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Editor's Note: The following article is Chapter Three from a new 55-page booklet by Pastor Jackson Morro, called The Gifts of the Spirit. Each chapter takes a look at one of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit from 1 Corinthians 12. If you'd like to order a copy of the booklet in its entirety, free of charge (donations accepted, but not necessary), write and request from Christ's Chapel, PO Box 3182, Fall River, MA 02722, or email pastormorro@faithontheearth.com.

THE GIFT OF FAITH
by Pastor Jackson Morro

The third Gift of the Holy Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12 is the Gift of Faith. The Gift of Faith is the power of the Holy Spirit working through an individual who has been baptized with the Holy Spirit, using a special impartation of faith so that what a person believes and speaks forth comes to pass for the benefit of God's work, God's Kingdom, or the Church of Jesus Christ.

Faith itself is the ability to reach into the invisible, spiritual world and lay hold of God's promises so that they come to pass in the visible, material world. Faith is believing before seeing. Faith is the opposite of the motto of the state of Missouri which is "Show Me." Faith is when we believe something before we actually see it. Faith is also the God-given ability to cause things to come to pass.

All faith is a sharing in God's faith. The Book of Hebrews tells us that God created everything by faith. He spoke and things came to be. In the beginning God said, "Let there be light" and there was light. The same Book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus Christ is the author (beginner) and finisher (completer) of our faith.

Faith is the exercise of supernatural, creative power. The heart of faith is based on an inner knowing that God is almighty and that Jesus Christ is really Lord of this universe. In any kind of faith, the heart is emptied out of doubt. With faith, visible facts don't matter; rather what the heart believes about the truth of God's promises in His Word is what really matters.

Just as there are different manifestations of love and wisdom, there are also different manifestations of faith. Before we look at the Gift of Faith, we will examine other types of faith. In Ephesians 4:5, Paul tells us there is one Lord and one faith. Faith is *faith* is *faith*. We see in scripture that this one faith is manifested in different ways.

1) *Faith For Salvation* (Ephesians 2:8) – We are saved by grace through *faith*. Although man can know God as Creator through nature, no man can come to a saving knowledge of God on his own. He cannot earn salvation through good works. No one can "find God," God has to find him. The first work of faith in our life is when we receive the faith to believe and be born again into the Kingdom of God. *This faith is not automatically in us*. Romans 10:17 states, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Faith for salvation is made available to us when the Gospel is preached. The preaching of the Gospel opens a window of opportunity for us to exercise an initial reading into the spirit world and take hold of salvation, appropriating it to ourselves. This is why the preaching and publishing of the Gospel is so *important*, because it creates this window of opportunity for receiving salvation.

2) *There Is The "Measure of Faith"* – In Romans 12:3, we read that God gives every person something called "the measure of faith." At the moment a person receives salvation and Jesus Christ comes to live in their heart, God places a deposit of faith in the individual's heart or spirit that is sufficient to meet every circumstance or need that will arise as they obediently walk in God's will orphan for them. Technically, we don't need any more faith for *our own personal life* than the faith we get at the moment of salvation. We just have to learn to use the faith we already have by learning and growing in God's Word and walking obediently in His plan for us.

3) *In Galatians 5:22 we See Faith as a Fruit of The Holy Spirit* – This is a manifestation of faith that grows in to be used on behalf of others. The Fruit of the Holy Spirit is actually a nine-fold manifestation of the personality of Jesus Christ that the Holy Spirit develops within us as He forms a Christ-like character in us. One such characteristic is faith. It's a different side of faith. The faith for salvation and the measure of faith affect our own personal lives. The fruit of faith is called "faith which works by love" (Galatians 5:6). The outcome of God's love growing in us is that we become more like Jesus Christ and we want to use our faith to help others and bring about good things in their lives. This type of faith can develop into what Jesus called "great faith" like in the case of the Roman centurion in Matthew 8 who came to Jesus asking for his sick servant to be healed or the Syro-Phoenician woman in Matthew 15 who pestered Jesus to heal her sick daughter even though Jesus tested her faith by saying "no" for a while.

4) *Finally, There Is The Specific Gift of the Holy Spirit, The Gift of Faith* – This is a special gift, or special allotment of the power of faith which is given supernaturally by the Holy Spirit to a Christian. Only Christians who have been baptized with the Holy Spirit can be used in the operation of this Gift of Faith. (For a study of the Baptism

with the Holy Spirit, request the free booklet from this ministry entitled, *The Baptism With The Holy Spirit*). On the Day of Pentecost, in Acts, Chapter 2, we see that the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles and disciples (about 120 people) in the upper room where Jesus had held the Last Supper. We also see that after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus into heaven, the Holy Spirit came upon each individual in the upper room in the form of tongues of fire, and they received a special dimension of power to perform the effective ministry. They were baptized, or dunked, in the power of the Holy Spirit. At that point, they began to be used by the Holy Spirit in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Gift of Faith is only manifested through someone baptized with the Holy Spirit.

The purpose of the Gift of Faith is to bring to pass a supernatural happening through a spoken word that will promote or further the work of God, the work of God's kingdom, or the work of the Church of Jesus Christ on earth.

We also must continually remember that the Gifts of the Holy Spirit can often work together in "clusters," as it were. The Gift of Faith can often operate in conjunction with other gifts, such as the Gifts of Healing and Working of Miracles.

The Gift of Faith brings to pass supernatural manifestations as the Holy Spirit wills.

There are many examples of the Gift of Faith in both the Old and New Testaments. Some examples are:

1) *1 Kings 17:1* – The nation of Israel had fallen away from the One True God and had begun worshiping idols. The prophet Elijah commanded that there would be a drought for 3 ½ years in Israel to cause Israel to repent. Elijah spoke the Word of the Lord and there was no rain for 3 ½ years. This was a Gift of Faith to promote God's work.

2) *Mark 11:14* – The Lord Jesus Christ was hungry and went to a fig tree. He found no figs, so He cursed the tree. Later, when He and His disciples went by the tree again, the disciples noticed that the tree had withered from the roots up. Jesus exercised this Gift of Faith to promote God's Kingdom and show the disciples that all things are possible through faith.

3) *Acts 9:37-43* – A kindly Christian woman named Tabitha, who made clothing for poor widows, got sick and died. The Apostle Peter went to her and said, "Tabitha, arise!" The Holy Spirit gave Peter a special gift of faith to raise her from the dead. Because of this, she could continue to make clothes for the poor, and also many people in her city began believing in Jesus Christ as Lord because of this miraculous event.

4) *Acts 13:6-13* – When the Apostle Paul witnessed about Christianity to a government official named Sergius Paulus, a magician named Elymas came up and claimed his magic was more powerful than Paul's Jesus. But at that moment, the power of the Holy Spirit came on Paul with a gift of faith, and Paul stated the Elymas would become blind for a season. Elymas was immediately struck with blindness and the government official believed in Jesus and became a Christian.

In conclusion, the Gift of Faith is the power of the Holy Spirit operating through an individual who has been baptized with the Holy Spirit by giving that person a special impartation of faith so that what the person believes and speaks forth comes to pass for the benefit of God's work, God's Kingdom, or the Church of Jesus Christ.

Editor's Note: The following is excerpts from an email to a Korean pastor in Kazakhstan. It was written by Christopher Dart of Connecticut, who, in prayer, is presently pursuing a worldwide prayer chain both for pastors in these end times and for a great revival to take place among God's people. He has been a friend to me for several months, as we pray for one another and share our burdens. I was struck by much of what he wrote in this email (which he shared with me, and I asked permission to reprint), because I see that he knows the dire spiritual situation of the age.

I hope that some who read will be led to pray for Pastor Joseph and his pastoral / ministerial efforts overseas, and / or for Christopher (that he continue in his pursuit of revival in these end times). If you would like to be part of Christopher's worldwide prayer chain, please email him at dart_tree_farm@sbcglobal.net.

REVIVAL ENCOURAGEMENT by Christopher Dart

Dear Pastor Joseph,

Thank you for your kind reply. Several things of importance came to me, as I read what you wrote:

1) I am pleased you desire my prayers. Please keep me posted so I may continue you pray intelligently.

2) Please pray for Connecticut pastors and churches. The existing problem must go back to the leadership. Many pastors act as if they may lead a church without seeking the Holy Ghost. At best, they presume, no matter what they decide, the Holy Spirit will bless their decisions and work among them with the power of the Almighty. The fact is, the Holy Spirit has been forced out of nearly every church because the leaders have their own ideas on how to make things work.

Let's go back to Israel leaving Egypt. When the Pillar of Fire (Cloud by day) stopped, they stopped; when He arose, they broke camp and moved on. Not one move was done without the direction of God.

Today in the Church, the opposite is true. Not one church, in Connecticut, that I know of, waits on God before making a decision. The Church is run as a business. People come to what is called "His house" irreverently, shabbily dressed, without expectation for the awesome presence of Almighty God. The music mentions not the cross, Christ, the blood (for there is no atonement without the shedding of blood), nor repentance; it's all profitable, non-offending music for all religious faiths. The music ministry physically tries to "pump up" the worship with jumping, dancing and persuasion to mimic the presence of God, only to become even more offensive to the Holy Spirit. Services begin with foolishness in jokes, worldly epithets and "Top Ten" lists. Sermons are purchased from Preachit.org, interlaced with Power Point

presentations and movies because the pastors can no longer keep their congregations interested. That is true because pastors don't get into God's presence long enough to get a message from His throne.

It all boils down to this, Pastor Joseph. If pastors would repent of loving the world and spend much time waiting on God every day, the church would revive. Ten or fifteen minutes will not do. Every morning, I am in my prayer chamber, pleading with God to wake pastors in Connecticut and the Eastern Time Zone, for prayer. I pray for the protection of their prayer time. No interruptions, nor hindrances. No distracting thoughts, nor mind wandering to things outside of prayer. I pray their times in prayer be productive, fulfilling and inspiring as they wait on God, intercede, present supplications and requests. Before I can even get to that prayer, I have often taken 30 minutes organizing my thoughts, praising God and meditating, briefly, on scripture. I'll spend one hour praying for my family and those I have ministered to in the past day. The next hour is spent on pastors in CT, MA, MI, CO, NY, NJ and around the world. Finally, I will pray for the pastors at Times Square Church, and many of the saints and ministries, thereof, who will be praying for you today.

There are 112 million Christians, worldwide, who have left the church-going scene. They are not those who have left Christ; it is the leadership who has neglected diligent pursuit of the face of God. With average salaries, in the U.S., for senior pastors of \$78,000/year plus benefits, pastors are simply attempting to keep the church working to keep the paychecks coming. Nothing may be offensive; hence, the Holy Spirit is grieved and has left the church.

You may want to know about me. I'm a convalescent home pastor. I preach and minister without charge. I operate a tree service business for monetary support, yet I'm able to get before God for hours a day. I will preach no message unless it is given me by the Holy Ghost. Indeed, I'd love to get paid \$78,000 per year to pray and minister the Word, but the way it is, I must proceed as the Holy Ghost leads.

3) You mentioned accreditation. Please be sure all of your students are graduates of the great University of Prayer. Recognition by the dead, mainline colleges means nothing when the Sword of Islam approaches your flesh. The only thing of value is, as Moses, to have been at the mount, in the Awesome presence of God. When the enemy tries to kill you, men will believe the Gospel because of the blood of the Lamb, the word of your testimony and that you loved not your life to the death.

Please, above all things, require all students to seek the face of God as if their next breath depended upon it. You hold the keys of life and death. You may only use them after you have been transfigured by getting into your prayer closet, closing the door and there, alone before God, communing with Him.

4) I will pray for you, perhaps, for the duration. I will pray that I may be able to provide some sort of material support. I will come visit you, if the Lord makes the way.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and the power of His might.

Please give my kind regards to Mrs. Jun and to Rev. Lee....

Thank you and God bless you,

Christopher Dart
Pastor, Cobalt Lodge, Assisted Living Facility
Middle Haddam, CT

http://www.prayct.org/connecticut_church_map.htm

Below is also a prayer by Christopher Dart. You can pray in the same way and insert your local churches in place of Connecticut – or pray for other countries, etc. Believe God will hear and answer.

**PRAYER FOR PASTORS TO REVIVE THE CHURCH
by Christopher Dart**

Lord, please wake Connecticut pastors for prayer at this time (0400). Please get them to come to the mount, as Moses, and no longer be as Nadab and Abihu, who were commanded to worship afar off and probably left by the sixth day, returning to carnality and neglect of your presence. Lord, cause them to come near and just be with you, for there is nothing more transfiguring than prayer. In Jesus' name, I cast down any high thing causing the desire of fleshly fulfillment, preventing them from choosing to get into your presence as the first and most important thing of every day. Put in their minds: He who is called to serve you must deny himself and minister unto you first and foremost. In contrast to that, men daily choose to gratify their flesh first and most.

May they, please, respond in obedience. May the glory of yourself be undeniably evident in their lives as your glory did shine upon Moses and thereby radiate from him. Pastors, music and youth ministers and other leaders are in their positions in the Church to help lead the Church in showing forth your glory, bringing the lost to salvation.

O, God, presently is an absence of souls being saved in the Church. The Church is seen as irrelevant in today's society. Young people certainly don't recognize your glory in the Church. Many have no idea what the name of Jesus means historically. O, God, we have sinned. We have consumed what we called your presence for our own desire and enjoyment. We have neglected simple sacrifice of time with you. Our prayer closets have been used for anything but prayer. Our results were to present some manner of dead religion, which brought none to salvation. We're incapable, in ourselves, to bring forth life. It only comes after having been alone in your presence, for you will abundantly supply our need to minister your grace.

Please, O God, bring pastors and other supporting ministers, into your presence. Help, O God, them to know, somehow, that there are true ministers of you, all over the world, praying for them to get into your presence.

Help me, dear Lord, to continue to persuade intercessors, all over the world to intercede for Connecticut's pastors daily, for dedicated, secret prayer time, for those

pastors' time alone with you is the necessary part of being transfigured to deliver a Word from the Throne. Apart from time with you is mere scholastic recitation; a dead letter; the death most commonly issuing forth from pulpits throughout this state, possibly without exception. Thank you, God, for those intercessors who have agreed to pray for pastors, music and youth ministers, in this state.

Lord, let it be put on billboards, for those church leaders too blind to see, "Have the sense to shut down the churches, sell them and give the proceeds back to those who provided them." To continue to go on, without your Holy Spirit is foolish.

God, be glorified in those ministers. As they are in that secret place, pour your love out on them so they can pour your love out to others that they may say, "Assuredly, the Lord is present."

This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

Christopher

P.S.: Please understand, I pray also for you, those close to you and your pastor and your state. I know you are in an equally dead state. I'm praying for this pathetic state to wake up so that she can pray for other states and ministries about the world. At present, the Church in Connecticut believes she is rich, and increased with goods, and has need of nothing; and knowest not that she is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

Editor's Note: The following is a letter written by a 26-year-old from Michigan who went to Ethiopia on a missions trip to her friends, family and acquaintances. It details what she encountered while there, and how she grew in her own Christian walk in the process of missions. Her trip was through the organization SIM (Serving in Mission).

RETURNING FROM ETHIOPIA MISSIONS by Elizabeth Long

As the months have passed since my return from Ethiopia, I have been torn as to what to share with you concerning my trip. I have finally settled on letting you know how God has moved in my life through my experiences and how I saw Him working in Ethiopia. I am writing from the assumption that many of you were able to read the emails that I sent concerning the work I was doing while I was there; however, if you didn't, I will be mentioning more about the different ministries as I continue. I hope that you will have the opportunity to hear more about my trip when I speak at various churches.

Partner: (n) one associated with another especially in an action¹

First of all, I want to say THANK YOU again for your prayer and/or financial support that played a significant part in the Lord opening the door for me to go to Ethiopia and be a part of the HIV/AIDS internship through SIM. It was truly a grace to be able to minister because of God working through you, His people.

Missions: (n) the cross-cultural expansion of the Church of Jesus Christ²

As I have mentioned previously, my going on this trip came out of my desire to learn about long-term missions. In the time I have had to reflect upon my time in Ethiopia, the Lord has given me a better understanding of the Great Commission. As John Piper has written, “Missions exists because worship (of the one true God) doesn’t.”³ In essence, missions is about bringing the Gospel to a people, planting and establishing churches and equipping the believers so they might do the same. While SIM has been in Ethiopia for about 80 years now and Christian churches have been established throughout the country, equipping is still in progress.⁴ I took part in the HIV/AIDS class that was taught by American Dr. Tim Teusink at the Evangelical Theological College. As a lecturer, his role was to educate future Ethiopian church leaders about a biblical response to HIV/AIDS and to give them practical tools to reach those who are living with this disease for the glory of God. Despite the fact that in the capital, about 10% of the people are living with HIV/AIDS⁵, being infected with the disease still carries a stigma with it.

While the stigma is present, the church is already becoming an influence in the community when it comes to HIV/AIDS. Medan ACTS was a project started as a cooperation between SIM and the Ethiopian Kale Heywet (Word of Life) Church. The voluntary testing and counseling center where I worked offered a number of free services to the community thanks to ongoing donor support. People are able to be tested for HIV and are counseled before and after the testing. Once their status is known, various programs are in place to help them either cope with being HIV-positive or to encourage them to stay negative. For example, support groups for HIV-positive people are in place and a post-test club for teens who are negative is also running. Other facets of the project involve providing for orphans and vulnerable children, giving home-based care to those living with AIDS, working to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and community education.

Surrender: (v) to give (oneself) up into the power of another, especially as a prisoner⁶

Personally, this is an area that the Lord has been constantly impressing on my heart since I returned. It is a daily necessity for me to say “not my will, but Thy will be done,” and one not always met with success on my part. On many occasions, my desires and wants and the attitudes that come with having them have triumphed over having an attitude of surrender and trust in the Lord. Missions, in particular, has been an area of struggle for me. I still have strong desires to be overseas at times, but I know that for now, God wants me here in the States. Perhaps He will call me to serve in missions in the future, but in the meantime, I must trust and do the good works He has prepared for me here. I am admonished by Jim Elliot’s words, “Wherever you are, be all there. Live to the hilt every situation you believe to be the will of God.”⁷

Instrument: (n) a means whereby something is achieved, performed, or furthered⁸

It is only natural that surrender leads to being used by God. Cherry’s story begins with a staggering thought. Thousands and even tens of thousands of prostitutes can be found on the streets of Addis Ababa on any given night. This is not surprising considering the city has an unemployment rate of greater than 60%.⁹ While Cherry grew up in a Christian family, received a college degree, and was not on the streets

herself, she was challenged to reach out to these women. God gave her a deep desire to help them after she realized how difficult it would be for uneducated women to find jobs since she herself had been looking for one for almost a year. Through her and others' willingness to love and care for prostitutes, Women at Risk was established. This program takes a small number of women off the streets each year and rehabilitates them by sharing with them the love of Christ through the Gospel and counseling and giving them the skills to earn a living by means other than prostitution. Women at Risk has been running for several years now with remarkable success. One hundred and seventy-five women have gone through the program and 94% of them have left the field of prostitution and stayed out, thanks be to God. 10

It is my desire that as I surrender to the Lord and follow His leading, wherever that may be, missions or not, that He would use me and in the process, conform me more to the image of Christ. My time in Ethiopia was a time of learning and growing that I wouldn't trade. God bless!

Praying that His glory would be declared among the nations,
Elizabeth (Betsy) Long

1, 6, 8 definitions from www.m-w.com

2 <http://www.home.snu.edu>

3 Piper, John. Let The Nations Be Glad. Baker: 1993, p. 11

4 <http://www.sim.org>

5 Stop AIDS Keep the Promise 2006 summary

7 Elliot, Elisabeth. Passion and Purity. Fleming H. Revel: 2002, p. 80.

9, 10 <http://www.w-a-r-e.org>

**OUR HEART'S DESIRE:
THE RAIN OF FIRE
by Paula Leanues**

The Church doesn't need new converts so much as it needs the old bunch made over.

- Billy Sunday

The happiness of the creature consists in rejoicing in God, by which also God is magnified and exalted.

- Jonathan Edwards

Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

- Hosea 10:12

Fallow ground is too hard to receive new seed. Many hearts are this way when it comes to receiving the Word of God. It is a wonder how any in Christ can shut Him out, but they do. The only cure for the ail of an individual, the only seed of new life, is shut out and drowned out by carnal pursuits.

Whosoever does not desire God above worldly, carnal goals is enslaved by those goals. God must take precedence over all our goals, to guide us into reaching them. There is freedom only in pursuing the personal will of God for our lives.

I never wanted anyone but the Lord Jesus Christ. But I did not know this until I *found* Him. I sought peace, tranquility, joy, freedom and love. I sought perfect resolutions of problems, the way to perfect judgment, a perfect government, a society without crime and without hate. I sought perfect health, a way to heal all ailments, physical and of the heart and mind.

These things I sought in the world, as have we all. But these things are only found in the character of God and in the Kingdom of God. We seek His character every day but do not easily find Him in anyone. We seek His ways of governing life every day, but do not find them anywhere around us.

So we take on habits that help us get through the day. The world, as Solomon in more cynical days, says eat, drink and enjoy the fruits of your labor. So we eat to excess. We drink to excess. We spend our time and money on worldly movies, social gatherings, worldly books, worldly music and “friendships” that aren’t worth a dime to a righteous and holy God. We curse when we are still not satisfied. We hate, when in our hearts, all we need to do, like Christ, is to love. Eventually we may hate because the desire to love has burned out completely. Let us not go so far away from Him.

We build a phony personality for those we see on a daily basis. We fear being our true selves, so we cater to the god of societal expectations. Our manufactured personality is what we think people want to see. It is full of pride and greatness. We can sometimes bring a phony confidence to the table of our lives to hide the insecurity we may feel inside. And we go home and close the door, take this personality off and either face or hide from the reality that we feel unsettled.

Face it or hide from it – either way, we won’t know we are truly something until we *know we are loved and accepted in Christ*.

We are enslaved by our habits, which God calls sin. We have monsters living among us that compel the behaviors we grow to both resent and befriend, but we’re trapped in these behaviors, enslaved, caught in webs of sin.

The devil employs demons against everyone, Christian or not. No one is immune to his attacks, but there is a way to defeat him and his cohorts.

So often we’ve heard this that it’s become a cliché to some, but CHRIST IS THE ANSWER. In giving up all to Him, *all* the earthly goals, the habits, the behaviors, the sin, the desires that grew out of our society dictating to us our preferences – we become free. He takes from us, with our permission, all that the Kingdom of heaven considers worthless, robes us in His righteousness, and we are free.

We have all that we sought, the peace, the joy, the love. We have His promise that to live by His Word promotes true success, because we discover we *can* be “in” the world, but not “of” it. We have the Truth once formerly sought in all the wrong places, found in the only place it can be found, in Christ.

To turn again and forsake this Truth, after possessing what we’ve sought all our lives, is madness. It is a great sin by one born of God to continue seeking fleeting, earthly pleasures. We open ourselves up to more attacks of the devil by not ascertaining refuge in the Kingdom. We open ourselves up once again to receive not the blessings of God, but to reap the curses, or the consequences of sin. His protection bypasses us, and we are prey to calamity. This does not speak of tribulation we must endure while on this earth. Chastisement for our unfaithfulness and tribulation for our faithfulness are different things.

To forsake the Truth once tasting of it, to live with one foot in it and one foot determined to step into the lies of the world with its false peace, false confidence and doctrines of devils, we stand with the lukewarm, who at judgment, are spit out of the Lord's mouth (Revelation 3:16).

We treat that diamond ring or those pearl earrings, or that gold watch with more care than we treat the God of heaven whose Son we invited into our hearts to live.

The fire of the Holy Spirit is promised to those who seek Him, who desire the full Gospel and the whole Truth, who pain after righteousness. This fire is the power of Christ Himself flowing down from heaven and through us. He'll baptize you with His fire and cause you to walk in it and manipulate the course of this world for GOOD if you will have it.

But will you have it?

Hebrews 12:29: "For our God is a consuming fire." As is His Spirit! He burns all the dead weight, the sin, in us, by His Spirit and fills us with this same fire to clean up the death and wickedness that surrounds us. This fire never burns a good thing out of us. It reduces evil in us to ashes and empowers us in righteousness to carry out the commission of the Lord.

The power of the Holy Spirit is also described as rain, which will fall in the last days. The fire *is* the rain. (This rain of fire is not to be confused with the eternal burning fire of hell, which blazes and yet never consumes its tormented inhabitants.)

"Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month." (Joel 2:23)

This precedes the promise in Joel 2:28, 29: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."

This rain – will you have it? Do you want it?

So many Christians now are satisfied going to church for the potluck suppers and ten-minute sermons, but they forsake the true following after God with their whole heart. The "salvation" is good enough for them once their initial high wears off, and they go right back into trying to find Him in the things of the world.

Fellow Christian, we have Him! We have what our heart has longed for our entire lives. We were created with an innate desire to know Him and to be of His character. Once we place our former sins on the altar and repent for Christ, we have the key to all the rest – His miracle-working power and the mysteries of His perfect Kingdom. Can we not keep ourselves holy for two minutes to enjoy this? Can we not find a moment to be in His presence for communication with Him?

Instead of being consumed with Holy Ghost fire of God, we again are consumed with petty cares of this world. Clean entertainments are all right in moderation and perspective. But when they, both clean and of the world, take the place of God in our hearts, we are in no condition to experience the fire and the rain.

God reserves the fullness of Himself for those who seek all of Him, who are quick to repent of sins and desire true holiness. We will find him when we seek him with all our heart (Jeremiah 29:13).

Do we seek Him? Do we want to conform to His character? Can we forsake the character of worldly principles? Are we willing to repent for the times the parties and ballgames (etc.) were more important than He?

I believe if each of us gave up just a few of our earthly entertainments and spent some prayer time in their place, we would grow so close to God as a Body, and so desirous of Him personally, He would pour out His Spirit upon this wretched planet and shift its present course!

People all over the globe would recognize their need for God and understand their innate desire of His Kingdom. Splashes and flashes of heaven would come down upon earth in a spiritual revival the likes of which we have not seen.

Do we want this fire and rain? This *rain of fire* from heaven? Yes we do. But are we willing to stop looking for it in a “happy pill,” junk food, alcohol, get-togethers, sitcoms and overly persuasive friends?

There is an alternative to this rain. It is exactly the opposite of heaven’s blessings. It is the depression, disaster, distress and judgment we see all over the globe, and it grows worse – until we will fervently pray.

I say not to the unsaved, as John the Baptist and Jesus did, but I say to the unrepentant Christian of our day: “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Let us remove the clothing that the world has lent us and receive the robe of righteousness that is truly ours.

HUMOR

There were three playing golf. The first man swung and the ball was headed straight for a lake. He raised his golf club and the waters parted, enabling him to take his second shot from dry land. The second man swung and the ball headed for the lake, but hovered over the water without going in. The man walked on the water and took his second shot. Then the third took his swing. The ball bounced off the water, flew onto a highway, ricocheted off the side of a passing van and into the mouth of a bird. The bird carefully dropped the ball into the hole. Then Moses said to Jesus, “This is why I hate playing golf with your Father.”

Hillary Clinton and Fred Thompson were walking down the street. They came across a homeless man. Fred Thompson handed the man a business card and said to look him up and he would try to help him find a job. Then he reached into his pocket and handed the homeless man twenty dollars. Hillary Clinton was impressed, so she wanted to help the next homeless man they encountered. She said to the man, while pointing down the street, “Over there is the local welfare office. They will help you.” Then she reached into Fred Thompson’s pocket and pulled out twenty dollars. She handed the man five and kept fifteen for her administrative fees.
