Life in the Spirit Seminar
SEMINAR 2

Salvation

GOAL
To help people see the momentousness of Christianity, to help them understand the basic Christian message (what Jesus has done and will do for them), to help them realize the need to make a serious decision.

“He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son.” (Col 1:13)

The second seminar is the seminar in which people can come to see the full dimensions of Christianity. In it we present the vision that is contained in the message of the good news about Jesus. It is the seminar in which people are presented with the reality of the two kingdoms (two ways of life, two societies) in the world, and have to face the question whether their lives reflect life in the kingdom of Christ or not. This is the time when people should realize that they are not just getting a “blessing” when they are baptized in the Spirit, but they are committing themselves to a total reorientation of life.

Those people who come to the second seminar are beginning to be in earnest. They have made a fairly definite decision to stick with the seminars, usually because they want the new life that is being offered. The message of the talk is a sobering one. Interest and curiosity characterized the first week; growing seriousness characterizes the second week.

The Second Seminar

A. The talk

1. There is something seriously wrong with the world (with society as a whole and with individual lives)
   — something major is needed.

2. Since the cause of what is wrong with society is something bigger than man can handle on his own (Satan, sin, and the dominion of darkness), men need God to find the new life they want.

3. God sent Jesus, his son, to break the hold of Satan and give us new life through his death and resurrection. Jesus is the Lord and Savior.
SEMINARY 2
Expanded Outline of the Presentation

I. There is something seriously wrong with the world (with society as a whole and with individual lives) — something major is needed.

A. God made the world to be a place of peace and justice and happiness, a place in which he would reign. He still wants the world to be that way. (Isa 2:1-5).

B. But everyone agrees that there is something seriously wrong with the way the world is now (war, poverty, riots, racial conflict, generation gap, exploitation).

C. There is a growing realization that there is more than just a number of individual problems — society as a whole, the system as a whole, has something wrong with it (where is it all going? social problems getting worse, no one on top of the situation, technology and social change out of men’s control).

D. Individuals suffer from the situation and from lack of help, and they experience many problems (loneliness, isolation, depression, anxieties, insecurities, lack of direction, meaninglessness, personal relationships characterized by fear, suspicion, mistrust, exploitation).

E. Something major is needed to correct the situation in the world.

II. Since the cause of what is wrong with society is something bigger than man can handle on his own (Satan, sin, and the dominion of darkness), men need God to find the new life they want.

A. Men make various efforts to improve the world:
   1. There are a variety of secular efforts, but they are not succeeding
      — even the most educated men in our universities are having a hard time making a go of their own lives, work, and relationships
      — even the most highly placed executives in our modern business corporations are having a hard time making a go of their own lives, work, and relationships
   2. Religions which men have developed try to achieve a solution Buddhism, yoga, transcendental meditation, etc
   3. Some forms of Christianity amount to being man’s efforts to find a good life and change the world secular Christianity, types of traditionalist Christianity But these are all based on man’s wisdom, (God’s wisdom is needed (Isa. 55: 8-9)

B. God tells us that:
   1. We are not just confronted with particular wrongs in society or in ourselves, behind the particular things that are wrong there is something bigger than most men can handle
      — the pervasive power of sin (Rom. 3: 9, 23)
      — a kingdom, the dominion of ti (Col. 1:13)
      — a force in rebellion against God, at enmity with him (Eph 6: 12)
— Satan is behind it (I Jn. 5:19)
— we are not free, nor is our society (people are in spiritual bondage, under the oppression of evil) (Eph. 2:1-3)

2. Man was created to need God to achieve true peace, justice, and truth:
— the spiritual realm is not an optional extra (Jn. 15:5c)
— only in God’s kingdom (under his rule) are these things possible (Isa. 2:1-5, Isa.45:22)
— under God’s rule, life can be changed now (Isa. 48:17-18, Mk. 1:14-15)

3. There is a choice before us: to live under the dominion of darkness or in the kingdom of God.

Ill. God sent his son Jesus to break the hold of Satan and give us new life through his death and resurrection. Jesus is the Lord and Savior.

A. God sent his son to free us from darkness and Satan. Jesus is the Christ (the messiah, the one God sent) (Col. 1:13, Jn. 11:21-27, Mt. 16:13-17)

B. Jesus died for our sins and rose to give us new life (Rom. 4:25, Col. 1:20, Tit. 3:3-7):
— if he had not died, we would not have been freed from our sins (Isa. 53:4-6, Heb. 9:11-28)
— he broke the hold of Satan (Jn. 12:31,1 Jn. 4:4)
— salvation is more than just going to heaven: it is a whole new way of life on earth as well (Jn. 10:10b, Jn. 4:14).

C. Jesus is Lord (God gave full power and authority to Jesus to bring freedom and new life to those who accept him) (Mt. 28:18, Phil. 2:5-11).

D. Next week: we will discuss what the new life is and what a person can expect from being baptized in the Spirit.

COMMENTS ON THE PRESENTATION

The second talk is on “salvation.” “Salvation” means “God saves us.” When we talk about salvation, we talk about what God has done, is doing, and will do to save us. Our usual concept of salvation is limited to the ideas of the forgiveness of our sins and our admission into heaven. Sometimes it will also include a personal knowledge of Christ. While all these things (forgiveness of sins, admission to heaven, knowledge of Christ) are important parts of salvation, the fullness of God’s salvation exceeds even these God is at work in Christ to bring us to a full life on earth, a life that involves peace and happiness, freedom from sin and Satan, healing, and spiritual power. Even more, God is at work to bring a new kingdom, and he has sent Christ, who has intended the church to be a new people, a society where people live under the reign of God and are free from the rule of Satan. Salvation is not just something for the future, it is now. Salvation is not just something that brings me a personal good, it brings a whole new life in a new society.
The purpose of this second talk is to make people realize how big a thing Christianity is. In some ways the talk is a test of faith for the speaker. He is called upon to make a proclamation of faith, to say something that those who are listening to him have not experienced and cannot experience for a while. He is called, in short, to proclaim the gospel.

He cannot justify what he says other than by saying: this is what God has told us. He simply has to rely on the fact that God has revealed to us that there is more going on in the world than unaided human eyes can see. Men are in the middle of spiritual realities, both hellish and heavenly. It is not until they can see with eyes of faith that they can begin to understand what is happening to them.

(I) The first section of the talk is meant to describe the situation in the world as most people can see it. We do not have to say that everything is wrong with the world. All we are saying is that there is something that is wrong with the world, and that it is something serious, in fact, major. There will be few people in the seminar who will not agree with this.

The first section can be presented in a brief, straightforward way, just as it is outlined in the presentation. There is no need to offer proof that there is something wrong with the world, we can simply state it as an obvious fact. It helps to tell some personal stories of experiences that helped us realize the condition of the world.

(II) The second section is far from being obvious. In fact, it can only be learned by God’s revelation. We make a mistake if we try to prove it; we can only say, “God said so”. That is the reason why there are so many scripture passages indicated in the extended outline. The speaker will not want to use every one of those passages, but he will want to know where “God said so”.

(II.B.1.) The section on sin, Satan, and the dominion of darkness can be difficult for people to give. In fact, the degree to which we have personally experienced God’s salvation will affect our ability to speak this message in faith. If we have not yet experienced freedom from the Power of Satan, if our life is not yet so different from the lives of those around us, we cannot speak these words in the same kind of faith and conviction that we have when we have seen such changes. We should rely on the Lord to lead us in how we personally should make this point.

In preparing for this talk, the speaker can read Michael Harper’s *Spiritual Warfare* and Watchman Nee’s *Love Not the World*. Both present the cosmic view of salvation which the talk needs. Both help to place us in contact with spiritual realities. He might also consider the meditation on the two standards in the second week of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius.

When we come to the point of speaking about Satan and the dominion of darkness, we should present the truth simply and powerfully. We often think that modern men are unwilling to accept the existence of Satan. It is certainly true that some people are, and some of those people may be in our seminar. But most modern men have actually suspected for a long time that Satan exists and is at work. Many have had experiences of encountering evil spirits, or at least of suspecting that that is what they were encountering.
When we talk about the kingdom of Satan, we can call people’s attention to a few simple facts. We can say, “Most of us have felt that what is wrong with the world is something that is bigger than we are, something, in fact, that is bigger than the sum total of what individual men have done wrong. We have felt that there was some force behind it.” We can also say, “Many of you have had experiences of sensing the existence of evil powers.” We can rely on the Lord to bring home the truth of these statements.

(II.B.3) At the end of section II, the people in the seminar should see that they need help and that they need to make a big choice. What the choice involves will not be too concrete to them at this point. All they need to know is that in choosing Jesus and the life of the Spirit they are choosing something bigger than a personal blessing.

(III) The final section is simply stating the good news of Jesus. God has become man in Jesus. Jesus is the Lord. He died for our sins and rose again.

(III.B) There is a temptation Christians sometimes face. In the attempt to have Christianity make sense to non Christians, they talk about Jesus in a way that avoids the “foolishness of the cross”. Paul said that “the work of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (I Cor. 1:18). We cannot make complete sense of the cross in humanly understandable terms. But that does not mean we should avoid it. We were saved because Jesus died on the cross, because he shed his blood for us. He was the sacrifice for our sins. If he had not died and risen again, we would not have experienced salvation. All we can do is to tell the facts. Jesus’ death and resurrection saved us. We who have experienced the power of the cross should not be ashamed to tell men that it is through the cross that they can be saved. As Paul said, “For the Jews demand signs and the Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and folly to the Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God is stronger than men.” (I Cor. 1:22-25).