

Call to Obedience #324
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In Search of Ministerial Standards.

The Minister and the Holy Spirit (Part 3)

By Pastor Reimar A. C. Schultze

"…But be filled with the Spirit" – Ephesians 5:18

We have been considering how ministers and, in fact, all of us, can come to the knowledge of true doctrines. Jesus said: " *If any man do his will, he shall know of the doctrine*" (John 7:17). The secret of knowing the doctrines of God is more in obeying than in studying. Of course we need both. Churches are greatly divided over doctrines. This has birthed all kinds of denominations, generated strife and competition. Disobedient men have left the Holy Spirit out of their understanding of the Bible. Peter said, "*The Holy Spirit is given to them that obey Him*" (Acts 5:32). We miss the mark in all spiritual matters if we don't obey God. The natural man does not perceive the things of the Spirit of God, but if we have the Holy Spirit "*he will guide us into all truth*" (John 16:13). The two disciples on the road to Emmaus did not understand what they were reading. The Bible says that Jesus met them and opened their understanding (Luke 24: 13-45). So, **a minister needs the Holy Spirit in order to understand the written Word.**

A minister needs to be led by the Holy Spirit. Paul said, "*as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*" (Rom. 8:14). In the life of Jesus every step was led by the Holy Spirit. Many say that the Bible is our only guide. Listen, friend, the written Word did not tell Jesus to go to the wilderness at the beginning of His ministry. It was the Holy Spirit. Luke says, "*And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness*" (Luke 4:1). How do you know where God wants you to be this afternoon or tomorrow? By the Holy Spirit! If three churches are calling you to be their pastor, how do you know which is the right one? You can only know by the Holy Spirit. How do you know which song to sing, who should testify or be on the church board? How will you know when to have prayer meetings, or how many hours a day Jesus wants you to spend in your prayer closet? Only by the Holy Spirit can you know which way to travel; whether to take the shortest route or the longer one, the easiest way or the more dangerous. Jesus did not know which way to go from Judea to Galilee until the Holy Spirit told him to go through Samaria. Who did Jesus find in Samaria? He found a woman who was ready to be saved and become an evangelist (John 4:3ff). Could she have been found any other way but by the Holy Spirit? A shepherd needs both rod and staff, so a pastor needs both the written Word and the spoken Word. If we don't have both, we cannot experience the promise "eye

hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9).

All of Jesus' leadings came from the Holy Spirit; it must be so with us. Paul said, "*as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*" The Book of Acts has many illustrations of the apostles being led by the Holy Spirit. Who told Philip to join the Ethiopian in his chariot? (Acts 8:29) How did Peter know that there were three men at his door waiting to see him? It says, "*the Spirit said unto him, behold three men seek thee*" (Acts 10:19, 20). Who forbade Paul and Silas to preach the gospel in Asia and told them to preach in Europe? The Holy Spirit! (Acts 16:6) Is there any committee, board, or study group that can, in their own wisdom, tell you where to spend your church mission money or where your missionaries should serve? How often are missionaries and missions money sent to the wrong places! When it comes to our churches and our daily lives, unless the Holy Spirit is leading us, we will miss the mark here, there, and most everywhere.

In most of our churches people are not fed. Their hearts are not fed. The music may be excellent, the preaching may be powerful, the rituals may be beautiful, but, in most cases, when people leave they have not been fed. They observed a performance, but their hearts are still hungry. Their hearts are not stirred and they don't know why. Only by the Holy Spirit can God's people be fed. There is no other way. We preachers need to get this into our hearts: parishioners cannot be fed any other way. If the Holy Spirit is not leading in the message, the singing and the program; believers cannot grow in the Lord. There is no growth without the Holy Spirit's ministering. Without the Holy Spirit people will remain the same decade after decade despite all their churchgoing. Nothing in the kingdom of God advances without the Holy Spirit. Nothing! Anything that does not come from the Holy Spirit is dead from the start no matter how good it may seem in the beginning. Christianity is supernatural. If it is not of the Holy Spirit, then it is not Christianity.

Let me end this section with a more contemporary story. A missionary went to Africa. He took two students with him. When he arrived, he thought: I can go a hundred miles in any direction without finding a single man who ever heard of Jesus. Randomly, he sent his students in one direction and he went another. Going from village to village, he was nearly killed three times. Discouraged, he went back to his wife and they prayed. Then the Lord led him to a village where he met a witch doctor. The witch doctor said, "Where have you been? In a vision, I saw three white missionaries coming to my village to tell me about God. Where have you been all this time? Your two men arrived here and I have put them in prison, holding them till you would come." The witch doctor and many villagers were marvelously saved.

On another occasion this same missionary passed by a man in a cage. He was kept there because he was insane. The Holy Spirit said to the missionary, "You don't care about this man, but I do. Go back to him and pray for him." God healed him, and the next day he was set free. Yes, Jesus literally wants to lead us. Oh, what would it be like

if the Holy Spirit led us all? The minister needs the precious Holy Spirit as much as a farmer needs land and as a fish needs water.

A minister needs the Holy Spirit so that he will become like a little Jesus. We call this Christ-likeness. Many try to become like Jesus by attempting to acquire fine character in their conduct, attitudes and reactions. Through civilized human efforts, they work at being more like our Lord. But, friends, you cannot become like Jesus except by the Holy Spirit. First the Holy Spirit wants to birth you. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*" (John 3:5). Then the Holy Spirit wants you to be sanctified; that is to be separated from all the things of the world, the flesh, and the devil. "*For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication*" (I Thes. 4:3).

Next, the Holy Spirit wants to fill you (Eph. 5:18). The Holy Spirit can only fill that which is empty, entirely empty. Everything of the earth: the flesh, the self-life, human ambition, pride and prejudice have to go to the cross. If we engage in any worldliness, criticism or foolishness, the Holy Spirit cannot lead us. If we are harsh with our spouses or our congregations, the Holy Spirit cannot lead us. Being led by the Holy Spirit exacts a high price and few are willing to pay it. We need to take up the cross daily, die and die and die so we can live and keep on living. Until we do that, we will not obey, and we will not be ready to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Ministers of the gospel, we have no sermon unless we become a sermon of Christ-likeness; being like our Master in conduct, attitudes and reactions. Someone rightly said that a man's character is most clearly revealed by his reactions.

Finally, **we need the Holy Spirit in order to witness.** "*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witness unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth*" (Acts 1:8). This is for all of us, but the minister should be the leader in evangelism at home and abroad. All churches, no matter how poor they are, should have a missions program beyond their own borders.

The bottom line is this: **only by the Holy Spirit can we be fed.** We, as ministers, must have this precious Holy Spirit. We must walk in the Spirit and equip our sheep to be vital partakers in a spirit-filled ministry.

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