

The Secret of Fruitfulness

THE ABUNDANT LIFE JESUS PROMISED CAN BE YOURS BECAUSE THE SAME SPIRIT WHO RAISED HIM FROM THE GRAVE DWELLS INSIDE YOU.

Do you know that the enemy has a plan for your life? He does! The Bible tells us, “‘The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy’” (John 10:10, NKJV).

In other words, Satan doesn’t come to your door unless he intends to do you harm. You will become his victim if you are ignorant of his plan.

But Jesus said, “‘I have come that [you] may have life, and that [you] may have it more abundantly’” (v. 10). God has a plan for you, too. He sent Jesus into the world to give you abundant life and to restore everything that was destroyed by Satan.

When God first dropped this revelation into my spirit, it kept me up all night because of its life-changing applications. I got really mad at the devil as I thought about the way he works in our lives.

He tries to throw obstacle after obstacle onto our paths to cause us to live below that which God has called us to. We are meant to be life bearers! Life is the antidote to the enemy’s plan for death.

Jesus is the source of life bearing and life giving. If His Holy Spirit dwells in us, we are life bearers also.

The word “life” means “vital, breath, to give life, to preserve, to quicken, to restore.” You may not be able to quickly recall a time when you were a bearer of life to another person, but I’ll bet you can remember when you received a life-giving word from someone else.

I know I can. When I was a little girl in elementary school, I

had a choir teacher who spoke powerful, life-changing words into my life. She said, "Shirley, you can sing really well and you have a very pretty face."

It was a simple statement, but in the midst of the self-hatred and insecurity I was struggling with, it gave me life.

The Spirit of God is a life-bearing Spirit, as Psalm 104:29-30 indicates: "You hide Your face, they are troubled; You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. You send forth Your spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the earth."

But we must choose to be life bearers. Because the power of life and death is in the tongue, we are capable of giving either life or death to one another.

We must remember that we are not of this world. We are spirit beings. That is why the life-bearing Spirit must proceed from us to impact others in the way God intended.

John 6:63 says, "'It is the spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.'"

God's words are spirit, and that is why they give life. While the flesh profits nothing, the spirit profits a great deal.

"Profit" is "to derive benefit, to gain." That means the Spirit of God will elevate us and cause us to increase in this ever-increasing kingdom. He will also enable us to bear fruit—not just leaves.

The spirit of fear is the opposite of the life-bearing Spirit. Sometimes we fear that bad things are happening to us because we have been cursed by others.

When I asked the Lord once how to handle people's judgment and cursing, He spoke a profound word to me. He said, "The problem isn't too much cursing. The problem is not enough blessing."

When there is a curse placed on your life by another's words or actions, the only way you can come against it is with a spirit of blessing. Blessing is the opposite spirit to cursing; therefore it is a life-giving spirit.

LIFE-BEARING SPIRIT

There are three important characteristics of the life-bearing Spirit we should know.

The life-bearing Spirit will remove itself from that which does not produce or create. There is a good example of this in the gospel of Mark: "Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He [Jesus] was hungry. And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. In response Jesus said to it, 'Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.' And His disciples heard it" (Mark 11:12-14).

The life-bearing Spirit in Jesus spoke to the tree because it had leaves but no fruit. I think He felt it was no good because it wasn't producing life.

Jesus was making a statement regarding producing fruit in the kingdom of God. You can sit around looking pretty and leafy, but when the branches are pulled away, if nothing is being produced, you aren't fulfilling your purpose.

A lot of Christians are deceived into thinking they are accomplishing something for God when in reality all they have are branches with no fruit. Then they wonder why we have no miracles. I don't know about you, but I'm tired of being a fig tree with no fruit! I'm ready to see miracles in my life.

After Jesus cursed the fig tree, He left its vicinity. He didn't sit under it for shade or take a branch from it for swatting flies. He walked away from that dead thing because He didn't even want to be in its atmosphere. If you are fellowshiping with something that doesn't produce life, you

need to get away from it.

The life-bearing Spirit controls the atmosphere. When Jesus was faced with the challenge of healing Jairus' daughter, He had to control the atmosphere to allow the life-bearing Spirit to do His work. The fact that Jesus was the one praying didn't guarantee results; Jesus said He couldn't do many miracles in His hometown because of unbelief.

In this situation He had to get rid of the unbelief. He walked into Jairus' home and controlled the atmosphere instead of letting the atmosphere control Him, as the scriptural account shows:

"He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. When He came in, He said to them, 'Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.'

"And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was lying. Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, 'Talitha, cumi,' which is translated, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise.' Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age" (Mark 5:38-42).

A lot of people feel if they can just make it "through" whatever situation they are confronting then everything will be OK. But what you can't forget is that the devil doesn't play fair. He wants to keep you on a roller coaster of emotions. He may let you make it through the one bump you are experiencing, but that doesn't mean that all of a sudden Satan has decided to be nice. It just means he has a bigger plan in mind.

Oftentimes as Christians we don't take ownership of our atmosphere; we let all sorts of things filter in and out of our area of influence.

That is exactly what the devil wants. If he is allowed to control your atmosphere, he will control you and your emotions.

Your atmosphere is too important not to have input into it. Put the spirits of discouragement and unbelief out of the room.

I'm not saying you should curse people and cut off everyone who isn't your cheerleader. But if you are surrounded by negativity, you need to deny it access. Cut it off at the root.

The life-bearing Spirit looks for opportunities to give life. One time the life-bearing Spirit in Jesus did this was when there was a need to feed the crowd of people who were following Him.

"Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, 'Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?' But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

"Philip answered Him, 'Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.' One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, 'There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?'

"Then Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

"And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, 'Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.' Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve

baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten" (John 6:5-13).

Jesus knew the disciples needed a lesson in impossibility so they could learn that nothing is impossible with God. God will use even what the devil meant for bad and turn it to good.

We often ask God why He won't deliver us from a situation, but God wants us to grow and develop in our ability to draw on the life-bearing Spirit in each of us. Jesus is all about reproduction, so it makes sense that He wants to give us opportunities to draw on the life-bearing Spirit in the midst of any situation.

It isn't easy to do this when everything around you is sucking the life out of you. What will set you apart is that when you are at your worst, you are at your best in God.

But be prepared to pay a price for this to be true. When Lazarus was on his deathbed, Jesus didn't go to him immediately because He was creating an opportunity for the life-bearing Spirit.

When the life-bearing Spirit in you is called forth your body must obey. If you start speaking to your spirit, your mind and body will have to come into agreement. When sickness tries to take hold of your body, you can release the life-bearing Spirit in your own life.

The life-bearing Spirit is the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead. And the Bible assures us that "if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Rom. 8:11).

The word "mortal" means "that which is subject to death." Everything that is subject to death is subject to the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead—the life-bearing Spirit. His resurrection life will speak to everything that

can die.

So what is dead in your life? Is it your dreams, your marriage, your job, your walk with the Lord? Speak life into it.

You carry in yourself the life-bearing Spirit. Control your atmosphere and tell that fig tree without fruit that it is cursed to the roots. You will not tolerate a leafy—or a dead—tree in your life any longer. You want to bear fruit!

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