

Spoken Word no. 174

Almost a Bride

Brian Kocourek, Pastor

June 27th, 2010

Mark 12: 28-34 *And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second [is] like, [namely] this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love [his] neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, **Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.** And no man after that durst ask him [any question].* Let's pray.....

Dear Father, we see once again an illustration of the condition of the people were they were once again in an almost condition as Agrippa said, "**Paul, thou almost persuadest me to be a Christian.**" And we hear these words echoing forth again this time from the lips of your Son Jesus when he spoke to the Scribe and said, "**Thou art not far from the kingdom of God**" and we see that all the people were afraid to ask another question. For fear that they also would be told that they were not an altogether believer as well. Father, we ask this evening that you would truly move upon us and fill us with such a love for your Word that we would have but one desire in Life and that is to be an altogether Christian. One who would be fit for Thy Kingdom. And we ask this in the Lovely name of your Son Who dies to make this possible.

From **The Spoken Word is the original Seed** brother Branham said, 30 ...Adam's bride could not wait, but she mingled her seed illegally, illegally. **We are supposed to believe God's Word and that alone.** Now, brethren, here and on the tape, **do you see why I am contending for that Word, word by word.** I've told you I believe that is God's Truth. God's protected that Bible. He's got to judge the world by something: through Jesus Christ which is the Word, and this Word was made flesh to become Jesus Christ. I'm just letting it soak in. Remember, the Word. And now **He finds her all messed up.** You think He'd marry such a thing as that? Never. He's holy. She couldn't wait. Illegal, that's what Adam found.

Now, look, what he is saying here is that just because you can quote some of the Word does not mean that you believe all the Word. King Agrippa said to Paul, "**Thou almost persuadest me to be a Christian**". And to be almost persuaded is not to be persuaded at all. You can't be an almost Christian, because an almost Christian is not a Christian. Just like you can't be almost pregnant. You either are or you are not.

I will never forget when I signed 3 one year contracts to play professional football back in 1976 with the Minnesota Vikings.

Now, that was my ambition until I met br. Vayle and heard him speak. Then for the next two weeks that I was in the preseason training camp with the Vikings, the scripture kept haunting me as it said, “what will you profit if you gain the world and loose your own soul. All of my friends said, “Just think how many doors will open up for you to go and testify in. And I had at that time a lot of Baptist connections because I was a born again Christian who played football. And I had already begun to go to the youth and testify to them, and the doors were opening up for me, but that Scripture haunted me, “*What do you profit if you gain the world and loose your own soul?*”

And I knew that I had come to a cross roads in my life, either I was going to be the best field goal kicker the NFL had ever seen, or I was going to be the best Christian I could be. I chose to be the best Christian knowing that even if I had gained the whole world playing football, I could still loose my own soul to that atmosphere and Godless environment where the players, even the so called Christians ones were talking about wife swapping and the like. I couldn’t believe what I heard, and the cussing and foul language, and the women hanging around looking for a score, when I got my release from the contracts, I fled that environment as fast as I could.

So, let me tell you something, just because you have been baptized in water does not make you a believer, nor does it mean that you have been baptized with the Holy Spirit, *But when once that Holy Spirit, the real genuine Word comes into you (because Jesus said my Words are Spirit and they are life), then, brother, the Message is no secret to you then; you know It, brother, It's all lit up before you.*

Now what we are dealing with hear is not just whether your conscience tells you that you are Ok. That won't do it, but whether that Word has become lit up to you. So in effect what I shall like to talk to you about this morning is “*How do you know when you have received God's Spirit in you?*” Notice that water Baptism alone won't do it. We know that water Baptism is only an outward sign showing an inward work of cleansing has taken place. That’s what Peter told us baptism represented in **1 Peter 3: 21** *The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:*

And yet how can a baby have a good conscience toward God? well so much with believing what peter had to say. And if Peter told us that Baptism was an answer of a good conscience toward God, then why are so many people not even conscious of God when they get baptized. We had a guy years ago that said he wanted to be baptized in Christian baptism, and I know it wasn’t because he had repented of his life, and wanted to put on Christ, but he wanted to please the in-laws, so he could marry their daughter. So when we took him to the river to baptize him, he no more was living the life than nothing, but if someone wants to do it, I will help him, no matter what his motive is. That’s not my problem, that’s between him and God.

Now, I was told that he had a drinking problem, but he assured me God had cleaned him up, so we took him down to the Licking River in Kentucky, I hear it is one of the most polluted rivers in Kentucky, but I didn't know that then. So we went into the river, and we immersed him into the river and baptized him in Christian Baptism and when he came up so did a bottle of beer right in front of him.

I guess God has a sense of humor as well. And as it turns out he eloped with the girl anyway, and eventually the marriage ended due to his drinking and drugs problems.

So the Lord let us know this guy went down a dry drunk and came up a wet one.

Therefore, *"Just because you were Baptized correctly doesn't mean you are born again". "You must be baptized with the Holy Ghost, to be born again."*

So the real question then becomes, how do you know whether or not you are born again? By what means do we have confidence that we have been born again? What is our evidence or our assurance - or **witness** that we are born again and have been baptized with the Holy Spirit? And so we must ask ourselves this question. **By what witness do we have confirmation that we have been truly born again?** First of all we do know that the Holy Spirit is a down payment or earnest of our inheritance. We find this in **Ephesians 1: 13 - 14** *13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

Secondly, we know that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is our hope of Glory, or the earnest expectation that God's mind shall become our mind as we find in **Colossians 1: 27** *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

2 Thessalonians 1: 10 *When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.*

1 John 2: 19-21 *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. 20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. 21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.*

You'll notice that when we receive this anointing upon our minds and our soul we are quickened to the Word of God as John said, We know all things."

Thirdly we know that we are truly looking at a birth, a genuine birth of a genuine Life that is coming forth into existence as we see in **Colossians 3: 1-4** *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

Galatians 2: 20 *20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Ephesians 2: 11 *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*

And it comes by the Word as we see in **1 Pet 1: 23** *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

Here we see that there are actually two different types of being born again. One which is denominational being born again of corruptible seed or word and the other being born again of the Word of God which is incorruptible in it's nature. Now notice, it speaks of seed and word and so if the incorruptible Seed is the Word of God then the other seed has to be a different sort of Word. And so when the Son of Man went forth sowing Good Seed or Good Word, Which is God Words, since Jesus said to call no man good but God. Then the man in black which we know is the devil followed behind sowing forth bad seed or bad word and both seed grew up together until the time of the harvest.

Now, knowing then that this new life or new birth comes by means of the Word of God, then we must ask ourselves, *"What witness do we have that we are truly born again?"*

In **John 8: 12-19** *Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. 13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. 14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. 15 Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. 16 And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. 17 It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. 18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. 19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.*

We find Jesus Himself telling us in the mouth of two or three witnesses we are to establish a thing.

If we read **John 5: 30-32** *I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. 31 If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. 32 There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.*

We see that we can not be our own witness for our witness does not count without that of another. So we see here that it is not just a matter of you having a good conscience about the matter, or a good witness within yourself because every denomination that teaches the new birth look to their own experience and to their own conscience to tell them if they have this or not.

Jesus Himself said, "***You can't go by your own words or your own testimony***" because, let's face it, if this were true, then everyone who claimed to have it would have it based upon their own testimony. And as Brother Branham said, "***Just because you say it doesn't make it so.***" Jesus said, "***God is My witness***".

And in **Romans 1:9** Paul said the same thing. ***For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;***

I John 5:6B And it is The Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. 9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. 10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. 11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath life; [and] he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. 14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

Romans 8:1- 9:1 ***There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded [is] life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit [is] life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:***

So we see that His Spirit must bear witness with our Spirit. And what is His Spirit? Jesus said in **John 6:63** *My words are spirit and they are Life.*

Romans 2:15 *Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, **their conscience also bearing witness, and [their] thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;*** Now here we find a people who have a conscience that bears witness but look at their testimony, accusing and excusing one another. So we see that just because someone's conscience might tell them they are born again, it does not necessarily hold true that they are. For evidence just look at all those in politics who claim they are and their own life is more indicative of a satanic influence than a Christ centered one. So you see, it is not just conscience of conscience sake because these people had a conscience that bore witness yet they did not hold to the Word. In fact Brother Branham himself said, *"just because you believe this Bible does not mean you are born again, it only means you can read."*

Matthew 23:31-32 *Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.*

Luke 11:47-54 *Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchers of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye **bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers:** for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchers. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and [some] of them they shall slay and persecute: That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation. Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: **ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.*** Now he said, these men bore witness to their own actions and yet we know Paul did the same when he was killing Christians thinking he was doing God a service, yet outside of God's will. He wasn't serving God, he was serving the devil until God got a-hold of Him and gave him a mind change.

Luke 12:1 *In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, **which is hypocrisy.** For **there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed;** neither hid, that shall not be known. **Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light;** and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.*

John 1:6-15 *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. **The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light,** that all [men] through him might believe. He was not that Light, but [was sent] to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt*

among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

Now I will be reading a few scriptures here and what I want you to see is this. Jesus Himself said we had to have a witness outside of our own selves. Then He said, God was His witness. Then He said that God through His Vindication was His witness. So we see then the Word we serve, must be a manifested Word for the Hour and it must have been vindicated, and then this vindication becomes our witness.

John 5:33 *Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than [that] of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. I receive not honor from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that [cometh] from God only? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is [one] that accuseth you, [even] Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?*

John 10:25 *Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.*

Acts 15:8 *And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as [he did] unto us;*

It all comes down to this, ... Brother Branham said in his sermon, **God's only provided place of worship 65-1128M P:114** *I can call the Name of Jesus over you and baptize you; that doesn't make it so. But when once that Holy Spirit really genuine Word comes into you (the Word, Jesus), then, brother, the message is no secret to you then; you know It, brother; It's all lit up before you.*

From his sermon, **Christ is the mystery 63-0728 P:124** *The new birth is Christ, is a revelation. God has revealed to you this great mystery, and that's the new birth. Now, what are you going to do when you get all that group together, where the revelation is perfectly in harmony, and God expressing it through His Word by the same actions, the same things that He did, making the Word manifest? Oh, if the Church only knew its position. It will one day. Then, the rapture will go when it knows what it is. Now, notice. You say, "Brother Branham, but that--that ain't..." Oh, yes, it is, too. It is the Truth.*

Hebrews 11:4 *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.* So we see that His Faith which is revelation was his witness, because only the Father can give us revelation but it must come through the right channel which is His Prophets.

Is your life worthy 63-0630E P:69 *Christians, oh, you must have a personal relationship to God. In order to be a son of God, you must become relation to God. He must be your Father in order for you to be a son. And only His sons and daughters are saved, not the members of a church, but sons and daughters. There's only thing, one thing that will produce that; that's the new birth. The new birth is the only thing that will produce relationship to God. Is that right? Sons and daughters...Then when this takes place, then the man (Here's the question I want to get to you.)--the man said, "What do we do then after we've been born again?" So many ask me that question. "What should I do then, Brother Branham?" If you are born again, your entire nature is changed. You are dead to the things you once thought.*

Paradox 64-0206B P:89 *The new birth is a paradox (That's right.), can change a man's being. We could preach a sermon right here in a little bit (See?), how a paradox to take a man that's a disbeliever, unbeliever, has nothing to do with it, and all at once change from a renegade to a saint, a prostitute to a sister. It's a paradox. No one can give him a medicine, or a shot, or a dose of medicine, or anything else; It takes the hand of almighty God, and that alone to change a man. Well, it's a paradox, when a man is born again (That's right.), a paradox anew.*

Let's open our Bibles in closing to what Paul said in **Ephesians 2:1** concerning our new life in Christ. *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

And one last Scripture in closing. **Colossians 3: 1** *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. 5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: 7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. 8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. 12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. 14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. 18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. 20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. 21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. 22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: 23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.*