Exploring the Bible—Gospel of John (17)

The Spirit of Reality and a New-born Child

**Scripture Reading:**

7 But I tell you the truth, It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. 8 And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and concerning righteousness and concerning judgment: 9 Concerning sin, because they do not believe into Me; 10 And concerning righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you no longer behold Me; 11 And concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. 12 I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 But when He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you the things that are coming. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will receive of Mine and will declare it to you. 15 All that the Father has is Mine; for this reason I have said that He receives of Mine and will declare it to you. 16 A little while and you no longer behold Me, and again a little while and you will see Me. 17 Some of His disciples then said to one another, What is this that He says to us, A little while and you do not behold Me, and again a little while and you will see Me; and, Because I am going to the Father? 18 Therefore they said, What is this that He says, A little while? We do not know what He is talking about. 19 Jesus knew that they wanted to ask Him and He said to them, Are you inquiring among yourselves concerning this, that I said, A little while and you do not behold Me, and again a little while and you will see Me? 20 Truly, truly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. 21 A woman, when she gives birth, has sorrow because her hour has come; but when she brings forth the little child, she no longer remembers the affliction because of the joy that a man has been born into the world. 22 Therefore you also now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy away from you. (John 16:7-22)

**Ministry Reading:**

In verses 14 and 15 the Lord said that the Spirit of reality “shall receive of Mine and shall disclose it to you.” All that the Son is and has is revealed as reality to the believers through the Spirit. This is to glorify the Son with the Father. The Spirit discloses the Son with the Father to the believers. He makes all that Christ is and has real to us.

How the Spirit makes God in Christ real to us? The Bible says that God is light (1 John 1:5). The Bible also says that Christ is light (John 8:12). This means that the very light, which is God Himself, is the Son. But how can this light be realized? How can it be real to us? It is realized through the Spirit. When the Spirit moves within us, the light is shining. The light is both the Father and the Son. The Father is the source and the essence of light, and the Son is the embodiment and expression of this light. We realize this light in actuality by the Spirit. When the Spirit moves within us, He is the reality of light.

The Spirit is the reality of all that the Father and the Son are. Without the Spirit there is the essence of what the Father and Son are, but there is no realization. Take the example of electricity. Although we may have electricity, it still needs to be applied for a specific purpose. That application of electricity is the realization of the electricity. Likewise, the Spirit is the application of all that the Father and the Son are. Without the Spirit as the realization and application, everything may be real, but it is not available or applicable. If we would apply all that God and Christ are, we need the Spirit. We must praise the Lord that today He is not only the Father and the Son but also the Spirit. He is not only the source and the course but also the application. The Spirit reaches us, entering into us and applying all that we need of the Father and the Son. This is wonderful.

In verses 16 through 24 we see a point which is rather difficult to understand: the Son was to be born in resurrection as a newborn child. The Lord had told His disciples that He would be killed and that this would make the world happy but the disciples sorrowful (v. 20). Then the Lord told them that a woman who is about to bring forth a child has sorrow at the time of birth, but when she brings forth the child, she no longer remembers the affliction because of the joy that a man has been born into the world (v. 21). After the child has been delivered, the woman will be happy because a man is born. Who is this woman? The woman is the whole group of disciples. Who is the child, the son? The child is Christ. What is the birth? It is resurrection.

At the time the Lord spoke this to the disciples, He was one with them, like a child conceived within its mother, waiting to be delivered in birth that He might be a newborn child. In this sense, His disciples were the delivering woman in travail. In those three days, the disciples did suffer the travail of the birth of Christ in resurrection to be born as the Son of God. After the Lord’s resurrection, this “woman” had a newborn child and she rejoiced (20:20).

The man born into the world is the Son (v. 21). The Son was to be born in resurrection (Acts 13:33) as the Son of God (Heb. 1:5; Rom. 1:4). It was by resurrection that the Lord was born as the Son of God. The Lord was born as the Son of Man in the manger, but He was born as the Son of God in resurrection. Acts 13:33 proves this: “God has fully fulfilled this promise...in raising up Jesus, as it is also written in the second psalm, You are My Son; today I have begotten You.” On what day was Christ begotten as the Son of God? On the day of resurrection. His resurrection was a birth.

**Life Applications:**

The church life is absolutely dependent upon the Spirit. Mere doctrines concerning the Father and the Son are inadequate. We need a living application of the Father in the Son by means of the Spirit. The Spirit glorifies the Son by revealing Him with all the fullness of the Father. Let us take the example of humility. No one is born humble. People wrongly say that children are humble, but every little child is proud. We are proud by birth and by nature. Moreover, we are proud in our living. What is humility? Humility is Christ. Christ is the reality of every human virtue and every divine attribute. All the human virtues and all the divine attributes are simply Christ Himself. In a good and positive sense, Christ is everything. He is humility, love, patience, and submission. Outside of Him nothing, including us, is good. Every virtue and every attribute is Christ. How does the Spirit glorify Christ? He glorifies Christ by revealing Him item by item. For instance, in all that Christ is, there is an item called humility. One day the Spirit reveals Christ to you as your humility. This is not a doctrine of humility; it is the living person of Christ revealed to you as humility. Spontaneously, a living humility will come out of you. That is the glorification of Christ. The Spirit glorifies Christ, the Son of God, in this way. He does not do it by teaching you about Christ as humility, but by directly revealing Christ as humility to you. This humility then comes out of your very being, and this coming out of humility is the glorification of the Son.

Eventually, every characteristic of Christ will be expressed in the church life. There will be no Jewish, Greek, American, British, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, or any other kind of expression. There will be only the expression of Christ. This is what it means to say that the Spirit glorifies the Son by revealing Him in the fullness of the Father to the believers. We all need to have much experience of this. This will enrich, strengthen, and uplift the church life. If the church life has all of these actualities, it will surely grow.

Question for Discussion: Who is the newborn child in John 16? What does he have to do with the Spirit of Reality mentioned previously? And how does it relate to all of us?

Reference: Life-Study of John, Msg. 36-37