in that blood to purchase forgiveness of sins.

The gift of righteousness is ours by grace – God's willingness to use His power and might on our behalf even though we don't deserve it – and by faith. The Holy Spirit makes righteousness "real" to us by confirming it with evidence: Jesus now sits at the right hand of the Father, having obtained for us the "earnest of our inheritance," the Holy Spirit Himself. That's right; the Holy Spirit Himself is the proof of our righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. He proved it anew! He "re-proves" righteousness as a reality to those who are caught up in Satan's system; and, then He brings them into the status of being "new creatures in Christ" to all who believe the blood of Jesus saves. How, by being the down-payment of our inheritance! The Holy Spirit comes and lives within our heart – a living testimony that Jesus has ascended to the Father and the promise of the Father has now been sent! The Holy Spirit has come and now "abides!"

Now, I could just keep giving scriptures regarding the awesome gift of righteousness, but this leads us very nicely into the fourth "R" of the new covenant – Reconciliation. So, join us next quarter as we continue our study of The Six "R's" of the New Covenant.

Be blessed beyond measure in Christ!

**Related Scriptures:** Romans 3:21-26, 5:17-21, 10:6-10; Galatians 2:21, 5:5-6; Ephesians 4:24, 5:9, 6:14; Philippians 1:11, 3:9; Titus 3:5



# The Infilling Word

## Rock-Solid Faith: Part Three Corresponding Action

**Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine,  
and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man,  
which built his house upon a rock:  
--- Matthew 7:24**

In previous newsletters, we have been discussing what it takes to have Rock-Solid Faith. You know, the kind of faith that allows us to build our house upon a rock -- a foundation that secures our lives even through the midst of horrific storms. We have been using the analogy of "concrete." To make concrete you need gravel, cement, sand, and water. Depending on usage, you might also need something called re-bar.

We talked about the Word of God being the gravel, with faith as a binder -- just like cement is the binder for concrete. Today, let's talk about what we will "add" to the "gravel" of the Word of God and our "cement" of faith -- "sand" or corresponding action!

Without corresponding action, or works, our faith is dead. James 2:17 identifies that faith is dead, or ineffective, because faith without corresponding action is alone or by itself. One of the most powerful "corresponding actions" that we can use is identified in James 3 -- What we say with our tongue!

You heard me correctly. The first action we must change - that represents our faith - is our tongue. We must speak out of our heart and show forth what we really believe. Faith is of the heart, not the head. Sometimes we forget this truth and then wonder why our "declarations" of faith do not come to pass. It is because our words are coming from our mental assertion of the truth that we have heard. Those words have no root and, therefore, will produce no results.

Hebrews 8:10 tells us that God put the "laws" of God into the mind of Israel and wrote them in or upon their heart. First the mind, then the heart. However, Hebrews 10:16 declares that after the coming of Jesus, the "laws" will be put into our hearts and written in our minds. First the heart, then the mind. Just opposite. I don't know how many times I have read those particular scriptures and didn't realize the difference or the importance of that difference!

Mark 4:14-20 is a parable that Jesus told concerning the sower that sowed the word, the type of ground that the word fell on, and the subsequent harvest from each type of ground. So many lessons can be taught from this parable, but the main focus for this particular article is the ground that the "seed" fell into. It doesn't matter whether it was the way side, stony, thorny, or good ground. It was all "ground." What is that ground that Jesus was talking about? The heart!

Because of the work of Jesus on the cross and then in the depths of hell, we were given a heart of flesh, replacing our heart of stone. Our hearts became the "resting place" for the word of God to abide. That word! That *Living Word* - which is sown a "seed" and grows into a fruitful harvest! Why? Because it is sown in a heart that is ready and willing to receive it.

It matters what "word" we put into our heart, because what goes into our heart is going to come out of our mouth at some point or another. Whether we like it or not, that is just the reality of words. Jesus said, "*for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*" In fact, this teaching, found in Matthew 12:25-37, is a wake-up call for all of us. The Lord tells us that we will have to give an account of the words that come out of our hearts -- through our mouth!

A lot of people can fake it until the pressure comes on them. But, when the pressure gets on them, what they really believe is going to come out of their mouth - sooner or later. We all have our bad moments, but we need to guard against letting our tongue get out of control and say things that do not correspond with the Word of God.

Corresponding action can simply be lining up our words with the words of the Lord. We say what He says in His Word. We want the words we say to spring up out of our heart, which we have filled with His precious word as revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.

Are the words that we speak the only "corresponding action" that we can take? Absolutely not! However, what fills our heart dictates our words and our behaviors. And, think about it. Don't our words dictate our behaviors in the long run? We say something, think about what we said, and then act on it. Correct? The action originates from what is in our heart that ends up being "written" on our mind and spoken by our mouth.

Take a look at Romans 10:5-10. These scriptures tell us that the right standing we have with God through faith "speaks." That "righteousness," or right-standing, declares that the "word" is in our mouth and in our heart. Then, verse 10 states the progression: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." First the heart, then the mouth!

So -- what is the "sand" in our rock-solid faith? Corresponding action! We mix the gravel of the Word, with the cement of faith, add the corresponding action of our speaking and behavior, put a little "water" with it and watch the concrete of faith become stronger -- so strong, in fact, that we can build our "house" upon it, or our life.

Let's recap. What is our best corresponding action? -- Watch what we say and make sure what we say is based on the powerful Word of God! Is there anything else we can add to make our faith even stronger? Yes! Let's add some "water"!

Please join us next time as we add the water of the Holy Spirit to make **Rock-Solid Faith!**

**Supporting Scriptures:** 2 Corinthians 4:13; James 2:17-20; James 3; Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26; Romans 10:5-10



# The Infilling Word

## Hindrances to Faith: Lovelessness



During the last few newsletters, we have been looking at different hindrances to faith. Last time, I began looking in a direction that God gave me concerning John 10:10 linked with 1 Corinthians 13:13; and, what an eye opener it was! Let's refresh the idea.

The Lord told us in John 10:10, *"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."* As I related last time, the Lord told me to put it with 1 Corinthians 13:13 which states, *"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."*

Putting these two scriptures together underlines certain thoughts that are revealing and powerful:

- The thief comes to steal your faith . . .
- The thief comes to kill your hope . . .
- The thief comes to destroy your love . . .

Satan is a thief, meaning to cause you loss. It may be by stealing or killing or destroying; but all cause a failure to keep in one's possession. We looked at the enemy's purpose to steal our faith and to kill our hope. The last aspect we need to look at is that the adversary comes to destroy your love.

The word "destroy" has some interesting ramifications. Strong's Concordance tells us that it doesn't necessarily mean extinction but ruin and loss of well-being. The enemy wants your love life to be in ruins! He wants you to believe, and experience, that God does not love you. He wants to rob you of the love of God that has been shed abroad in your heart. You know, the love that lets you know with absolute certainty that God is your Father, Jesus is your Brother and Lord, and that the Holy Spirit has come to abide within.

He also wants to take from you the experience of loving. There is something wonderful that happens when you are blessed with loving relationships. Those relationships may be with family or friends; and, believe it or not, you can even experience love with strangers. The love I'm talking about is the God-kind of love, not romantic or even brotherly love. This is the kind of love that comes from the very depths of your being and flows out like a mighty river to others. Yes, it affects others; but, more importantly, it affects and changes you!

Satan wants to absolutely demolish love in your life because it is what identifies us with God. God is love; and, it is God Himself that is shed abroad in our heart. God Himself takes up residence in us. And, if the enemy can destroy that? . . . then fear sets in.

Whenever fear sets in, then we know that faith has left our hearts – at least regarding that particular subject of fear. 1 John 4:18 states, *"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."* If our "love" is not sure, fear arises. If fear arises, then faith is not active. How do we know this? Because the Word of God tells us that faith "worketh by love," or is activated by love. No love or weak love, then no faith or weak faith. And we wonder why Satan works so hard to keep fear, hopelessness, and hatred in our lives!!

If you just look up to 1 John 4:17, you will find a very startling declaration, *"Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world."* What? Does that really say that if our love has come into maturity, we have boldness in the day of judgment because we have come into a position of being as Jesus is?

Now, before you get all in an uproar, I did not say we become Jesus. No, I said the scripture says we come into a position of being as He is because the love of God has come to a place of maturity in our lives. Ephesians 4:11-16 talks about this very thing – coming into maturity -- *"unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."* And if there is anything Satan does not want to see happen, it is that we take our place in the Body of Christ as full participants as we *"bruise Satan under"* our feet.

As we have been discovering, there are a number of hindrances to faith; however, I think that lovelessness may be the worst. Why do I say that? Because 1 Corinthians 13:13 proclaims, *"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."* (Emphasis by author) If love is greater than faith and hope, then love is absolutely essential in the life of spiritual victory.

There is so much more to say about hope and love, especially concerning faith; however, I just want to end with a reminder of a couple of scriptures. First, the very familiar scripture of Hebrews 11:1, *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* Second, Galatians 5:6 which states, *"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."* These three "powers" – faith, hope, and love – are tightly entwined.

I am reminded, as I write this, that Ecclesiastes 4:12 tells a simple truth that all of us probably have come to recognize even in the earthly sense; and, that is this, *"a threefold cord is not quickly broken."* How much more so as we contemplate these three awesome powers! I call them "powers" because they enable us to live a Christ-like life of victory, overcoming all the power of the enemy. These "powers", entwined, will defeat the devil every time. Praise God!

So, how do we keep the enemy from stealing our faith, hope, and love? We stay in the Word of God.

*\*"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17)*

*\*"If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister." (Colossians 1:23)*

*\*"But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him." (1 John 2:5)*

And, really, it is simply a matter of putting on the whole armor of God. God has provided everything that we need to defeat the devil. We simply have to lay hold on the wonderful weapons of our warfare and be diligent. God always causes us to triumph!

Join us next newsletter and discover another hindrance to faith. May God's grace abound toward you!

**Supporting Scriptures:** Romans 5:5; 1 John 4:8, 18; Galatians 5:6; Romans 16:20;  
Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Corinthians 2:14