

## The Happiness Of Those Who Have Received The Holy Spirit.

Text: Acts 10:42-48

Suggested Hymns:

130, 131, 128, 227, 134

- 1) They Have Forgiveness Of Sin  
Through Faith In Christ Jesus
- 2) They Are Adorned With Glorious Gifts
- 3) The Grace Of God Is Sealed To Them

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Acts 10:42-48, <sup>42</sup> *And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.* <sup>43</sup> *To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."*

<sup>44</sup> *While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.* <sup>45</sup> *And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.* <sup>46</sup> *For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered,* <sup>47</sup> *"Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"* <sup>48</sup> *And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days. (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

This entire Epistle breathes happiness from beginning to end. The verses prior to our text tell how an angel appeared before Cornelius, a Roman soldier, a centurion in Caesarea, who feared God and believed in the future Messiah. It tells how the angel called his attention to Peter in Joppa, and told him to send for this Apostle, and how Peter met with a most wonderful experience in Joppa.

He saw a vision to prepare him for this mission to Cornelius in Caesarea, and, finally, Peter went with the men who had come from Cornelius, and visited the centurion in Caesarea, and preached in his house of the crucified and risen Christ.

Here our text begins, and tells us that the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard Peter's preaching. While Peter was speaking, they received the Holy Spirit; and what happiness must have entered their hearts with the Spirit of God!

So, let us consider, *The Happiness Of Those Who Have Received The Holy Spirit*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

### **1. They Have Forgiveness Of Sin Through Faith In Christ Jesus.**

We are told, <sup>44</sup> *While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word*. What did Peter say to Cornelius and his people? What was it that made such an impression on them that their faces brightened and their happiness knew no bounds as the Holy Spirit descended upon them?

It was this: Peter had told them of the crucified and risen Christ, and said, <sup>42</sup> *And [Jesus] commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.* <sup>43</sup> *To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.*"

The reception of the Holy Spirit made them sure of the fact that in Christ Jesus they had forgiveness of sins. And this certainty, given to them through the Holy Spirit, made them so happy.

Oh what a miserable creature is the person who does not admit the Spirit of God into his heart! Whenever and wherever the Word of God is proclaimed, then and there is the Holy Spirit. He is always connected with the divine Word.

For the Word of God is something altogether different from man's word. It is a wonderful, living thing. The Gospel of Christ is the power of God to salvation to every one who believes. Have you not often felt a most peculiar sensation within you as you heard the Word of God, a wonderful power forcing itself upon you?

Behold, this is the Spirit of God, knocking at the door of your heart, demanding admission, seeking to convince, to regenerate you, and to make you a true child of God.

But whose fault is it if you are not convinced and not regenerated? It is your own fault, because you refuse to admit Him; you resist Him, you harden your own heart in the love of sin, and then the Holy Spirit's work upon you is in vain, and you remain as miserable as you ever have been, burdened with the guilt of your sin, and without any divine certainty as to your soul's salvation.

But happy is the person who has admitted the Spirit of God into the shrine of his heart. Happy is the person with whom the Holy Spirit has put up His abode. However, my friends, you must note well that you cannot obtain the Holy Spirit by your own exertions.

As the Holy Spirit is always connected with the Word of God, it is the Word of God, and nothing but the Word, which can impart to you the Spirit of joy.

If you simply hear the Word of God with devout attention, as did Cornelius and his people; if you receive the Word; if you do not wilfully and maliciously resist the Holy Spirit's pleading with you in the Word: then the flame of faith in Christ Jesus is kindled within you.

Then the firm conviction is fastened upon you that Jesus, the eternal Son of God, is truly the Saviour of the whole fallen world, and you will be made divinely certain that you have forgiveness of all your sins through faith in the Redeemer Jesus, and the Spirit of God will enter into your soul and bear witness with your spirit that you are God's dear child.

And who could be happier than the person whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered, who has been cleansed from all sins by the blood of the Son of God who died on the cross for our sins, who knows that God is pleased with him for Jesus' sake, and who does not fear anything because God is with him?

## **2. They Are Adorned With Glorious Gifts.**

The second thing which the Holy Spirit does for those who receive Him to make them happy is, that He adorns them with His gifts.

We are told, <sup>44</sup> *While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.* <sup>45</sup> *And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the*

*Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. <sup>46</sup> For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.*

The gifts of God's Holy Spirit are twofold; common and extraordinary. In the early days of the Christian Church, as long as the holy Apostles were with them, the Holy Spirit manifested Himself by the most wonderful extraordinary gifts with which He adorned the believers.

The greatest miracles were performed among the Christians through the Holy Spirit's power. This explains the rapid growth of the Christian Church and its triumph over heathenism. Never would the early preachers of Christianity have been so successful, had not the Holy Spirit given them the power to prove what they preached by miracles.

But one of the most miraculous gifts was speaking with tongues. Immediately before His ascension Jesus said that among the signs to follow those who believe would be speaking with new tongues. This is what we see in the house of Cornelius. It was the first time that the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Gentiles, so that they did the same thing which the disciples did on the day of Pentecost, speaking with tongues, magnifying God in different languages which they had not learned, as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance.

We must observe, however, that this extraordinary gift of speaking with tongues was not exactly the thing which filled Cornelius and his people with happiness. It only served to convince the Jews who had come with Peter from Joppa that the Gentiles must not be excluded from the Christian Church.

What brought happiness to them were the common gifts of the Holy Spirit with which to this day He adorns the believers. For we hear that the Holy Spirit moved them to magnify God. To this day, my friends, the Spirit of God is poured out upon you while you hear the Word, and if you do not resist the Spirit, He will adorn you with gifts of a lasting character.

He will, above all things, give you a new heart, and change your sentiments, so that you no longer cling to this earth, but set your affection on those things that are above.

He will fill you with delight in the Law of the Lord, so that you will find joy in God's Word, and crave for God's Word, so that you will not have to be

coaxed to come to church, but go to church of your own accord, because the Word of God draws you.

He will adorn you with the gift of prayer, so that you can speak to God as a child speaks to his dear father. He will supply you with Christian virtues, with love to God and the neighbour, with patience, with chastity, with kindness, and so forth. Is not he a happy person indeed whom the Holy Spirit has adorned with such precious gifts?

### **3. The Grace Of God Is Sealed To Them.**

To make our happiness complete, the Holy Spirit does one more thing for us: He seals the grace of God to us. This is the third part of our meditation.

When Peter saw that the Holy Spirit had fallen on the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius, he exclaimed, <sup>47</sup> *“Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”* <sup>48</sup> *And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.*

Why did they ask him to stay a few days? Doubtless, to learn more about Jesus of Nazareth whom they had received as their Saviour. And we must not be surprised that they were baptised immediately.

Nowadays adult candidates for baptism take a course in religious instruction before we administer baptism. But with these Gentiles in the house of Cornelius it was a different thing. The Holy Spirit fell on them, and enlightened their understanding in a wonderful way, so that they were ready for baptism.

Besides, they must have been well versed in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. With the Jews of their day they believed in the future Messiah, and all that was necessary was to acquaint them with the fact that the Messiah had come in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Neither can we argue from this text that children should not be baptised, and that in every case religious instruction must precede baptism because Peter had preached to these Gentiles before he had them baptised.

Did not Jesus command to baptise all nations, and are not the children included, forming as they do the greater part of the nations? Did not Jesus command to bring the children to Him? Did not the Apostles baptise families,

including the children? Our practice, therefore, to baptise infants born in the church or brought to church, and previously to instruct adults, is in perfect harmony with Holy Scriptures.

But what did Baptism mean for these Gentiles in the house of Cornelius? It made their happiness complete. It sealed unto them the grace of God. Through the reception of Holy Baptism the Holy Spirit was effective in them to make them divinely sure and certain that their sins were washed away, that they were truly admitted into God's kingdom, and that they were in God's favour.

Likewise we have we received God's Holy Spirit in Baptism, my friends, and the grace of our God has been sealed to us in this holy Sacrament.

And in addition thereto we have another Sacrament which seals to us the grace of our God, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in which we receive the true body and the true blood of our Lord Jesus Christ as a token to assure us that our sins are truly forgiven, and that God's grace is with us.

Let us not despise the grace of our God which He seals to us in these divine institutions! Let us not drive away the Holy Spirit from us by unbelief and wilful sinning! Then we shall be truly happy as God's children on this earth, and our happiness will continue without end in heaven, when the time has come for us to depart this life and to be with our Saviour forever. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.