

Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, May 27, 2017

I'm sure you've heard the phrase *"It's what's inside that counts."* So I imagine the obvious question we need to ask is *"What's inside?"* The list is probably fairly long as to the inner things that really can count and make a difference in a person's life. Some will allude to one's personality and an adage like *"Beauty is only skin deep."* or *"You can't tell a book by its cover."* Words like perseverance, tenacity, guts and determination may come to mind.

Well, I believe the answer lies much deeper. Let me give you my take on what the *IT* is. There must be something very special that makes a man or woman stand out from the crowd causing others to perhaps long to be more like them. Then again, others may see their uniqueness, appreciate it and yet have no desire to have anything more to do with whatever *IT* is. Here's what I believe *IT* is.

It's not an *IT* at all, but *WHO* dwells inside! The *HOLY GHOST*, the Third Person of the Trinity, cannot be easily explained. In fact, I believe it's impossible to adequately convey the existence of this Entity and how He dwells in every true follower of Christ. Before Christ's ascension, the Third Person of the Trinity certainly did exist, but His purpose was not to enter the body of all believers. That all changed on Pentecost, which still remains a holy day remembering the day Moses brought down the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai – 50 days after crossing the Red Sea. That day also signifies the death of 3,000 Israelites who were punished for worshipping a man-made golden calf.

Nearly 2000 years ago on one particular feast of Pentecost, fifty days after Jesus' resurrection, We read in the Book of Acts that Christ returned in the form of the Holy Spirit and gathered for Himself a harvest of 3,000 souls! In the Book of Zechariah which was written more than 500 years before Christ's birth, we are given the first glimpse of this future event. In Zechariah 12:10 we hear the prophecy *"And I will pour out on the House of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son."*

In Acts 2, we're initially presented with the presence of the Holy Spirit in the form of a violent wind coming down from heaven and what appeared to be tongues of fire. This was followed by all those present who came from many nations being able to hear each other in their own language. And finally the chapter ends with Peter preaching a powerful message of repentance and 3,000 being saved and baptized that day. That may be too much for you to fathom, but this event turned the world upside down. Actually, I prefer to see this event as turning the world right side up!

We live in a fallen world. The only hope that we have is in Jesus of Nazareth. Through His resurrection we can experience the peace of God in this world through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in us. Nothing else that may be inside matters. He is our Comforter. We might become extremely successful in this world, but it's all meaningless if we don't have the Holy Spirit residing in us.

There's one more important matter regarding this dwelling of the Holy Spirit. We need to do daily housekeeping and dispose of those things that will be displeasing to God. There needs to be a constant filling going on to ensure we don't fall into Satan's trap and be sifted by the Deceiver.

For those of us who have accepted Christ's work on the cross, our salvation is certainly secure. However, I trust your desire is to be truly used by your Heavenly Father as a living sacrifice during your short time left here on this earth.

Passages to Ponder: John 3:5-8, 15:26-27; Romans 8:16-17; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 1:13-14; 1 John 1:9, 2:27

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John 3:5-8 New International Version (NIV)

⁵ Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷ You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' ⁸ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

John 15:26-27 New International Version (NIV)

The Work of the Holy Spirit

²⁶ "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. ²⁷ And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

Romans 8:16-17 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁹ Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Ephesians 1:13-14 New International Version (NIV)

¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

1 John 1:9 New International Version (NIV)

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 2:27 New International Version (NIV)

²⁷ As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.