

The Screwtape Letters ~ Letter 25 ~ Mere Christianity or Christianity And (Relevance)
September 12th, 2021

Before reading the following overview of this Letter, we suggest that you click on the link above to read the short **Letter 25**, for today's Illustrated Message, which will help you understand the following message.

Screwtape says to Wormwood; *"The real trouble about the set your patient is living in is that it is merely Christian. They all have individual interests, of course, but the bond remains mere Christianity. What we want, if men become Christians at all, is to keep them in the state of mind I call "Christianity And". You know-- Christianity and the Crisis, Christianity and the New Psychology, Christianity and the New Order, Christianity and Faith Healing, Christianity and Psychical Research, Christianity and Vegetarianism, Christianity and Spelling Reform. If they must be Christians let them at least be Christians with a difference. Substitute for the faith itself some Fashion with a Christian colouring."*

Does it sound familiar, Christian, like that of the majority of churches today who choose to make Christianity relevant and relatable to the sinner instead of relying on the work of the same Holy Spirit that was poured out on the early church in the Book of Acts chapter 2?

Screwtape says; *"What we want, if men become Christians at all, is to keep them in the state of mind I call Christianity And."*

Screwtape lies and the devil still lies that what happened at the birth of the church when the Holy Spirit was poured out, isn't enough for Christians today, but that they need more or something else besides.

When the Holy Spirit was poured out on the early church, it was prophesied about by the prophet Joel as it says in **Acts 2:16-21**; *"16 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. 18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. 19 I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. 21 And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved.'"*

Screwtape wants to keep his Patient away from this power, to keep him in a mentality that the Holy Spirit is not enough and that he has to add to it. Why is it that Christians would even think that they can add anything more to what the Holy Spirit has done in order to make Christianity more relevant to this present generation? I believe many Christians have bought into this lie as a result of not being willing to wait on the Lord for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit to build the church, and have as a result, incorporated what I would deem to be the works of the flesh as a draw card to become a Christian and attend church.

Screwtape says; *"If they must be Christians let them at least be Christians with a difference. Substitute for the faith itself some Fashion with a Christian colouring."*

Today, to sidetrack and derail Christians, the devil wants to embellish Christianity by adding to it other issues or agendas to divert them from the purity of mere Christianity, where the power of the Holy Spirit is at work like it was in the early church, which clearly was not by their own might or power.

Does the Holy Spirit need to be made relevant? Is the Holy Spirit not able to cross over any cultural barrier the sinner has built in their lives? Could it be that many Christians today that are building seeker friendly churches in order to make it relevant, are actually backslidden from the fundamental work of the Holy Spirit that gave

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birth to the early church? These seeker friendly churches have removed repentance from the pulpit and label sin as various disfunctions, habits, addictions etc.

We read in **Acts 2:39-47**; “39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” 40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this [a]perverse generation.” 41 Then those who [b]gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ [c]doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and [d]sold their possessions and goods, and divided[e] them among all, as anyone had need. 46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added [f]to the church daily those who were being saved.”

We see that Peter did not have a seeker friendly agenda, as together with the other 120, they had been waiting for the Holy Spirit to be poured out in the upper room, and as a result this baptism of fire with the evidence of speaking in tongues brought thousands to Jesus in one meeting.

When was the last time you saw in the body of Christ everyone having all things in common? It sure has not been apparent in the North American church. The early church had simplicity, humility and power. No smoke shows, entertainment, nor buying and selling of books. There was no ‘Christianity And.’

Could it be that Christians don’t want to be associated with the early church in its simplicity and view it as, ‘that was then and this is now,’ and that it’s unrealistic to think that that our generation could even possibly live like this, not to mention all the persecution that would follow as a result?

It’s very important Christian, to not buy into the lie that we have to make Christianity relevant to our day and age, be it through Christian Arts and Entertainment, Christian Physiology, Christian Education, etc...

Screwtape says; “*Work on their horror of the Same Old Thing. The horror of the Same Old Thing is one of the most valuable passions we have produced in the human heart--an endless source of heresies in religion, folly in counsel, infidelity in marriage, and inconstancy in friendship. The humans live in time, and experience reality successively. To experience much of it, therefore, they must experience many different things; in other words, they must experience change.*”

The works of the flesh will always have to be maintained in order for it to not become the ‘same old thing.’ This is why so many churches have to create program after program to make it relevant as a draw card instead of depending upon the work of the Holy Spirit alone. What you start in the flesh has to be maintained in the flesh.

This is why the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are not allowed to operate in most churches today, and is deemed simply that it is not relevant enough and cuts into their programs that are ever changing and entertaining enough to avoid the horror of the ‘same old thing.’

When the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are in operation, it is anything but the ‘same old thing’, but is rather the opposite of the works of the flesh. When the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are in operation, it’s very diverse, always moving and fluid, never boring, tiring or waning.

We read about these Gifts in their unity and diversity in **1 Corinthians 12:1-11**; “12 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: 2 You know that[a] you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb[b] idols, however you were led. 3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus [c]accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

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4 There are [d]iversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works [e]all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by [f]the same Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”

Can you add anything to this? But churches are removing the Holy Spirit out of the church and replacing it with the works of the flesh. The church is supposed to consist of Christians operating in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit as He wills and it will never become the natural horror of the ‘same old thing’, which needs to be maintained in the flesh, but rather is a supernatural ongoing work of the Holy Spirit that is diverse in all its ways.

Jesus spoke of the baptism in the Holy Spirit in **John 7:37-39**; “37 *On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” 39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those [a]believing in Him would receive; for the [b]Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”*

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is what our generation needs the most right now, and that is why the devil has so many Pastors on a treadmill in a backslidden condition of maintaining ongoing church programs and entertainment that will never satisfy and can never replace the Baptism and Gifts of the Holy Spirit. The devil will always try to counterfeit it, but it will never satisfy.

The Apostle Paul says in **1 Corinthians 12:27-31**; “27 *Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. 28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But earnestly desire the [a]best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.”*

Prior to the ascension of Jesus, He spoke about the Holy Spirit that He would send as a Helper to His disciples, who would glorify Jesus and take what is His and declare it to them.

Jesus talks about the Holy Spirit in **John 16:5-15**; “5 *But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ 6 But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. 8 And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; 11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. 12 “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 All things that the father has are Mine. Therefore, I said that He [a]will take of Mine and declare it to you.”*

This is why Screwtape wants the Patient to not accept mere Christianity in itself, because in itself, he is going to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and then lead by the Holy Spirit, and will operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit as

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the Lord wills, and this is what the devil wants to replace with programs and entertainment, Christianity And etc... Jesus is the one who is being rejected.

When Jesus instructed His disciples to wait until they would receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, it was a command, not an option, for He knew that they would need it to prevail, build His Church and to overcome the persecutions they would face. Right now in Alberta, Canada, churches and pastors are being persecuted for not closing their places of worship to comply with government restraints. Sadly, they're not only being persecuted by non-Christians but their fellow Christians who accuse them of not obeying the laws of the land and hence don't recognize it as persecution.

Acts 1:4-8 says; *“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; 5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” 6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be [a]witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

It sure doesn't sound like Jesus was wanting His disciples to build His church to pander to the sinners but to rely solely on the power of the Holy Spirit and the preaching of the gospel.

So what makes any disciple of Christ exempt of this command? The answer is there is no exception. A simple indicator that determines whether you have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit is if you speak in tongues. If you don't speak in tongues, you haven't been baptized in the Holy Spirit regardless of how much power you may experience. Tongues is the first and primary sign of this baptism.

This is accurately shown in **Acts 2:1-4**; *“2 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all [a]with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 Then there appeared to them [b]divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”*

Jesus **clearly** says this also in **Mark 16:17**; *“And these signs will follow those who [a]believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;”*

Acts 19:6 says; *“6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.”*

Acts 10:44-46 shows that years later after the initial outpouring at Pentecost, the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues was still common and commanded; *“44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. 45 And [a]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. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.”*

So Christian, are you going to choose 'mere Christianity' instead of 'Christianity And' etc...? Are you going to be filled with the Holy Spirit and operate in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit instead of relevant church programs and entertainment that never satisfies and leaves you empty? Are you going to be enamoured by relevant church speakers who have every hand and body motion, trained as motivational speakers?

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The Christianity that Jesus has called us to is to be baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues and to operate in power and the Gifts He gives as He wills. We're in the end times, Jesus could rapture us at any time and you need more than 'relevant' Christianity to stand until the end.

Jesus came to give life and life more abundantly. But don't confuse that with not getting persecuted because of the preaching and living out of the gospel.

Mark 10:29-30; " *29 So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, 30 who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life. "*

This is who we need to associate with, our brother Paul. The least of the Apostles, this is our association and what we might look forward to as part of our future. He says in **I Corinthians 4:9-15**; *"9 For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle ^[a]to the world, both to angels and to men. ¹⁰ We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! ¹¹ To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. ¹² And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; ¹³ being defamed, we ^[b]entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now. ¹⁴ I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. ¹⁵ For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."*

Lay down your life for Christ, give up your life to Him today, it's a win, win situation, the blessings of Abraham will overtake you if you're obedient to Him, but the persecutions are going to come your way too, because Jesus talked about that. He made it very clear that 'as they persecuted Me, they'll persecute you'.