

Russell Kelfer Inherit the Wind

#1122-A

Series: Making the Spiritual Switch



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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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Inherit the Wind

Ned and his family were camped at the base of a large mountain, awaiting the flicker of the sun's first rays so they could continue their journey to their destination. By now the campfire's final embers had disappeared, and the black of night was interrupted only by the occasional glimpse of a firefly. The slightly overcast sky produced a covering that prevented the stars from shedding any light on the campsite, and it was as though God had turned off the lights and said, "Goodnight".

The children were hibernating in their sleeping bags, feeling as secure as one can feel in the unprotected environment of the great outdoors. Little by little, each member of the family finally entered the world of slumber. Nightfall had taken its toll at last. It was about three in the morning when Dad began to feel uneasy and opened his eyes. There was a strange rustling noise outside the tent, and as the protector of the clan, he felt obligated to investigate—obligated, not excited.

Somewhat gingerly, he made his way to the door of the tent and peered outside. He really wasn't sure what to expect, but that horror movie he had watched before they left wasn't helping.

Easing his way outside, he moved cautiously to where the noise seemed to be coming from. There was nothing there. Suddenly the darkness enveloped him. As Dad stood, frozen in his tracks, a bit less of a great outdoorsman than he had been a few hours before, a strange rustling noise to his left caused him to tense up a bit. Just as he turned his head to see what might be the source of the sound, he was thrown off guard by a cracking noise just behind him, a noise that sounded *just like a gunshot*.

With that, Ned's career as a potential hero came to a swift halt. Frightened out of his wits, he wheeled around and went diving towards the tent where his family, still secure that their paternal watchdog was on duty, lay fast asleep. Needless to say, his fear gave way to panic, and as he hurled himself towards the family abode, his foot found itself entangled in one of the ropes that held

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the tent upright. In his hysteria, his mind went wild. Assuming someone had grabbed him by the ankle, he began shouting and jerking his leg to set himself free. The more he struggled, the tighter the knot in the rope became.

You guessed it. In what seemed like an instant, the stake that held the suspect rope gave way, and with it the entire canvas family castle came crashing to the ground, allowing Ned's wife and children to awaken to the sudden descent of a fifty pound khaki blanket which came down upon them, creating an atmosphere that made the word "panic" seem to be an understatement.

What tarnished Dad's hero image even more was the discovery, after serious family investigation, of the cause of the noise that frightened our potential superman out of his wits. Was it a tiger? No. Was it a grizzly bear? No. Was it a cobra? No. The vicious enemy that poor Pop was defending his family against was nothing more than the wind. It seems that at about 2:30 a.m. a cool front had arrived from the northeast, and the shifting winds, which later reached about 25 m.p.h. at their outset, simply began to blow through the tops of the trees creating a whistling noise, followed by the breaking of branches which to the untrained, frightened ear sounded like a gun shot.

The family vacation, needless to say, was shortened a bit. On the way home little Benny was overheard telling his sister, "How do we tell our friends we came home early because we've got a father who chases the wind?"

That *is* what happened. In a moment of fright, Ned unknowingly went chasing the wind, and needless to say, it was a losing venture. The wind cannot be contained. It can't be cornered. It can't be captured. In fact, the worst part is, we can't even see it. We can only see what it does. We cannot touch it, but we can feel it with such confidence that there is no doubt when it's blowing. When it chooses to unleash its full power, it leaves in its wake homes flattened like pancakes, buildings demolished, lives snuffed out. When it chooses simply to open its windows and release a fraction of its might, it becomes a gentle breeze that cools the brow and removes the curse of summer's blinding heat. It seldom sends its calling card in advance and often leaves as quickly as it comes, but while it is present, it holds the potential to be either friend or foe, quiet comforter or powerful enemy.

Most of all, it is one of God's great reminders of Himself,

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because *every time you feel the wind*, God is sending a message from heaven. How seldom we stop to listen.

As we make the spiritual switch, we begin looking at the physical signposts God has painted on planet earth to learn the corresponding spiritual truths revealed in the Scriptures. We now observe that it is *possible to inherit the wind*.

WHAT THE MASTER SAID

Looking at what is perhaps the most famous passage in all of the New Testament, John, chapter three, we see in verse 2 that the Master has been approached in the dark of night by a Jewish ruler who has a most insightful observation. He begins,

Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. (John 3:2b)

The answer Jesus gave was hardly what the man expected, for rather than dealing with His own credentials, Jesus decided instead to deal with the man's problem. Oh, that we would learn to do the same. He turned directly to the man, those penetrating eyes of His reaching down to the depths of the man's soul, and He answered like this:

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:3-5)

Jesus cut right through this learned inquirer's facade and went to his heart. He said, "Beloved, the issue isn't *the things I do*, the issue is *what you choose to do with Me*."

Unless something supernatural happens in your heart, it doesn't matter how wonderful you think the words of Jesus are. It doesn't matter how wonderful you think the works of Jesus are. You can study the works of Jesus and the words of Jesus until you know more about Him than the great religious scholars, but *unless you allow God to take away your sins*, you will die in those sins and spend eternity without God in a fiery hell where

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the worm never dies and the flames are never quenched.

Lest this educated religious expert miss the real reason Jesus came, the Master cut away all of the external issues and dealt with the new birth. Unless you do the same as you deal with struggling inquirers, you may well teach them much *about* your Lord, without their ever coming to *know* your Lord.

Except a man be born again, He *cannot* enter the Kingdom of God. (John 3:3b)

Not *may not*, *cannot*. Jesus continues;

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

(John 3:6,7)

“Marvel not that I say unto you”, Jesus said, “Ye must be born again.” In other words, don’t be so shocked at how perfectly distinct that plan of God is. Either you have been born twice, or you die twice. It’s that simple. It’s not how educated you are in Christian doctrine; it’s how transformed you are by Christ Himself. Education and transformation are not synonymous. Once the transformation takes place, then the education becomes exciting; but until and unless Jesus Christ comes into your heart and takes over your life, nothing else you do will make you wise. Nothing.

Jesus could tell that this brilliant theologian was struggling with the concept of the new birth. It simply didn’t compute, because he couldn’t see it or feel it or touch it. It was too abstract. The law he could handle; salvation he couldn’t. So Jesus wanted to paint on the scrolls of eternity an illustration that would forever etch in his consciousness (and in ours) just what happens when God’s Spirit touches a life. He went back to the beginning of time when his Father had lovingly created a thing called the “wind”. He had created it for a myriad of physical reasons, but those were all incidental to the real purpose. God had designed a physical reality called the “wind” to illustrate one of the deepest spiritual truths known to man. So Jesus went on;

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

(John 3:8)

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Jesus said, “Nick, let’s talk about the wind. Where does it come from? Where is it going? When is it coming? How does it work? Oh, you can’t tell me? Then do you deny its existence? Of course not. You know it is there because you can see what it does, but you can’t see *it*. That’s the way it is with the new birth. You can’t see it happen, but you can know that it has. It is because the wind is a picture of how The Spirit works.”

Then why does God make the wind to blow? To cool us? Sometimes. To blow away the clouds? Sometimes. To bring judgment? Sometimes. But God could do all those things without the wind. No, God makes the wind to blow *to remind us of His Spirit*.

Every time we feel the wind, every time we see the tops of the trees begin to bend beneath its force, every time we see the awesomeness of a hurricane or sense the gentle cooling of a summer breeze, God is saying to us, “Learn of Me, Beloved. I am showing you how My Spirit works *every time the wind blows*.”

WHAT THE WIND DOES

What, then, are some of the characteristics of the wind that speak so eloquently of the work of God’s Spirit? Our textbook will be the Word of God itself, for it alone speaks to us from God’s perspective. Let’s take a journey through the Scriptures and see what they say about the wind.

First of all, the wind is God’s agent of restoration and comfort.

And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark, and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters lowered.

(Genesis 8:1)

The flood had ceased. The judgment was over. A God of grace and mercy had miraculously secured in His ark of love those He needed to save. The storms ceased. After 150 days, the eyes of God scanned the earth and saw that the time had come. He sent His Spirit forth to stem the tide, and when *the wind went forth*, the waters began to recede. Likewise in your life, there are times when the storms have been raging, and even though you know you are safe in the ark of God, you begin to wonder if the driving rains will ever cease.

It is then that your God, who loves to bring peace after life’s storms, will gently send His Spirit forth with the fresh breeze of

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restoration and hope. It is the Comforter, even His Spirit, “who comforts us in all our tribulation” (II Corinthians 1:4). And after we have suffered a little while,

But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle *you*.

(I Peter 5:10)

No wonder the next verse shouts out,

To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

(I Peter 5:11)

It is God’s Spirit who comforts us as we bear our trials, and it is God’s Spirit who wraps His arms about us and leads us out of those trials into the glorious sunlight of victory, whereby we apply those things He has taught us in the storms. So *every time the wind blows*, we are to remember the last time the winds of adversity blew upon our lives. Remember how patient God was, how gentle God was, how perfect God was, and praise Him.

Secondly, the wind speaks of the provisions of God. The children of Israel were not satisfied with the manna God had been sending from heaven, and they had begged God for something more. So God sent forth His wind with a present. Numbers tells us,

And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day’s journey on this side, and as it were a day’s journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth. (Numbers 11:31)

In this case, God sent more than they needed to teach them a lesson about contentment and presumption, but His agent of provision was the wind. Even so, Paul wrote in I Corinthians 2,

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

(I Corinthians 2:9,10)

We may be asking God for quail. Our finite minds sometimes cannot think beyond the things that others possess—the things that satisfy carnal desires rather than things that transform the spirit, but God knows what we need. His Spirit is always

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searching deep within our hearts to determine just what we need to be whole and to be wholly God's. Gently, He opens the eyes of our spiritual understanding to see the manna He has prepared for us. So every time you feel the gentle breeze begin to blow, stop and thank God for the provisions of His Spirit. He never leaves us without the "things" we need, but He always goes beyond and gives us the spiritual things we need, more abundantly than we would even dare to ask for.

Thirdly, whenever you see the wind devour and destroy, stop and bow in awe before a God of judgment and power. The wind is your reminder of how powerful He is. A good verse to remember might be Isaiah 11 which declares,

And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod. (Isaiah 11:15)

Or how about II Samuel 22,

In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears.

Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because he was wroth.

There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness was under his feet.

And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: and he was seen upon the wings of the wind. (II Samuel 22:7-11)

We belong to a God of awesome power. Psalm 18 echoes again that visual portrait of God demonstrating a fraction of His might, riding upon the wings of the wind. Until and unless we have seen first hand the devastation of a tornado or a hurricane or some other form of vicious storm, we do not know what power is. What an army cannot do in days, a hurricane can do in seconds. A hurricane reaps a harvest of mass destruction; a tornado is almost singular in its selection of victims; but in either case, when the wind unleashes its power, nothing man has done or made can stand against it. Why? Because it is a portrait of the power of God. That God uses it selectively is obvious from Exodus 15, where we read:

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Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.

Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?
(Exodus 15:10,11)

The key is that *every time you feel the wind*, you are experiencing a reminder of God's comfort. *Every time you see the results of the wind*—the trees blowing, the leaves falling, the flags flying—you are experiencing a reminder of God's provision. *Every time you read or hear of the awesome devastation of a hurricane or tornado or some other form of storm*, you are experiencing a reminder of the incredible power of God—power that will one day be unleashed with unbelievable force as in II Peter 3,

But the day of the LORD will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be... (II Peter 3:10,11)

You and I cannot fully fathom the comfort of God, the provisions of God, or the power of God. We can only grasp a fraction of their magnitude. So God has given to us an audio-visual aid to constantly remind us of those aspects of His nature: it is called the wind. In the next chapter, we will look at precisely how the wind speaks of God's Spirit and of how God's Spirit works.

Before leaving John, chapter three, let's examine one more facet of the wind that Jesus was so obviously referring to as He used that analogy for Nicodemus. Let's look at that characteristic of the wind known as its *invisible nature*.

WHY THE WIND HIDES

When Jesus was explaining the new birth to Nicodemus, He decided to illustrate the way God works in such a way that Nick could grasp the fact that *an invisible God who works in mysterious ways* does not conform to the tangible, visible parameters man has devised for Him. God will not be put in a box. You cannot make a statue out of him. You cannot paint a picture of Him. You cannot confine His works to what you can see or understand. You must accept by faith that He is; but because our minds are so finite, He lovingly gives us glimpses of Himself, even as He did to

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Moses, so that we *see enough to marvel and to worship*, but not enough to limit His authority or package His power.

It is the goal of man to make God like man so that we can structure Him to our liking. It cannot be done. God is like the wind. He *cannot* be contained. We cannot see Him or capture Him or make Him exclusive. We cannot make Him in our image; we were rather made to be in His image. But everywhere we turn, He is there. We cannot dispute the miracle of His comfort, the constancy of His provisions, or the awesomeness of His power. Like the wind that blows, although we do not know from whence it comes or where it goes, we dare not doubt its presence. And like that wind, He moves *where He chooses*. We can no more control His movements than we can control the wind. Nor should we desire to, for He is sovereign, omnipotent, and omniscient.

You can neither define the wind, nor describe the wind, but neither can you deny the wind. Its presence speaks for itself. If you are struggling with the existence of God or the power of God or the comfort of God, perhaps you need to sit down and think a bit about the wind. Read John 3:8 and then go back and read John 3:1-7. Nicodemus had a problem. He didn't understand the new birth, but Jesus had a solution. He said, "Look at the wind". You cannot see it; you cannot contain it; you cannot even delay it, but you certainly cannot deny it. You cannot deny its gentle comfort on a summer day, nor its awesome power in the midst of a storm; and you, too, can *inherit the wind* by asking Jesus Christ to come into your heart. When you do, all that comfort and all that power will be yours, for "so is everyone that is born of the Spirit."

You can be born of the Spirit right now. You can open your heart this moment, wherever you are and ask Christ to come into your life. Stop waiting for God to appear in human form: He did that 2,000 years ago.

One day soon, like a raging tornado, He will appear again in great power and glory; and the world, as we know it, shall pass away.

In the meantime, like a gentle breeze, His Spirit moves against your life, calling to you—whispering "I AM the I AM, and I AM here to save you."

Oh, Beloved, say "yes" to Him right now and inherit the wind—for eternity.

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A Challenge to Further Study and Application

1- Reread John, chapter three. What was the man's problem? What was he saying to Jesus? What do you think he meant? What can we learn about how to respond to inquirers who are not addressing the real issue?

2- How would you phrase John 3:5-7 in modern language? What does all this have to do with the wind?

3- Verse 8 is the key verse. Why do you think He used the wind? Why do you think He created the wind?

4- How did God use the wind in Genesis 8:1 to bring comfort and restoration? Has He ever comforted you? How does that remind you of I Peter 5:10? What can you do to remind yourself of God's comfort when the wind blows?

5- What was the spiritual significance of the wind in Numbers 11:31?

6- The most evident use of the wind to depict the attributes of God is the power of the wind in storms. How can you appropriate the truths of that illustration in your own life?

7- How can Jesus' use of the wind in John 3 encourage you when you tend to doubt?

Memorize: John 3:8

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