

Sermonette by Robert Schmid  
August, 1989

### THE WORD, THE SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH

Is there any doubt in anybody's mind that this world, that we live in, is NOT the Kingdom of God? I do not believe so, for we all know that we live in a world that is not God's world, but Satan's world. Satan is the ruler of this age and the evidence of his rule is all around us.

When Christ was on this earth, He was the light in a dark world, but after a few short years He left, to be at the right hand of God the Father in heaven.

What about the disciples He left behind? What about His disciples today, you and me? Did Christ leave us mercilessly exposed to Satan's lies and Satan's way of life, or did Christ make provision to continually be with his disciples, to give them the truth, to protect them, to comfort them and to provide the fellowship that we all need?

In John 16:1 Christ told His disciples "*I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away.*" Now at first this appears to be a strange statement! What did he mean? "*To your advantage!*" How can Christ's going away be to our advantage? Let's look at what Christ said: But, first of all, just in case there is any doubt in anybody's mind, Christ assures us that He is telling the truth, that we can trust and rely on what He is going to tell us. "*I tell you the truth,*" He said, "*that it is to your advantage that I go away!*" **Do you believe that?**

In II Cor. 10:3 Paul said: "*For though we live in the world, we are not carrying on a worldly war*". No, our battle is not physical, requiring physical solutions; our battle is spiritual, requiring spiritual tools and spiritual solutions.

And so, Christ assured us that it is to our advantage that He, the physical Christ, would go away and in His place He would give us the spiritual tools we would need to overcome Satan.

What then did Christ leave behind that is to our advantage that would make it possible for us to overcome Satan? In Ecclesiastes (4:12) there is a scripture that says that:

*"A threefold cord is not quickly – not easily broken."*

Christ left behind such a threefold cord. A cord so strong, that Satan can not break it, unless you and I don't use it, unless you and I weaken it by using only one or two of its individual cords. This threefold cord Christ left behind for us, consists of:

- 1.) The WORD - The Word of God
- 2.) The HOLY SPIRIT - The Spirit of God
- 3.) The CHURCH - The Church of God

Taken and used together they are strong and unbreakable. Taken together as one, threefold, intertwined cord, they provide both the physical and the spiritual tools and weapons we need to resist the devil.

My message is that Christ left us a strong threefold cord, to resist and fight the devil, to survive in Satan's world.

Be neglectful of one of its parts and you will have to pay a penalty. Take away one of its parts and you will surely fail.

But, if you utilize all three, the **Word, the Spirit and the Church** you are assured of every needful thing in this life, and of eternal life in the world to come.

These God given tools, the Word, the Spirit and the Church, are obviously big-ticket items. A sermon or two could easily be given on each of these subjects. My point is to show that all three are necessary. You must study them individually and meditate on them in detail yourself.

Now we all know from John 1 and other scripture that **Jesus Christ** is the **Word of God**. When he was on this earth, He was the **Living Word**. When He went away He left us the **Written Word** - the Bible. Now, this complete Bible has been around for almost 2000 years and has been read and studied by millions, but we all know from experience that this Word can not be comprehended unless God's Spirit is within us to make it comprehensible.

Years ago in Russia a little boy through a priest learned to memorize scripture. The boy was an exceptional student. In fact he was so good that he received an award for being able to recite the four gospels verbatim. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John word for word.

Years later however, the priest was horrified about his pupil, for he was Nickita Khrushchev.

What's the point? Well it's obvious! You can have the Word and many do, but unless you combine it with God's Spirit, it will do you no good, it can not wage spiritual warfare, it can not fight by itself the invisible Satan.

But the Word of God in combination, in unity with the Spirit of God, is a powerful weapon. Jesus Christ used both when He was tempted by Satan. Remember, Christ quoted scripture with the true, spiritual meaning and intent of the Word. Satan, in contrast, also used and quoted scripture, but without the Spirit of God, and thereby wrest the Word of God to his own destruction.

So the **Word of God** must be combined with the **Spirit of God**. But God knew that even with His Word and His Spirit we would be vulnerable because we humans are greatly influenced by the company we keep and the people we associate with.

We not only desire, but we need fellowship - interaction with other people. And so Christ fulfilled His promise and provided for us. Before He left, He not only made God's Spirit available but He established the **Church of God** on the day of Pentecost.

Can you imagine having the Word of God and God's Spirit but nobody to share it with? No, God knew! After all He made us. And He made us the social creatures that we are, in need of like-minded fellowship. Can you imagine being without the Church!

That would be like being without a mother. You wouldn't know where you came from or where you belonged. There would be nobody that teaches you and protect you. Who would give you constant attention, always be there, feeding you with the Word of God according to the Spirit of God!

Can you see how the **Word, the Spirit, and the Church** work together? Can you see the necessity of the complete threefold cord Christ left behind for us?

In the July/August issue of the Good News magazine, the cover story is entitled, "When you need a friend." It speaks of the role the Church plays in providing essential fellowship. Take for example if you have to move, especially if you lived all your life in one place and whatever family and friends you have must be left behind. As you begin a new life in a new place, you immediately enter a Church family there, providing you with fellowship and the opportunity to continue to grow spiritually.

Over the centuries man has tried to find his way without the Word of God only to become utterly lost. They have called upon substitute spirits and Satan has answered their prayers. And they most certainly have created their own churches, and their own religions, throwing the world into hopeless and utter confusion.

But Christ said: "I will build my Church" and He did. Unfortunately, some have found the true Church of God, only to be drawn away again, and some, even though in the Church of God, are not really there either.

That is tragic, for you see we all need to be there, we all need each other, for every one of us is a vital part contributing to make us strong, to make it possible for us to overcome Satan and his world. **With the threefold cord of God's Word, His Spirit and His Church we can't lose.**

On the other hand, if we neglect one of the three we expose ourselves and become vulnerable to Satan's attacks.

Remember Christ's words before He ascended to heaven:

*"I tell you the truth"* he said *"it is to your advantage that I go away"*. Why is it to our advantage? Because He knew that He would leave us the **Word of God - the truth**, the **Spirit of God - His power**, and the **Church of God for fellowship** - a threefold cord that can not be easily broken. Let's take full advantage of all the gifts God has given to us.