

A Spirit Filled Life

By J. Leland Earls; edited by Kevin W. Earls

Examining the Words:

Life: The Greek word is zoe, which means life, motion, activity; that which is alive in contrast to that which is dead, that which is moving (vibrant) in contrast to that which is inactive and stagnant. Jesus illustrated “life eternal” by the expression “living water.”

“Jesus answered and said to her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you **living water**.’” (John 4:10)

“Living water” is that which is moving, active (even though slowly and gently; see Is. 8:6) rather than that which is stagnant (not moving, and thus foul and impure), debris laden and insect infested. Living water **flows** from the throne (Re. 22:10). God accused His people in Je. 2:13 of committing two evils:

““For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain (source) of **living waters**, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.” (Jeremiah 2:13)

In His providence, God ordained that there would be two seas in the land of Israel. One (the Sea of Galilee) is “living,” filled with fish, abounding with vegetation around its shores; the other (the dead sea) is just that; dead, stagnant, with no fish swimming in it and no vegetation growing around it. Water flows into and out (thus “moving” and “living”); water flows into the Dead Sea but remains (and stagnates) there.

Galilee (meaning “a circle”) is called “Galilee of the nations” by the prophet (Is. 9:1-2), showing that symbolically it portrays the Gentile nations throughout the circuitous area of the whole earth who would receive **life** through Christ, but the Dead Sea symbolizes the Jews (and others) who have remained in a state of spiritual deadness through refusing Christ. Jesus performed no works at the Dead Sea but taught and performed many might works around and on the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus came that we might have **life** (eternal) and have it more abundantly.

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10)

When tempted by the devil, Jesus said;
“But He answered and said, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’ ”” (Matthew 4:4)

Thus, we see Jesus’ emphasis on receiving **life** and learning how to **live**. We must be Christ centered (He is the **source** of all life) but we must be **life** oriented, studying the Bible as a source book of life, for the Word of God is “**living** and **active** (energetic, effective, efficacious, and creative; able to produce in experience what it proclaims);” see He. 4:14, NAS version.

Underlying every Bible doctrine is a basic principle of life that God wants us to understand, and which He wants us to **integrate** into our life experience, “writing” it on the “tablets of the heart” (see 2 Co. 3:3), with His own “finger” (Spirit). The Bible is a vast storehouse of **treasures**, and we are in a continuous quest, searching, seeking, probing, digging, that we might find the “nuggets” of **truth** to integrate into our lives and **build**, as it were with “gold, silver, and precious stones” (1 Co. 3:12). We are to seek for wisdom, knowledge and understanding as for “hid treasures” (Pr. 2:4), and Paul declares that in Christ are “hid all the **treasures** of wisdom and knowledge” (Co. 2:3; see also Mt. 13:52).

Jesus defines life: “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” (John 17:3)

“Life” consists in a vital, meaningful **relationship** to the **source** of life. It is a “living relationship” based on love, for God is love. (1 Jn. 4:8). To **know** Him is to **love** Him. He is the “altogether lovely” one. We love Him because He first loved us (1 Jn. 4:19).

Love motivated God to create beings that He could love and who could return that love. Love is behind His redemption (Ro. 5:8). The two greatest needs in our lives are to love and be loved. Love is the greatest motivation force in the universe. “To live is to love” not only God, but also to others; to be vitally and meaningfully related to others who also partake of the eternal life of God and who are beginning to manifest His nature and attributes and also are beginning to see His purposes fulfilled in their lives (see Ro. 8:28-29).

We see that Jesus spoke about “living water,” which means there must be a continual **flow**, both from God to us, and from us to God; both a receiving and a giving, in a living, love relationship. His life and love are **in** us as a “**well** (**fountain**) springing up;”

“but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” (John 4:14)

And to become a “**river** flowing out” (Jn. 7:38), to Him and to others;

“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” (John 7:38)

What life is not: “And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.” (Luke 12:15)

Here Jesus not only says that “life” (eternal, blessed, and abundant) cannot be found in material things or the pursuit of material things, but he also introduces the **problem** or **force** that can **keep** people from **entering into life**. He says, “beware of covetousness.”

When Adam and Eve fell from their pristine position of innocence, there was unleashed within them a corrupt desire nature, which drives a person to “lust” (desire, covet) after things that will lead to destruction, sorrow, and death. In the New Testament, this “fallen nature” within man is called “flesh” (Greek = sarx). Paul calls it “the law of sin” working in our inner being (Ro. 7:23). The physical body becomes the instrument to carry out the desires of the “flesh,” but the actual corrupt desire nature of fallen man is rooted in the soul (our mental emotional being). In further study we see that one of the provisions that Christ has made for us in His death upon the cross is **deliverance** from the “dominion” of that sin nature, and **victory** over the temptations that would lead us into the wrong desires and keep us from experiencing the **fullness** of the **life** that Christ has made available to us.

We want to learn how to grow and develop into “spiritual” Christians, rather than “fleshly” (carnal) Christians who remain in an immature “baby” state (see 1 Co. 3:1).

From position to experience: If we are to enter into the abundant life in Christ, we must understand how “positional truth” is translated into “experiential truth.” Position has to do with our “legal” inheritance in Christ; what Christ has “purchased” for us and made available to us because we belong to Him. It is seeing ourselves as God sees us “In Christ;” this is, legally and positionally **united** with Him. Where He is, we are also, raised and seated with Him in heavenly places (Ep. 2:6); and what is His, is now **ours**, as joint heirs with Him (Ro. 8:17), with all of

the provisions, privileges, blessings, rights, and powers of that inheritance (see Ro. 8:32; 1 Co. 3:21-23; Ep. 1:3, 11). Experiential truth is that truth which has become ours in experience. It is that part of our inheritance in Christ which we have personally possessed, so that we have actually entered into the reality of it.

We might illustrate the above in two ways:

First, Israel was given the land of Canaan by God. God told them it was theirs; their inheritance. They didn't have to earn it, work for it, deserve it, etc., for it was God's **gift** to them, just as everything Christ has purchased for us on the cross is His **gift** to us. God caused the Israelites to pass through the Jordan river and take up a **position** in the **land** that was **theirs**; they were **in** it, camped at Gilgal on the west bank of Jordan. But from that **position**, they had to actually go **into** the land and **possess it** (make it theirs by experience). But there were enemies in the land, determined to keep them **out**. Even so is this a type of how God has allowed Satan and his demonic forces to test and challenge our faith and determination to possess what is ours in Christ. The tribes of Canaan had made “strongholds,” built around idolatry, which the children of Israel were to break down and destroy through the power of God. This is a type of the strongholds of the “flesh: in our own lives through which Satan works and which are to be cast down through the mighty workings of God in our lives (see 2 Co. 10:3-5).

A second way we might illustrate the truth we are considering is by the human family. When a baby is born, it is placed **in** the family and has by virtue of that birth and inheritance; a legal position in that family, and potentially all that belongs to the parents, and all that they can provide for him is **his**. But the babe must grow and come to the place where he is capable of understanding, appropriating, and actually experiencing what is his by right of birth.

Spirit: We can live the Spirit filled life only as we understand and experience the ministry and work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the **connecting link** between positional truth and experiential truth. It is the Holy Spirit's **ministry** to “take the things of Christ” (all the provisions of our inheritance in Him) and make them real and effective in our experience.

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore, I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.” (John 16:13–15)

In order to have “life”, we must be vitally related or “plugged in” to the Source of Life (Jesus Christ), but the Holy Spirit provides the “conduit” or “current” to **convey** to us and make real in our experience all that Christ has for us.

The **ministry** of the Holy Spirit is so vital that we find in the New Testament the following aspects of His work.

1. Conviction by the Spirit (John 16:8-11, Mt. 5:25).
2. Drawing by the Spirit (John 6:44, 12:32).
3. Born of the Spirit (John 3:3-7, Titus 3:5-6).
4. Baptized and filled with the Spirit (Mt. 3:11, Lk. 24:49, Acts 1:5, 2:4, etc.).
5. Revelation of truth by the Spirit (John 16:13, 1 Co. 2:9-13, Ep. 1:17-18).
6. Worship in the Spirit (John 4:23-24, Ep. 5:18-19).
7. Live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit (Ga. 5:16, 25, Ro. 8:4-6).
8. Led by the Spirit (Ro. 8:14).
9. Warfare by the Spirit (Ep. 6:10-18).
10. Fruits of the Spirit (Ga. 5:22, Ph. 1:11, Ep. 5:9, James 3:17-18).
11. Gifts & manifestations of the Spirit (1 Co. 12:4-11, Ro. 8:11, 1 Jn. 2:20, 27).
12. Ministry by the Spirit (2 Co. 3:6, 8, 1 Co. 2:4-5).
13. Prayer in the Spirit (Ep. 6:18, Ro. 8:26).
14. Sanctified by the Spirit (Ro. 15:16, 2 Th. 2:13, 1 Pe. 1:2).
15. Strengthened by the Spirit (Ep. 3:16, 6:10, Co. 1:11).

Type: The Old Testament type shows us that the Israelites received their inheritance through the ministry of Moses. But Moses appointed a successor (Joshua) to actually lead the people into the possession (experience) of their inheritance.

Even so, our inheritance has come through Jesus, but He appointed a successor (the Holy Spirit) to lead us into the experience of our inheritance. But this comes gradually, over a period of time. This path of progress includes “knowing, reckoning by faith, presenting ourselves to God, walking in the Spirit, and bearing the cross.”

Filled: The Spirit “filled” life means more than one particular experience. It indicates the potential which Paul refers to in Ep. 3:19;

“to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” (Ephesians 3:19)

What a tremendous goal! The work of the Holy Spirit is to fill up, make full, fulfill, or bring to fullness in us the very nature, character, attributes and glory of God. Paul expresses it in Ga. 4:19 this way: “until Christ is formed in you.”

“My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is **formed** in you,” (Galatians 4:19)

The Greek word translated formed (morphoo) comes from a root word which indicates the “adjustment of parts.” Accordingly, **within us**, by the working of God’s Spirit, there is taking place an “adjustment” or reshaping of the “inner person,” so that the very **nature** of Christ is being fashioned, shaped, and formed in us;

“till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the **fullness** of Christ;” (Ephesians 4:13)

Pray: Let us pray that God will give us the grace to be increasingly motivated with determination to “press in” more fully to the inheritance, which is ours in Christ, that His fullness might become an increasingly reality in us. Our motivation will be even greater as we are illumined to see, not just what Christ is to me, as my inheritance, but also what I am to Him, as His inheritance (see Ep. 1:18).

It is not just what I have at stake in Christ, but what He has in stake in me as a part of His spiritual body, for Paul declares that the church is **His Fullness** (Ep. 1:23).

www.kevinwearls.com