

Mr Peter Nathan, 18-Jan-03, Pasadena CA

The Spirit in Man

20th July 1969 is a date to remember. It's one of those dates where people say, "Where were you when ... such and such happened?" I think I know where most of you who were alive were on this particular occasion. You were probably sitting in front of a television set, or had your ear glued to a radio, listening for this:

"That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind ..."

... as Neil Armstrong stepped from "Eagle," to place the first human footstep on the moon. I guess most of you were rather interested in what was going to happen on that occasion as man stepped outside of his natural environment for the first time, and, in his own micro-environment, set foot on the moon.

20th July 1969 was the culmination of the race for the moon, a race which was the culmination of technological development, a period of unheralded technological development, spurred by competition, which we otherwise called the Cold War. Who was going to be there first - the West or the East?

Oftentimes the race for the moon was seen in terms of competing ideological concepts. Which is the greater? It was often suggested that the first ideology there would be the one which won the war, or won the world.

But above all else, the race for the moon was a tribute to the creativity of the human mind; what the mind of man can do. It can dream, and it can turn those dreams into reality in quite a remarkable manner.

And so, as a result of a challenge that had been laid in 1957 when the Soviet Union launched the first Sputnik, the United States rose to the challenge and, instead of following, led. A lot was to be said for the creativity of the human mind, the ability to accomplish what it thought of.

God's Word talks about a time when nothing would be restrained from man. He would be able to accomplish whatever it was he set his mind to.

There was a side effect of the space race. I don't know whether you have ever put these 2 things together. The developments of the 1960s in terms of the space race spurred research into the nature of the human brain. We were able to look at things, and consider things in a different way.

Seeing the accomplishments of mankind, people started to ask, "What is the difference between a human brain and that of other mammals?" Contemporaneous with the space race, there was research going on into the nature of the human brain; the end result of which was that there are no PHYSICAL differences to account for the level of achievements between - on the one hand, the animal brain - and on the other, the human brain, which is able, by literally creating its own environment and carrying it with him, send one of its kind to the moon!

It doesn't matter how inventive animals may be, or how smart animals might be (they can be used in various ways), they were certainly not able to accomplish what humanity had accomplished in the decade of the 60s. If you weighed and looked at the relative brains of a human being and other mammals, there was no quantitative difference. There was no physical difference in those brains that accounted for the QUALITATIVE difference in the output. Qualitatively in terms of what the human brain could do, there was a vast disparity.

What is that disparity? The result gave rise to an understanding of a subject the Bible speaks about, and has spoken about since the beginning.

Another Armstrong, an older man, Herbert Armstrong, came to appreciate and understand that a NON-PHYSICAL component was coupled with the human brain to create the human mind. Clearly the results of science was that there was something non-physical. What was that non-physical component that gave the human brain the ability to accomplish what it was able to do, that the qualitative aspects of the human mind was able to accomplish?

That non-physical element we know as the spirit in man. The Bible has spoken for a long time about the spirit in man. In the book of Job, Elihu speaks of a spirit within man. He had an understanding and an appreciation that there was a spirit within a human being:

***Job 32: 8 But there is a spirit in man,
And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.***

There is a spirit. There is something there. The Tanakh says:

8 Truly it is the spirit in men, and the breath of El Shaddai (the Almighty) gives them understanding.

***Job 34: 14 If He should set His heart on it,
If He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath,***

With what effect? Man would cease to exist!

***15 All flesh would perish together,
And man would return to dust.***

Elihu understood that human beings were made from more than just the physical ground. Man also had a spirit within him that God placed there, and that spirit was sustained by the breath of God. If God were to take the spirit out of the human being, and the breath from his nostrils, we would be no more than dust!

The prophet Zechariah understood the aspect of the spirit in man.

***Zechariah 12: 1 The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD,
who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man
within him:***

Zechariah equated the concept of the spirit in man as being one of those elements of the creation, the heavens that God stretched out, the earth for which He laid the foundations, and the spirit of man within him.

David understood about the spirit in man. Moses understood it as well. One of the most incredible Scriptures in the Bible is in Numbers 14. It is a testimony, a statement that God has recorded, relating to Caleb. Caleb was one of the spies who spied out the Promised Land. When he came back, his report was different from that of the other spies. He, with Joshua, sought to still the people, and encourage them to go and possess the land. The Eternal's comment about Caleb was ...

Numbers 14: 24 "But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him ...

There was a different spirit in Caleb than there was in the other spies. What a comment to be made by God about a person!

***24 ... My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I
will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.***

The others, because they lack a certain type of spirit, because they have another spirit, are not going to inherit the land. They are going to die in the wilderness.

In the New Testament the apostle Paul speaks of this at length:

1 Corinthians 2: 6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.

The wisdom we are speaking of is a different form of wisdom. It's informed from a different source.

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,

8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written:

Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,

Nor have entered into the heart of man

The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

He talks about how we receive this wisdom from the Spirit of God, and that it is only through the Spirit of God.

11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him ...

There is a spirit in man and it understands the things of mankind. It is that spirit that gives man his ingenuity, and his ability to reason and deduce, his ability to dream and accomplish, his ability to do things such as he has done.

11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

Things of God are NOT KNOWN to the spirit of man by itself. They are only accessible through God's Spirit.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who (which) is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

In other words, the human mind is open to spiritual inputs in quite a remarkable way.

13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

15 But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.

He has the power and the ability to make right judgments, and to see things in a correct and proper perspective.

16 For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him ...

No one has known the mind of God, except the mind of God is given to them as a gift.

16 ... But we have the mind of Christ.

Paul is saying that there is a spirit in man and it can receive input from the spirit of the world, or it can receive input from the Spirit of God. We can also make up an equation that the brain plus the spirit in man

equals the mind. You have a mind. As Paul says, it has a spirit within it, that creates something distinct from the rest of the creation.

If we look at it graphically, we have an entity which has the spirit in man within it. It is able to receive input from the spirit of the world, or the Spirit of God. How does it do it?

The analogy that Mr Armstrong used was of a radio, not a modern fancy one with digital tuning, but the old fashioned analogue type that needed to be tuned with great care, and which oftentimes ended up with stations laying on top of one another. One had to fiddle the dial to try and get the tuning exact.

The spirit in man needs to be tuned to a wavelength. It needs to receive that, and it needs to be tuned. Something needs to happen within the spirit in man so that it can be tuned. It is interesting that after Mr Armstrong came to understand about the spirit in man that I think he spoke most of all about John 6:44 ...

John 6: 44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

... because if we understand and appreciate the element of the spirit in man there is no way WE can ever convert another person, because conversion is a spiritual process. Something has to be done to the tuning mechanism within the mind to receive the things of God.

We can set an example. We can create an environment in which God can intervene in a person's life (we can also make a right mess of it), but ultimately speaking, calling can only come about as God's Spirit seeks to over-ride the spirit of this world, and enables the spirit in man to hear something OTHER than it has been accustomed to.

So we can't CALL other people of our own doing. It is of God's doing.

We've used the analogy of a dial, and the need to tune it. The apostle Paul talked of the way in which the human mind is tuned ...

***Ephesians 2: 1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,
2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who (which) now works in the sons of disobedience,***

There's a prince of the power of the air. There's a spirit that works within the children of disobedience. That's the type of people we were until we were called.

3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

We were in that same situation, controlled by the spirit of this world, the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience, the spirit that now controls their lives.

A new translation, the Net Bible (the "dot com" Bible available on the Internet) translates this as follows:

3 In which you formerly lived according to this world's present path, according to the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the ruler of the spirit that is energising the sons of disobedience.

When I read this the first time, I thought that they were trying to get rid of something, but the more I looked at it, the more I realised that, in fact, it is probably the correct translation. They justify their translation based upon the Greek, and upon what various other scholars have said beforehand. The spirit of this world is ruled by someone.

They posit that the spirit in man is subject to the spirit of the world, but the spirit of the world is ruled over by another being, the prince of the power of the air. It presents it in a slightly better way, and provides an interesting corollary to the Spirit of God, because the Spirit of God does not rule itself. It is ruled over by the Father. The Spirit of God accomplishes what the Father sends it to do. It doesn't have a mind and a thinking of its own. So you might say the spirit of this world is ruled over by the prince of the power of the air, by Satan himself - with disastrous results in many cases.

I would like to put it to you that the SPIRIT IN MAN is one of the MOST IMPORTANT aspects of our understanding. What Mr Armstrong came to understand, as he lived his life, built on what went before. It did not de-construct, it did not remove, but rather built upon and illuminated what we had already been given. The spirit in man enabled us to appreciate more fully what we had been given beforehand. Why? Because it addresses the aspect of our IDENTITY.

A couple of weeks ago Mr Hulme spoke about the aspect of our identity. I would like to address it from a different perspective today, from the aspect of the spirit in man. Why is it important? Why is it so important that we consider this aspect of our identity?

Let me quote from a book entitled "The Church's Bible: its Contemporary Authority." This book has been sitting on my shelf for about 12 years:

"Post-Modern society is characterised by a loss of a sense of transcendence, by the absence of any overarching story, and by the disappearance of the under-girding structure that supports humane values and knits together individuals."

The book was published round about 1990, so it was being written in the late 80s. The author was talking about this post-modern society back then. He characterised it in various ways - a loss of a sense of transcendence, the absence of an overarching story, and by the disappearance of an under-girding structure.

A little later he said ...

"It is marked by individualism."

You don't know how much people argue over the Bible's role as an authority! This man was addressing that. What does he state? He states there's a lack of transcendence, no overarching story, and a disappearance of an under-girding structure. What does he mean by that?

People say there is no spirit world; the only thing that exists is what we can see, what we can touch, what our minds can deal with, what our senses can appreciate. A lack of transcendence means there's nothing else out there. "It's just us. There's no overarching story, or there's no place in history, or better still, in terms of you and I, there's no Plan of God!"

I guess you have all had a good guess as to what would be the disappearance of an under-girding structure. There's no place for the Law of God! That is the way in which the author is characterising society - no spirit, no history, and no law.

Why is it important? Because we have to ask WHO we are as individuals.

Let me introduce you to another individual. René Descartes, a Frenchman, a philosopher. Round about 1619 - 1620 he wrote a book about "Cogito". What was important about Cogito? Cogito was an orphan. Many people understand what it is to be an orphan. But Descartes' orphan was an orphan extra-ordinaire.

Descartes' orphan was a model for human beings. One person described it as a parent-less, autonomous thinking agent who is dependent upon nothing outside of himself for the truth he has uncovered within himself.

There's no transcendence. There's no overarching story, and there's no under-girding structure.

This was conceived and penned by a philosopher almost 5 centuries ago. The writer continues:

"The world Descartes had envisaged is a parent-less one, in which autonomous subjects, freed from oppressive tradition and feckless opinion, bring a bold new order into being."

A brave new world! Descartes' world was a world written at the beginning of the 17th century. It was lived out by a few subsequently - i.e. the romantics, the Shelleys, the Byrons, of this world, people who were greatly talented, yet morally reprobate; people who felt they owed nothing to this world; but to destroy anything it may have had, and who felt that the greatest thing in the world was they, themselves.

Sadly, it's a majority lifestyle in the West today. That's what society wants.

One young lady went to university, sat in an English class, and was told by the professor at the beginning, "My goal is to make you an atheist." This was an English class! I thought it would have been to teach something about English literature, but the goal of the professor was to destroy any sense of transcendence, to remove any spiritual underpinning that the class may have had, to make the students post-modern.

To some degree or other, the lifestyle, the model that Descartes posited in the 17th century, has become the norm in this century. Descartes denied the existence of the spirit world. He was, in one sense, the father of human reason. His writings became the building block on which much of human reason and rationalism has built upon.

But Descartes denied the existence of the spirit world. The identity is "within the self," and if you don't believe that we all have become part of this world, ask yourself, how long ago was it when you were first told to "be your own person?" How many decades ago were you told to find your identity within yourself? How long ago was it you were told to fulfil your OWN dreams, or do your OWN thing? How long have these concepts been around, expressed, not necessarily in those same terms, but expressed all the same?

In other words, "Your identity is within yourself. You are what you make of yourself."

Are you? The apostle Paul had something to say about it. Where is our identity?

If the spirit of the world controls us, then our identity is there, pure and simple. Our identity is not within ourselves. Our identity is somewhere else. It doesn't matter how much we THINK we control our own lives, and that we are our own person, ultimately speaking we are not.

The prince of the power of the air that controls the spirit of the world has room for boundless identities. He doesn't mind. As Jesus Christ said ...

Matthew 7: 13 ... for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

You can create any sort of scenario for yourselves. You may THINK you are doing your own thing, but your own thing is being informed by the spirit of the world. It is being fostered, encouraged, by the ruler of the spirit of this world. Our identity is there. It is not within ourselves.

The apostle Paul made a comment that speaks very much to this aspect of identity.

Romans 6: 15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to

righteousness?

The New Revised Standard Version says:

16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?

This world leads to death, and the majority of people unwittingly find their identity within it. They may think they are creating an identity for themselves, but that was the ultimate deception. They think they are free, yet they are enslaved. Satan, as Paul said in 2nd Corinthians 4, has blinded their eyes so they can't see.

God has allowed it, and God will allow it to continue until it is His good pleasure to open those eyes, so that people can start to see, and start to appreciate.

As the apostle Paul says, we are servants to whom we obey. Where does our identity come from?

Notice the beginning of the gospel of Matthew. Have you ever wondered why the book starts this way ...

Matthew 1: 1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

2 Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah ... etc, etc.

Is that the way to start a best seller? Yet it is, really. Do you know what it is talking to? It is talking to the IDENTITY of Jesus Christ! He was the son of David, the son of Abraham. It was very important.

In those days people hadn't become post-modern. They still had a sense of history, and who you descended from was very, very important. God wanted it to be known to the people of that day that Jesus Christ had descended from the most important personage in the history, psyche and thinking of those people. He had descended from Abraham for the right reasons.

Why? The people of Christ's day had a problem with identity. Yes, they realised they were descendants of Abraham. John the Baptist contended with the religious leaders of his day who had come to be baptised. What did he say to the religious leaders of his day?

Matthew 3: 9 "and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father ...'

"I'm OK. What about you? Who did you descend from? Oh, you're a lesser mortal." He said, "Don't think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' because just the physical descent from Abraham is not, of itself, sufficient." He went so far as to say ...

9 ... For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.

"You think you're so great, but God is able to raise up from these very stones children for Abraham."

And what would be important about them? Fruit! Let's read on a little ...

10 "And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

What is he saying about Abraham? The important point about Abraham is that he brought forth good fruit. Therefore, as a descendant of Abraham, one is obliged to bring forth fruit which is commensurate with that of Abraham. If you don't, claiming that aspect of identity is not sufficient. You can be burned up. You can be destroyed.

Jesus Christ Himself picked up this very same theme in speaking to the people. This was an occasion where He had healed a centurion's servant. The centurion had come to Him in Capernaum ...

Matthew 8: 6 saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented."

7 And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

8 The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed."

9 "For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

10 When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!"

Here is the faith that God looks for!

11 "And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."

12 "But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

What is He saying? He is saying those people who saw their identity in Abraham purely from a physical perspective, can miss out - because they've missed the picture of what it is all about. It is about bringing forth the FRUITS that God desires.

And the important thing about Abraham was that he was an example of being faithful. He set an example, and he is referred to as being the FATHER of the faithful. Here was another individual who was showing the importance of being faithful. Jesus Christ was telling them, "You've missed the boat. You've missed what Abraham is all about. Abraham is important, but it was the SPIRITUAL FRUITS of Abraham's life that set him apart. And that is what is to be emulated."

The identity is spiritual.

Colossians 3: 1 If then you were raised with Christ ...

... if you've been through the process of baptism, being buried and then raised from the waters of the grave
....

1 ... seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

Seek those things. Seek the spiritual.

2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Your life is now subsumed into that of Christ. As a result of baptism we now have to live a life which is characteristic of Jesus Christ. Our identity has to be that of Jesus Christ.

4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Christ is our life! He is our "raison d'être," our whole reason for being!

So it's not who you are! It's nothing internal. It is external. It is not physical, it is spiritual, and it is governed and determined by the fruit of the life. Are the fruits indicative of Jesus Christ? Are they representative of Jesus Christ?

When we look at another person, who do we see? So often we see the physical. That's natural. We have physical eyes. We make evaluations.

- Is the person obese or not?
- What sort of cardiac problem are they creating for themselves?

Our mind goes through all of these things. We look and evaluate them by the clothes they wear, their lifestyle. We make judgments upon a person based upon that.

But what is the real identity of the person? The identity is not on those physical things that you may see. It's on the fruit that is evidenced from their life! What is it that is being produced? Is it Christ-like?

Is it? If it is, then you know the identity of that person. You can have an appreciation of that person.

On the other hand, if it is the fruit of this world, then you have another identity altogether. There's an importance to this which I would like to address, because it's easy to accept things as they are without realising how IMPORTANT God's Spirit is for our life.

Let's look at some applications.

Over the years I have had the privilege of counselling many young adults for baptism. Very few of them had an appreciation of the spirit in man. Very few of them understood that. I can see within young people the ability to accept everything as being fine. "I have grown up in the Church. I'm part of the Church. I am accepted. I am basically a good person. What else do I need?"

It's a bit like the young man who came to Jesus Christ and said, "What good thing must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus Christ said, "Keep the commandments."

The young man said, "All these things I have done from a child up. What do I lack?"

Jesus said, "Go, sell all you have, and give to the poor."

Why? Did He want the man to be impoverished? Jesus Christ was getting to the heart of the problem that the young man had, but that he didn't realise he had.

Yes, he had kept the commandments from a child up, but as a man he was subject to the spirit of the world, and what was important to him were the physical things of life. They consumed him.

So Jesus Christ said "Your focus is in the wrong place. Your focus, your identity, is upon the physical blessings you have. You need a new identity, a spiritual identity. You need to very clearly change your identity if you are going to enter into life."

It's so very easy for young people to grow up within the Church, and believe everything is fine. They are accepted within the Church. But where is the identity? Ultimately speaking, for them where does their identity lie? They may think their identity is with the Church, but until they receive the Spirit of God, their identity is not really the identity that God seeks. In fact, I would say this much: the greatest, utmost thing in the mind of a young person should be to receive the Spirit of God, so that they can have the RIGHT identity; so that they can be freed from the COUNTERFEIT identity that the world is held captive with!

We are not talking about infants. We are talking about young adults. Yet oftentimes, when young people

come to counsel for baptism, one of the things they fail to appreciate is about the spirit in man, the spirit which is within them. They fail to appreciate that in going through the aspect of repentance, what they are asking God to do is to change their dial. "I want to be switched off that station, and I want to be switched onto a new station. You and You alone are the only one who can do it - and I desire it."

That is really what repentance is about - repenting of what we ARE, rather than what we have DONE. We have done what we have done BECAUSE of what we are. We are human beings, tuned in to the spirit of this world.

So understanding about the spirit in man is very important in terms of understanding what repentance is all about - the desire to have the Spirit of God, and to be able to identify with the things of God, in a way which is only possible through God's Spirit residing within us, interfacing and interacting with the spirit within us. That's where repentance really fits in.

So it's possible for a young person to be seen to be part of it, yet their identity is really still somewhere else. You might say that that is also even possible for those who have been baptised, because they have never really come to understand what they are doing. They can end up with a false sense of identity.

As I said, we are not talking about children, but clearly for a young adult there is a point at which God expects us to choose.

I have often wondered about the situation in Revelation 20, at the end of the Millennium ...

Revelation 20: 7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison

8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.

There will have been a thousand years of good times. It's the end of the Millennium, and Satan is loosed for a short period of time. He goes out and he deceives the nations. They come up against Jerusalem, and against the people of God. Why?

Clearly, I would say, in the first instance, it's emphatically the case that those people have felt they can live WITHOUT the Spirit of God; that they can live in a NEUTRAL zone, where the spirit in man is not tuned into the Spirit of God. And Satan gets out there and deceives them, just as clearly and convincingly as he deceived Adam and Eve.

They are clearly a group who lack a spiritual identity. They accept everything as it is, as being so good. There's been peace. There's been well being, physical blessings all around. "What else do I need?"

"All these things I have done from my youth up. What do I lack? Nothing!"

God says, "Yes, you do. You lack the Spirit of God within you."

The mind of man, without God's Spirit to protect it, is subject to deception; subjection to deception by Satan, just as surely and as completely as Adam and Eve were deceived. Nothing changes in terms of the human condition.

You might say God is convincing and writing for the last time, for the benefit of those who are about to be resurrected in the Great White Throne Judgment, a lesson - that there's only ONE identity that is going to matter, and that is an identity in which your mind, and the spirit within you is coupled with the Spirit of God. Without that we are nothing! Absolutely nothing! We will be destroyed.

What about those of us who have received God's Holy Spirit? What about us? Where do we stand?

Let's look at some Scriptures:

Paul says ...

Romans 12: 1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

You give yourself over to somebody else. Unlike Cogito, you realise that the transcendence exists. "There is a God, and I am going to give myself to Him, completely and unreservedly." That is a commitment that we made, going through the waters of baptism. But he carries on ...

2 And do not be conformed to this world ...

Don't use this world as your measure!

2 ... but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

The Spirit of God is at work with this person. And what is the Spirit doing? What is the purpose of the Spirit? It is so that the mind can be renewed. It can be transformed, so that it is no longer geared to the physical world, and the physical circumstances of this world, but it is geared to what is that good and acceptable, perfect will of God.

In other words, what God desires becomes our motivation, not what is convenient, or current within this world. So the spirit in us is now connected to the Spirit of God, and with that Spirit, we renew the mind.

Does it happen overnight? No. It is a continuing process. And it's a process we have to be in mind to continue, because if we stop, we will regress. There's no holding point. It's a continuing, continuous process.

The apostle Paul talked about how it was something that was done on a daily basis.

2 Corinthians 4: 16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

There's a renewing process taking place within our lives. The values of this world are being replaced by the values of God. It's a growth process. And each and every one of us has to examine ourselves to ensure that that process is continuing.

How do we know the process is continuing? By the fruit that is produced as a result of our life. We can see it.

Paul talks about this aspect again in ...

Titus 3: 3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

That's the way in which God sees humanity without His Holy Spirit, without having accepted the sacrifice of Christ. That's the way which we are; a pretty dirty, scurvy lot, nothing to be proud of!

***4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,
5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,
6 whom (which) He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,***

So there's a renewing process; the renewing, the cleaning of our life, the changing of the fruit of the life from those things that he talked about in verse 3, to the things he speaks of elsewhere, which are indicative of the Spirit of God being within us.

***Colossians 3: 5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.
6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,***

Those things are evidence of the ruler of this world controlling our spirit.

***7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.
9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,***

We have died. We have been buried. We have received God's Holy Spirit.

10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

It is being renewed in a new image, a new identity, an identity that this world cannot appreciate.

So there is a renewing process in which we are involved. You and I have to have a part in it by making sure that God's Spirit is in our mind. We have a responsibility to make sure that God's Spirit is coupled with the spirit within us, so that we can produce the fruits that God desires.

So where are we? What is our identity? What is my identity? The answer simply is, to what is your mind tuned? What are you getting input from?

People think they are free. But they are very clearly in bondage.

To what is my mind tuned? To what is your mind tuned? What's the dial set at?

Is it set for the Kingdom of God? Is it set for God's Spirit? Or is it set to another setting?

You and I have to evaluate that for ourselves. We have to answer and give account of that!

*...Peter Nathan
18 Jan 03*

[Back to Top](#)

[Back to Sermon Summary List](#)