

## Gift of the Holy Spirit

Scripture: Luke 1:25 – 35

11/20/22

Barbara Bush said these last words to her son, the former US President George H. W. Bush – ‘I believe in Jesus Christ and He is my Savior and I have no fear of death’. Barbara passed away within an hour.

This incredible and confident statement suggest to me a strong and deep rooted faith. I have heard words like this shared with me many times in my years of ministry from people who were facing fear. In fact, I have heard words like this more than I have heard words of fear! Barbara Bush experienced God’s gift of peace that comes from knowing Jesus even when faced with death. I hope each of you experience God’s gift of peace that comes from knowing Jesus when your time comes!

In our scripture reading from the Gospel of Luke, Simeon, a resident of Jerusalem during the 1<sup>st</sup> century, also experienced profound peace because of Jesus. He was moved by the Holy Spirit and he went to the Temple when Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus to be circumcised as required by law for a newborn baby.

Although not much is known about Simeon, from Luke’s description one can tell he was a special man of God. Simeon was devout and just. He was waiting each day at the Temple faithfully for the coming of the Messiah. The Holy Spirit was with him. Yet Simeon did not experience peace. He did not have a deep sense of completeness until he saw the new born baby Jesus!

While holding Jesus in his arms, Simeon broke into a song of praise and he expressed his full satisfaction in God. Listen to his words – *‘God, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the sight of all nations.’* Simeon was now at peace because he had foresaw the future hope of the world!

Are we waiting for the day that God shows you his glory in his one and only Son, Jesus Christ? Could today possibly be that day? Have you already witnessed God’s glory in Jesus Christ? Is the Holy Spirit within you? Have you experienced this deep sense of satisfaction and completeness that comes from knowing Jesus? And how can the Holy Spirit lead you to peace today?

During my time in ministry, I have witnessed many amazing things that have happened during the late stages of life. I have witnessed many people who find a true peace within them as their lives draw to an end.

Larry Kinney was such a person. I visited with Larry many times during his last year of life. Every time I would visit with him in his apartment or in a hospital, he would ask me to read the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm for him. I told him ‘No’ because the time was not right. On my last visit with Larry in a hospital room with a breathing tube down his throat, I asked him if he wanted me to read something for him. He pointed at my Bible and used his hands to make the sign of ‘23’. I opened my Bible and began reading the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm to Larry. The time was right! As I read it slowly, tears formed in his eyes and he took hold of my hand and squeezed it tight. When I finished reading the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, Larry’s lips moved saying ‘Thank You!’. Larry was at peace and the Lord called him home that night!

I hope you have experienced the peace of Christ and I hope you have a deep sense of completeness. I hope you can proclaim as Simeon did that day at the Temple - *'God, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation in Jesus Christ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations.'* I hope you have witnessed God's glory and are at peace now because you have seen the hope of the world!

As we celebrate each week the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, may we rejoice in God's gift of peace. May we praise the promised Savior.

To conclude our sermon series on Walter Scott's Five Finger Exercise, let me give you some more history about Walter Scott.

Walter Scott's role in our early history as a denomination was:

\*He enhanced growth within our denomination. Walter Scott traveled a lot on horseback preaching as he went. Walter Scott was our 'Paul', our great evangelist! He did this traveling because Alexander Campbell was getting too old to do it.

\*He helped us to develop a sense of identity.

\*He kept us an independent denomination. The Baptist Church wanted us to be part of their denomination but Walter Scott was the driving force which caused us to break away from the Baptist because of policy concerns.

\*He started many churches! He never came to DE but he did journey around PA and VA.

He became a very good friend of Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone. In fact, Walter Scott was a very important go-between the Campbellites located in Ohio, VA, and PA and the Stonites who were located in KT and IN. Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone never met face to face.

Walter Scott died on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1851 and he was 65 years old.

The last concept of Walter Scott's Five finger Exercise is 'THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'. (Put sign up)

For Walter Scott, there were three gifts that God gives:

\*The gift of forgiveness of sins

\*the gift of the Holy Spirit

\*and gift of Eternal life

According to Scott, the Holy Spirit is the gift given to the church to enliven its sharing of the Gospel. Walter Scott wanted his Five Finger Exercise to remind us that God has given us a special gift in the Holy Spirit who is a friend who is always with us. No matter where we go or what we have to do; we are never alone because the Holy Spirit is with us. Scott wanted us to remember that we have the Holy Spirit with us so that whatever and whenever we meet people who might not know Jesus, we can tell them about Jesus and the Holy Spirit would help us tell them.

The Holy Spirit can help us do lots of things. One thing the Holy Spirit helps us to do is tell others about Jesus!

Let us sing for the final time 'The Ballad of Walter Scott'

Let us pray:

O God, thank you for Jesus and thank you for your Holy Spirit, the guiding agent in our lives.

We also thank you for Rev. Walter Scott. We thank you for his life, ministry, and leadership. May we always remember him. AMEN.