

Finishing Well

Lesson #6

Hindering the Spirit-filled Life

February 8, 2023

The gates of Jerusalem depict the Christian journey from the Sheep Gate to the Inspection Gate. Each gate is in a specific position and ready for us to pass through on our journey. Each gate portrays Jesus Christ in His humility and in His glory. Begin at the Sheep gate.

Priority Gates: Sheep Fish Old

Note: There is a long distance between the Old gate and the Broad Wall.

- Learn to walk with Him & trust Him in everything.
- If we don't work on establishing that strong relationship, we will not be able to stand & react obediently when the valley gate arrives.

Just before the Valley Gate, we see the Tower of The Ovens: Hard times are ahead.

Prov. 24:10 If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.

Purifying Gates: Valley Dung

Test our character; testing my "mettle"

I am in "boot camp": Prepare me to rule & reign in His literal, 1000 year millennial kingdom.

If you want to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to be used by Him, the Dung Gate must become your friend. Consistent use of this gate yields powerful and fruitful benefits.

Come before the Lord to be cleansed and prepared for God's power which will be revealed in the next 3 gates.

- Only then can the fruit of the Spirit be produced in you.

Power Gates: Fountain Water Horse

Remember: Suffering comes before Glory. Servanthood comes before Rulership.

A.W.Tozer: "The Spirit cannot fill whom He cannot separate, and whom He cannot fill, He cannot make holy, and whom He cannot make holy, He cannot make joyful."

Col. 2:17 things which are a mere shadow of what is to come but the substance belongs to Christ

Matthew Henry: A lamb was to be offered upon the altar every morning, and a lamb every evening. This typified the continual intercession which Christ ever lives to make for His church.

Though He offered Himself but once for all, that one offering becomes a continual offering.

The continual burnt-offerings were placed at the doorway to the Tabernacle and were offered in obedience to God's promise to dwell among Israel. This was the pathway to God's presence.

This teaches us to daily offer God our spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise. Our daily devotions are the most needful of our daily works, and the most pleasant of our daily comforts.

Ps. 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.

Isaiah 59: 1-2 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. ² But your iniquities have separated you from your God;

and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.

1. My obedience to daily offer myself a living sacrifice, wholly and acceptable to God;
2. My obedience to be transformed by the renewing of my mind;
3. My obedience to confess my sins so I can be an empty, clean vessel for His use
4. My yielding for absolute surrender
5. My posture before Him with a perpetual fire and its ascending smoke >>>>>>>

Gateway to the Fountain Gate and the Spirit-filled Life

Tozer: "The Spirit-filled life is NOT a special, deluxe edition of Christianity.

It is part and parcel of the total plan of God for His people."

The Fountain Gate was the primary access to the Fountain located at the Gihon Spring which was Jerusalem's only reliable source of water.

In times of drought, the Gihon Spring would still flow freely.

Since this water of life was unending and Jerusalem could last a lot longer with good clean water, Nebuchadnezzar's army centered its attack upon the Fountain Gate.

II Kings 25:4 And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden:...

The Fountain Gate appeared to be the gate in most ruin due to the amount of rubbish which blocked Nehemiah's midnight inspection. When he approached the Fountain Gate, he had to turn back because he could go no further until it was repaired. [Neh. 2:14]

- This gate's spiritual counterpart is a target of concentrated Satanic attack.

Enemies of and Hindrances to the Spirit-Filled Life

A. Satan and his forces

Conspiracy of the Enemies to overthrow the work

Neh. 4:7-8 Now when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the gaps [breaches] were beginning to be closed, they became very angry, ⁸ and all of them conspired together to come and attack Jerusalem and create confusion.

Neh. 4:11-12 And our enemies said, "They will not know or see until we come among them, kill them, and put a stop to the work." ¹² When the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times, "They will come up against us from every place where you may turn,"

Neh. 4:14-15 And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses. And it happened, when our enemies heard that it [their conspiracy] was known to us, and that God had brought their plot to nothing, that all of us returned to the wall, everyone to his work.

Romans 8:31 If God be for us, who can be against us?

- Join the Holy Spirit in the spiritual battle for the power gates in your life.

The Fountain Gate's spiritual counterpart in my life = Empowered to live Spirit-filled life

- He will do all in his power to distract me, discourage and prevent me from the use of the Dung Gate. He will make every effort to hinder my prayer life and Bible study time.
- Target of concentrated and continual Satanic attack as he attempts to destroy my relationship with Jesus Christ and cut off the Living Water.

If he is successful:

1. I will lose my focus which will result in my vessel being clogged with unconfessed sin.
2. I will not be a clean, empty surrendered vessel that God can work in and use.
3. If the Holy Spirit has very little influence in my life, I will not be a Spirit-filled Christian.
4. I am not obedient to the command: Glorify Him and be conformed to the image of His Son.
5. I am "unplugged" from my power source. His ability to work in me is quenched.
6. Attacked by his fiery darts, I can experience frustration and defeat.

How can I be assured of victory?

1. Take a stance of defense; commit [to deposit for safekeeping] and submit to the Holy Spirit
Ps. 37:5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.

2. Set your mind to the task.

Neh. 2:18 Nehemiah encouraged the people to rise up and build.

They strengthened their hands for this good work.

3. Prayer and watchfulness are vital to the success of the task.

Neh 4:9 Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them. Note: The enemy DID NOT LEAVE after prayer. Persistent

B. The Fountain of Life can be Refused

- This fountain [Gihon Spring] represents the source of life, God Himself.

Psalm 36:9 For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light.

Isaiah 8:6-7 Inasmuch as these people REFUSED the waters of Shiloah that flow softly, And rejoice in Rezin and in Remaliah's son; Now therefore, behold, the Lord brings up over them the waters of the River, strong and mighty—The king of Assyria and all his glory; and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks:

Background: Isaiah is showing the rulers of Judah [Southern Kingdom] their mistake by trusting Assyria instead of trusting the LORD.

1. Judah had been warned to make no alliances. Their trust and strength was in the LORD.
2. Assyria had conquered Syria and had begun to invade Israel [Northern Kingdom].
3. Pekah, King of Israel, entered an alliance with Rezin, king of Syria against Assyria.
They tried to force King Ahaz of Judah to join their alliance against Assyria.
4. Pekah, King of Israel, and Rezin, king of Syria attacked the southern kingdom of Judah, besieging Jerusalem.

Isa. 7:1-25 King Ahaz's [of Judah] heart had been wavering. The hearts of his people had been shaking for fear.

Isaiah's message of assurance: "Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted."

- King Ahaz needed to believe God's promise that Judah's enemies would be defeated.

Isa. 7:9 If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established.

- Faith in God's promises is the only way to find peace in the midst of trouble.
- In God's eyes, the 2 threatening kings were nothing but "two smoldering stubs of firewood" who would be off the scene very soon. They both died within 2 years.

5. Problem: In response, King Ahaz of Judah sought help from the Assyrians.

- Judah had a faction of Jews who were pro-Assyrian!
- Remember the Command: Make NO Alliances

Consider: How did it appear? What could I see?

Assyria's power was growing. An alliance with them was the safest way.

6. This was the beginning of the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, which was God's judgment for the sin and idolatry of the kings and their people

7. Instead of trusting the LORD [the waters of Shiloah, that go softly,] they trusted the great river of Assyria.

8. They didn't realize: This river would become a flood when Assyria would come and destroy Israel and devastate Judah.

9. God offered His people PEACE, but in unbelief they opted for war.

- Walking by sight and not by faith

Isa. 8:6 These people refused the waters of Shiloah that flow softly

The waters that flowed out from the upper pool of the Gihon through that deep and secure conduit were those spoken of in Isaiah 8:6 as "the waters of Shiloah that go softly".

This gently flowing current of the channel brook ran from the Gihon spring all the way down the eastern side of the City of David, where it emerged from a narrow or confined space into a wide, open area.

The smooth, peaceful flow was typical of the silent and unseen working of God. Yet they refused to hear and remained blind to the all-wise and all-powerful Creator who had chosen them to be His Own special nation. Instead, they sought alliance with the great world-power of Assyria which, like its own mighty river, would one day overflow into their land with waves of death and destruction.

Truth: The enemy's goal is to choke out the Spirit-filled Life in me.

Questions: Am I indifferent to the call of God to be conformed to the image of His Son?

Am I neglecting the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in me? Have I considered the consequences if I refuse to allow the Holy Spirit to fill and control me?

C. The Fountain of Life can be Forsaken

Before Israel had been led off into captivity, Jeremiah had prophesied: Jer. 2:11b-13

But My people have changed their *Glory* for *what* does not profit.

Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; Be very desolate," says the LORD.

➤ Be appalled; Let your hair stand on end

"My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water."

Israel had committed many sins before God's judgment began to fall but of all the sins that brought them down, these two sins were singled out by God as the most severe.

These two sins remain the most severe in the Church and lives of believers too:

a. Forsaking The Spring Of Living Water - leaving Jesus to chase after the things of the world believing that things have the power to make us fulfilled.

b. Building broken cisterns - We build ourselves great empires, well-planned lives, and provisions for retirement, but we forsake the things that really matter for eternity.

A cistern was like a well, built into the ground, but had no independent source of water.

Water was brought from another source to the cistern, through different types of conduits, such as ditches, pipes or aqueducts. It was stored for future use.

The Lord likens those who trust in their own resources to those who build broken cisterns - their lives leak joy, peace, faith and strength. The conduits that connect them to the source of life, Jesus Christ, have been broken, cut off and destroyed.

Israel forsook the true God for false gods. This is like abandoning a spring of fresh, flowing water for a cracked, muddy cistern that cannot hold water. What a foolish thing to do!

My Birthright as a Born-again Believer

The fullness of the Holy Spirit and His imparting to me the Abundant Life

Gal. 3:29 Heirs according to the promise made to Abraham

Rom. 8:16-17 Joint-heirs with Christ

Titus 3:7 Heirs according to the hope of eternal life

James 2:5 Heirs of the kingdom which He has promised also II Peter 1:11

I Cor. 3:21-23 In Him, all things are ours also Revelation 21:7

I Pet. 1:4 Inheritance is incorruptible, undefiled, doesn't fade away,
reserved in heaven

Mark 10:28-30 Not just limited to things in the hereafter!

Consider: I must realize the value of being filled with and led by the Holy Spirit.

My obedience will convey spiritual blessings in this earthly life.

My obedience now will result in His blessings, glory & rewards for me
in His Millennial Kingdom.

Jer. 2:11b But My people have changed their *Glory* for *what* does not profit.

Question: What value do I place on my inheritance? Am I giving up my FUTURE GLORY
For things now with NO profit? Am I SELLING My BIRTHRIGHT?

Context of Hebrews 12: Running The Race Of Faith: Run Strong > Finish Well

The 5 warnings in Hebrews admonish us to press on and obtain all God has promised to the faithful Overcomer. These warnings represent the very real possibility of the loss of privileges or rewards offered to the believer. These warnings concern the possible negative consequences for the unfaithful believer. The results will be revealed at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Heb. 12:15-17 Looking diligently:

- lest any man fail of the grace of God;
- lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;
- Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

¹⁷ For ye know how that afterward, when he would have Inherited The Blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. It requires diligence to run the race successfully. The 3 dangers before us are illustrated by Esau's decision which was irrevocable even though he regretted it later.

Spiritual Failure is seldom an explosion. It is usually an erosion.

It is constant spiritual oversight by each one of us of our own lives. Be on guard!

The Route Of Any Failure Is A Progression Involving Three Stages.

1. Failing to Appropriate God's Grace

Appropriation does not necessarily mean to gain something new but to set aside for our practical possession something that already belongs to us.

Heb. 12:15a "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God."

"Looking diligently" = searching out carefully or minutely

The Hebrew Christians were going through trials, testing and facing persecution BUT they had failed to appropriate God's grace so they could stand firm.

Thus, they were living defeated lives. They had failed of the grace of God.

Consider: If I fail to appropriate God's grace, I will react according to my sin nature.

God's grace does not fail, but we can fail to take advantage of His grace.

2. Bitterness In The Heart

Heb. 12:15b Looking diligently... lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you., and thereby many be defiled.

Bitterness in the heart leads to murmuring with the tongue. Murmuring is one of the most dangerous sins because it always affects others and leavens the whole camp.

When I fail to appropriate grace, there will be a root of bitterness in my heart against God who has allowed this "trouble" to come, and it will ultimately come out in my speech.

The author now turns to Esau, a descendant of Abraham, who lived in close proximity to those whom God would favor with the blessings promised Abraham and his descendants. But in the end, living in close proximity to God's blessings is not the same as entering into them.

3. Open Contempt Of What Is Our Responsibility Or Our Privilege

The sole place in the NT where the loss of the "birthright" is mentioned specifically is in Heb. 12:16.

Esau's story is brought forth as a warning to believers of the possible loss of the birthright. Look Back To Esau Heb. 12:16-17 Looking diligently...lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

Profane = a common person, one who lives for the world and not God

Gen.25:29-34 And Jacob cooked a stew: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint:

³⁰ And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red stew; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. ³¹ And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.

³² And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? ³³ And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him:

and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. ³⁴ Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.

Note: When Esau was willing to give up his birthright for a mess of beans, he was faint or weary. What was the author's exhortation in Heb. 12?

Heb. 12:4 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. [Spiritual failure is a gradual erosion.]

Consider: Esau should have clung tenaciously to his status. It included the privilege of being the vehicle of God's promised blessing given to Abraham for all.

Waiting is one of the most difficult disciplines of life.

Heb. 6:12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through Faith and Patience Inherit The Promises.

Esau had neither faith nor patient endurance.

➤ He was cut off by one act from the place of blessing.

By the time of Jacob and Esau, none of these promises had been realized. They were not even on the horizon. Esau's attitude was, "Hey, I'm hungry. What good is some vague future blessing if I starve to death?" He wasn't interested in the future promises of God.

He lived for the here and now. So he sold his birthright for a bowl of stew, wiped his mouth, and went his way without a thought of regret at the time [Gen. 25:34].

Esau despised his birthright = LXX = paltry; a mere trifle; thought it was of NO value

Preferred gratification of the flesh rather than the blessing of God

Gave up all his spiritual privileges for a temporary gratification of the body.

Gen. 27:30-40 Jacob also receives the 1st born blessing of the father.

Esau lived as though his firstborn birthright meant nothing. NOW he comes before the father for the blessing.

³⁴ And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.

³⁵ And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.

And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

³⁸ And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also,

Heb. 12:17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

The man who despised his birthright and married two pagan women now wept and cried out for his father to bless him. No place of repentance: The father could not change his mind.

No amount of tears and remorse could alter the father's decision though he sought the blessing diligently with tears. It was too late.

Esau lost the inheritance that would have been his as the firstborn.

He realized the value of his inheritance...too late.

Question: What value do I place on my inheritance? Am I giving up my FUTURE GLORY

For things now with NO profit? Am I SELLING My BIRTHRIGHT?

Do I truly desire the Spirit-filled Life?

Jer. 2:11b But My people have changed their Glory for *what* does not profit.

Spurgeon: Seek ye first the Lord, and then He will provide for you everything that is profitable for you in this life and He will crown it with everything that is glorious in the life to come.