Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Ministries of the Holy Spirit, Part 1
Scripture: Galatians 3:1-5
Code: 90-31

For this morning I want to take you back to Galatians chapter 3 as we give you part 2 of what we began last Lord's Day; the subject, “The Sufficiency of the Spirit,” the sufficiency of the Spirit. And I want to read for you Galatians 3:1 to 5 as a setting for the thoughts that we want to share from God's Word.

In Galatians chapter 3 and verse 1 the apostle Paul writes, "You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you, did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish, having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain if indeed it was in vain? Does He then who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you do it by the works of the law or by hearing with faith?"

Now what the apostle Paul is saying under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is simply this, you cannot begin your Christian life in the power of the Spirit through faith and perfect it in your own power through works. That general principle speaks to an issue that has been on all of our hearts today and it is to that that we direct our attention in our study this morning as last time.

But the simple thought, for those of you who were not here last time, is this: Believers, whether the Galatians or us, or any other believers, begin the Christian life by the power of the Holy Spirit through faith. And frankly, that is the way...that is the only way the Christian life can continue to be lived, by the power of the Holy Spirit through faith. It cannot be begun in the power of the Spirit and then be perfected in the power of the flesh. And yet that is precisely what the church today is buying into. It is a new kind of Galatianism, if you will, it is a new sanctification by works, sanctification without the Spirit, a perfecting by the flesh. And last week I suggested several reasons why the church has defected from true sanctification into a false sanctification and the reasons that I gave you I will briefly repeat.

Number one, the charismatic movement. I am convinced that one of the legacies of the erroneous doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the charismatic movement is confusion about the Holy Spirit with regard to His true operation in sanctification, and in some cases a hesitation to speak truly about the Holy

Spirit for fear of offending some charismatic brother or sister. Consequently both confusion and retreat from a true understanding of the ministry of the Spirit in sanctification has left us with a void that has been filled by a perfecting by the flesh, or an attempt to perfect by the flesh.

The second contributing factor to the decline of interest in sanctification by the Spirit is what we called pragmatism. In a very highly defined, sophisticated, complex culture like our own, where we are the victims of so much data and so many theories and so many viewpoints and so many solutions and so many programs and seminars and operations and systems, we tend to look in the pragmatic realm at the natural level rather than the supernatural level for the matter of sanctification.

Thirdly, and maybe as significant as the other two, has been the decline of interest in the Holy Spirit due to psychological therapy replacing the ministry of the Spirit of God in the life of the believer.

These have been, I think, the major influences that have moved us away from an interest in the Holy Spirit. Now you can add to that a couple of theological considerations that must be noted. One is that we have a very Arminian doctrine of the depravity of man. The church for the most part lives under the illusion that a man, if offered the right program or...or the right theory or the right process, can somehow change himself. That is a failure to understand that man is so utterly depraved, the only agent of change that can operate in him at all is the Spirit of God. The second factor theologically is again a failure to understand not only the depravity of man but the sovereignty of God, that not only is man incapable but only God is capable. And so sanctification must recognize, as does salvation, that a man who could not save himself cannot sanctify himself. He is too depraved for either. And on the other hand, it is the same God who saves who sanctifies. And the same God who saved through the Spirit sanctifies through the Spirit. And the same God who sanctified through the...or saved through the Spirit by faith, sanctifies by the Spirit through faith. And so, as Paul says, we have received the Spirit by faith, are we then to be perfected by works? By systems? By theories? By own...our own effort?

So we have underestimated God, we have overestimated man. We have drowned ourselves in a pragmatic sea of psychological theory. We have backed off from the Holy Spirit, maybe giving in, as it were, to the confusion. And thus we have developed a sanctification apart from the Holy Spirit that is no sanctification at all and I believe is a false and deceiving lie which will lead the church to greater and greater sinfulness, immorality, and defection from divine standards. Only God can sanctify.

So much for the problem. I told you this morning we would turn to the solution. Having begun in the Spirit, we must continue in the Spirit. Now let's think about that for just a moment. The Holy Spirit is

the agent of salvation. He's the agent that God uses to bring about the new birth. We are born of the Spirit. We are begotten again by the Spirit. We are transformed by the Spirit.

That saving work can be broken into four dimensions. Can I give those to you? And I don't want to spend a lot of time, only to mention them to you. But the saving work can be broken down into four dimensions. Number one, the Holy Spirit begins the saving work by convicting of sin. In John 16, Jesus said, "When the Spirit comes He will convict the world of sin." Conviction or feeling guilty about sin is a work of the Spirit of God. It is not a work of man; it is a work of God. We may be the instrument through which the truth about sin is spoken, but the conviction is the working of the Spirit of God. For a depraved heart need not feel convicted. It's own depravity will deceive itself about the reality of its own sinfulness. And so it must come from the outside, namely the Holy Spirit, who invades the fallen heart and convicts of sin. And that's where the saving work initiates, at least in terms of man.

The second thing that the Spirit of God does in salvation is produce out of that conviction repentance. Conviction is guilt. Repentance is a desire, a deep desire, a strong desire to turn from that which causes the guilt, to turn from sin. That is why in 2 Timothy 2:25 Paul says that God must grant repentance. Man on his own does not repent. Man deceives himself about the reality of his sin and he loves darkness more than light. It is said in Acts 11:18 that God granted to the heathen repentance that leads to life. That is a gift of God worked in the heart by the Holy Spirit. So the Holy Spirit is the agent of conviction which then leads to repentance.

Thirdly, the Holy Spirit energizes the truth in the mind. The Holy Spirit energizes the truth in the mind. He makes it work. He energizes the preacher on the first hand and He energizes the hearer on the second hand. It says in 1 Peter 1:12, "Those who preach the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit," those who preach the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit. The preaching came through the power of and the energy of the Holy Spirit and the hearing unto faith was produced by the same power and the same energy. It is the Spirit, says 1 John 5:7 who bears witness and it is the Spirit who is the truth.

So the Spirit begins then by convicting of sin, by turning the heart toward repentance in response to the hearing of gospel preaching. And then fourthly, the rest leads to this, the Spirit then regenerates. Under the hearing of the Word of God, the gospel, comes the conviction of sin, repentance and then the regenerating. John 3, "Born of the Spirit, born of the Spirit," read John 3:3 through 6, Jesus' words are very, very clear. It says, "Unless you are born of water and the Spirit you can't enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. You must be born again," verse 8 says. Speaking of those who are believers, everyone is born of the Spirit. So the Spirit then regenerates. Titus 3:5 would be another scripture to add to that and in that Paul says, "He saved us not on the basis of deeds

which we have done in righteousness but according to His mercy by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit which He poured out."

So those four things will just briefly sum up the work of the Spirit. He convicts of sin. He turns the heart toward repentance, that is turning from sin toward God, under the hearing of the gospel message and then regenerates the heart. Now all of those, beloved, listen to me carefully, are supernatural works. That is why, if I may be so bold, it is of little consequence what method you use in the presentation of the gospel. It is of major consequence that you be energized by the Spirit of God to speak the truth of the gospel. It is not the method that can convince a depraved heart. Since it is only God who can turn the heart and since God uses the truth energized by the Spirit to turn the heart, we are bound then to proclaim the truth. It is a supernatural work.

Now follow this thought. At the moment of regeneration when the Spirit of God does that miraculous work, there are attendant works to that that also would fit into that category having begun in the Spirit. Now let me just remind you of them without a lot of detailed discussion. We use a lot of different terms but the first one I'll mention is “indwell.” We will note, first of all, that at the moment of salvation the Holy Spirit comes to indwell you. When a person is saved the Spirit of God then moves in and takes up residence in that person's heart. It simply says that when you repent, Acts 2:38, and you believe in the name of Jesus Christ and your sins are forgiven, you receive from God a gift. And that gift is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit takes up residence in your life. First Corinthians 12:13 says you've been made to drink the Spirit. You have the Spirit of Christ in you, Romans 8:9. That's the first thing. The Spirit who convicted you, who turned you toward repentance, who energized the truth in the life of the One who gave it and in you who received it and thus regenerated you came to indwell you. He lives in you. Your body, 1 Corinthians 6:19, is the temple of the Holy Spirit which you have from God. You're indwelled.

Second term, the Bible also says you have been baptized, or better yet, you have been immersed with the Spirit. First Corinthians 12 also, you read from verses 11 to 13, you find it there, and what does that refer to? Well, when you were saved Christ, who is the baptizer, with or by the Spirit placed you or immersed you into the church, which is His body. So you have become a part of the living church by means of the Spirit of God. With the Spirit as the agent, you have been immersed into the church, placed into the church. So the same Spirit who convicted you of sin, who brought about repentance in your heart, who energized the truth in your soul and regenerated you and now indwells you has also placed you in the living body of Christ. And pulsing through your spiritual veins is the life of God that belongs to all who are in that same body in whom the Spirit of God lives.

Then next, we find also in 1 Corinthians chapter 12 verses 4 through 7 that the Holy Spirit gifts you. He gives you a divine enablement for unique service to the body of Christ. Now that you are in the body, you are gifted to serve the body. It could be the gift of preaching or teaching. It could be the gift of governing. It could be the gift of faith or prayer. It could be the gift of helping or administrating. It could be many different gifts. It's a combination of all of those things in each individual in unique ways so that every one of you is a spiritual snowflake of sorts. But He gifts you. And that giftedness is not primarily for the outside world; that is primarily for the internal functioning of the body of Christ. And so you are gifted with the means by which the Spirit of God can minister through you to the body. You are spiritually gifted.

Another thing the Holy Spirit does in the beginning is in Ephesians 1:13 where it says, "And you have received the earnest of the Spirit," or the down payment or maybe the best word is “guarantee.” When you were saved the Holy Spirit sealed you, is what Paul says in Ephesians 1:13 and 14. What do you mean "sealed you”? First of all, a seal spoke of authenticity. A seal also spoke of something that was an unbreakable promise. So you were sealed by the Spirit as authentically a child of God and that is an unbroken pledge. We could simply put it this way. The Holy Spirit secures you for eternity. The Holy Spirit secures you for eternity. He secures your eternal glory. The moment you were saved, the Spirit of God became the down payment on God's final installment of your eternal glory.

To put it another way, the word *arrabn* means “engagement ring.” The Holy Spirit is the engagement ring to promise you that Christ will go through with the final wedding when you see Him face to face. And the Holy Spirit, according to Ephesians 1:14, is given as a pledge of our inheritance, a pledge of eternal inheritance.

One other thing the Holy Spirit does for you when you are saved is He separates you from sin and death. He separates you from the dominion of sin and eternal death. That is why in 2 Thessalonians 2:13 it says that we have experienced sanctification by the Spirit. We are set apart from sin, set apart from death, the consequence of sin, through the Holy Spirit. It is a positional sanctification, a positional setting apart.

Now all of that is what the Spirit does at the beginning, okay? Now think that through again. You began in the Spirit. How did it begin? Conviction of sin, repentance, a hearing with faith of the Word of God, regeneration, you were then indwelt with the Spirit, immersed into the body of Christ, gifted by the Spirit for service in the body, secured by the Holy Spirit as the seal of your eternal inheritance. You were then separated through sanctification from the dominion of sin and its consequence, eternal

death. All of that the Spirit has already done for you at the moment of salvation. That's how you began in the Spirit.

Now Paul's question is, if you began in the Spirit with all of that, would you for one moment believe that you could be perfected in the flesh? Can that which is by very definition supernatural life be then conducted on a natural plane? And the answer, of course, is no.

Now, let me share with you some things this morning and I...I don't think I'm going to get through all of these and we'll come back to them because I want you to understand these things. I want to tell you what the Holy Spirit does in your life as you continue in the Spirit. We know what He does at the beginning, we've just recited it. But what is His sufficiency for now, now that I am a Christian, now that I have been regenerated, now that He indwells, baptizes, gifts, secures, and separates me from sin, all of that has been accomplished by the Spirit. What is He doing now? And in understanding this you will understand the sufficiency of the Spirit.

Number one, what the Spirit gives to the believer, first of all, is this: He brings us into intimacy with God. He brings us into intimacy with God. What a thought. Will you just hold that thought for a moment? He brings us into intimacy with God.

In other words, He provides access. Is that significant? Of course it's significant, for this great reason. Listen to it carefully. God is the spiritual source of everything we need. Understood? God is the spiritual source of everything we need. He is the provider of all spiritual resources. He is the provider of all spiritual joys. We live, beloved, on a spiritual plane, and natural commodities do not satisfy spiritual life. And so, when we have entered into spiritual life, we must be then satisfied on a spiritual level. And God, who is the source of all spiritual satisfaction, becomes available to us through the Holy Spirit.

Let me show you that. Turn to the fourth chapter of Galatians while you're there and look at verse 6. Verse 5 says that God adopted us and made us His children. We've already said that when He made us His children, in order to prove to us the promise was eternal and inviolable, He gave us His Spirit and that's exactly what verse 6 says. "Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts." That's the seal, the guarantee, the down payment, the engagement ring, the first installment on our eternal inheritance. But having received the Spirit would you notice the impact? "Therefore you are no longer a slave," he says, "but a son," verse 7. "And if a son, then you are an heir through God." Verse 9: "Now you have come to know God and to be known by God."

Now what Paul is saying in all of this is you are now God's sons. And son-ship means access. And son-ship means intimacy. And the epitome of it is expressed at the end of verse 6. As a result of this, we cry what? Abba, Father, Abba, Father! Well you say, "What does that mean?" “Abba” is an Arabic diminutive. It literally in our language would be translated "Papa, Daddy," or in the case of an infant, "Dada." It is a term of endearment. It is a term that belongs only to those who have son-ship as a right and privilege. It signifies intimacy. It signifies family. It signifies access. It signifies love. It signifies approachableness. It signifies what the writer of Hebrews had in mind when he said, "Let us draw near." And lest we miss somehow the wonder of its importance Paul repeated that same statement in Romans 8. Basically in verse 14 he says we are the sons of God. And then in Romans 8:15 he says, "You have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again." We don't fear God; we don't live under terror as we approach God. "We rather have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’" And it is the Spirit Himself bearing witness with our spirit that we have a right to do that because we're the children of God.

So the Holy Spirit living in us gives to us intimacy with God, access to God. And the simple question I would ask you is this, why would you go to any other resource when you could go to the living God? And we're right back to what we talked about last Sunday morning. Why is it that we will substitute anything and everything for what? For prayer. Why do we do that? When we have access to the living God on the supernatural level whom we can call Papa, Daddy, because there's such intimacy and such approachableness. Why will we attempt to perfect on the natural level what can only be perfected on the supernatural level? It would be one thing if we had no access. But I am convinced today that people would rather do anything than pray intensely and wrestle with God.

Listen to the psalmist in Psalm 16:11, "Thou wilt make known to me the path of life. In Thy presence is fullness of joy. In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever." Do you believe that? Do you want joy? Do you seek pleasure? Do you seek the path of life? Do you want to know how to live? Do you want to know how to walk? Do you want to have a happy life? Do you want to know pleasure in life? Where you going to find that? "In Thy presence," said the psalmist, "at Thy right hand." Where are you looking for it? What have you substituted for prayer?

Psalm 27 verse 4, here's the heart of one who longs for God's presence. "One thing I have asked from the Lord." Now that's a pretty focused prayer life, wouldn't you say?

You say, "David, what's your prayer list?"

"Oh, I just have one request. I just have one thing on my prayer list."

"What is it?"

"Just one thing I have asked from the Lord that I shall seek, it is that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord and to meditate in His temple." All I want to do is be in the presence of God. There is a spiritual man. That's all he wanted to be was in the presence of God.

Look at Psalm 42, the beautiful and familiar verses that begin that magnificent hymn of praise. "As the deer pants for the water brooks so my soul pants for Thee, oh God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?" There's the cry of a man who knows where the resources are. Obviously he was in trouble here. He's, in verse 3 saying, "My tears have been my food day and night." In verse 5 he says that he's in despair in the depths of his soul. In verse 6 he says my soul is in despair. In verse 7 he's talking about being literally inundated with waves of trials. In verse 9 it seems as if God has forgotten him. In verse 11 he again soliloquies with himself, "Why are you in despair, oh my soul?" And in the middle of his despair, what is he doing? Who is he looking for? On what plane does he seek a solution? He says, "I pant for You, oh God, like a thirsty deer."

Look at Psalm 73 and verse 25. And again we find here in this which is ascribed to Asaph, another whom God used to pen some psalms, a similar heart cry in verse 25 of Psalm 73, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And besides Thee" I love this "I desire nothing on earth." Beloved, what I'm trying to say to you and what I'm trying to show you is you cannot, having begun your Christian life in the Spirit, descend to try to live it on a natural plane. It can't be done. And if there's any reason beyond all other reasons why the church is in such trouble and why it is in such chaos and such spiritual disorientation, it is because it is in the process of doing precisely that. It knows little or nothing about prayer and it knows little or nothing about ascending into the deeps of the presence of God. It wants a quick fix, a short answer, a program, a seminar, a counseling theory, a psychological prop, whatever it is, the substitute for the depth of communion with the living God.

And the psalmist says I...I desire nothing on earth. There isn't anything here, folks. There's nothing here for us. He says in verse 26, "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." That's the spirit of a spiritual man. God is the strength of my heart. And that is always true. And God has made that strength so available to you because of the Spirit of God

giving you access to God's resources. What a tremendous, tremendous promise.

Now let me crystallize it for you. What is the significance of intimacy with God? It can be summed up in three things. The significance of intimacy with God is first of all access for fellowship, access for fellowship. After all, isn't Christianity all about loving God? Isn't being a Christian loving the Lord Jesus Christ, loving God, loving the Holy Spirit? Isn't that what it is? Isn't that its...its very definition? Aren't we the lovers of Christ? The lovers of God?

And if that is true then don't we long for fellowship? Don't we long for communion just for the pure sake of communion? And don't we find in that communion a freshness and an exhilaration and a provision? Have you ever noticed, you talk to people who do counseling a lot and they will say what most people seem to need is just someone to talk to. And...and I've had people come and talk to me and talk and talk and talk and I basically would just listen to them for awhile. And they'd say, "Oh, you know, I feel so much better."

My basic response in my heart is if they feel better talking to me, how would they feel talking to God? But you see, we...we sort of have short-circuited that entire dimension in the pragmatic, psychological orientation of our contemporary church. The first great benefit then of intimacy with God is access for fellowship. The second great benefit is access to resources; it's access to resources.

What did the apostle Paul say? Listen to it, Philippians 4, "My God shall supply all your (what?) needs." Do you believe it? Of course you believe it, you have to, you signed the church covenant. Grace Church, we believe it. I'm not asking you if you believe it pedantically, I'm asking if you live it. You really believe God is the source of all resources?

Thirdly, access for wisdom. James, “If any man lacks” what? “wisdom, let him” what? “ask of God. Access for fellowship, access for resources, give us this day our what? Daily bread. Keep us from temptation, and then access for wisdom. That's really why we want to be intimate with God, for the sheer joy of communing with Him. I can promise you this: There is never a time in my personal spiritual life when I reach the spiritual heights in my own heart that I reach after a prolonged time of communion with God. That is the epitome. Access for fellowship, for resources, for wisdom.

Again in Psalm 63, I just want to read you the first four or five verses. Psalm 63, "Oh God, Thou art my God. I shall seek Thee earnestly. My soul thirsts for Thee. My flesh yearns for Thee in a dry and weary land where there is no water." Is that your experience? Now let me say, when I say that I know

in my heart that that is not the experience of most Christians. We have been diverted to human solutions to everything. We have so much in this world, there's very little of that thirsting and yearning for God.

The psalmist follows up, verse 2, "Thus I have beheld Thee in the sanctuary to see Thy power and Thy glory. Because Thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips will praise Thee. So I will bless Thee as long as I live. I will lift up my hands in Thy name. My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness and my mouth offers praises with joyful lips." Where did all that come from? It came from the God whom he sought. Truly the thirsty soul is satisfied only with God.

Beloved, do not try to perfect on a natural plane what was begun on a supernatural plane. Do not try to perfect with the systems of man what was begun by the spirit of God. What a privilege. The greatest gift imaginable, access to God, intimacy with God, could anything be more thrilling than that?

But that's not all the Holy Spirit does; let me take you to a second one. The second thing the Holy Spirit does in the life of the believer is He illuminates the Scripture. He illuminates the Scripture. He first of all provides intimacy with God. That's wonderful, but God needs to talk back to us. And how does God talk back in the conversation? He talks through the Word. And how does the Word come alive to us? It comes alive through the illuminating ministry of the Spirit of God in us. This is the second half of the conversation. The Spirit makes the Word live.

Look with me at 1 John chapter 2. This is necessary for that communion. Let me suggest to you that when you pray in those times of thirsting and yearning for God and when you pray crying out for the only one who can satisfy your need, providing fellowship, resources and wisdom, when you get into those deep times with God where you're unbearing the wounds of your heart and your soul and you're grappling with your sin and you're pleading with God and you're just loving and enjoying that communion, may I suggest to you that you do that with an open Bible so that God may respond. In 1 John chapter 2 and verse 20 we have this from John, he says, "You have an Anointing from the Holy One." That is God is the Holy One. "You have an Anointing from Him and you all know, you know truth because of this Anointing. Who is this Anointing? Verse 27: "As for you, the Anointing which you received from Him abides in you." Who is it then? Who abides in us? The Holy Spirit. The Anointing, if you will, at the beginning of verse 27 should be upper case, it should be capitalized. It is a person who is the Anointing. But as His Anointing teaches you about all things, again it's God's Anointing, again a capital A, the Holy Spirit, who teaches you about all things and is true and is not a lie. And just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. So you have a Teacher resident in you. The word "anointing" is *chrisma*. it literally means ointment, ointment, anointing oil. Some translate it unction,

but I like the idea of an ointment. It's as if it's put on you, it's put on you and it absorbs into you. The Spirit is on you and in you. It refers to the Holy Spirit. He is the Anointing. He is the one who teaches you so that you know things from the Word of God.

Verse 21 of 2 Corinthians 1: "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge." Again the idea of the... God doing the anointing with the Spirit. The Spirit is the Anointing, the ointment, the unction. And His ministry is to teach us truth.

You remember Acts 10:38 it says, "Jesus of Nazareth, God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power." So in the same way that God anointed Christ or placed on and in Christ the Spirit, He places on and in us the Spirit. Tremendous, tremendous, blessed ministry.

Now with that in mind, look at 1 Corinthians 2 for a moment and I'll just close by a brief consideration of this passage, 1 Corinthians chapter 2. Verse 9 says that God has prepared things for us which we in the natural can't understand. God has prepared for us things that eye doesn't see and ear doesn't hear and it doesn't enter the heart of man. It's not in his mind to conceive of these things. But God gives them to us. Verse 10, then, is where we pick it up. "For God has revealed them to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him, even so the thoughts of God knows no one except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak not in words taught by human wisdom but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. And the natural man does not understand these things."

The point is this, it was not only the Spirit who authored Scripture, but it is the Spirit who illuminates the believer as he studies the Scripture. It is the Spirit who is given to us that we might know the things freely given to us by God. Yes He is the author of Scripture, 2 Peter 1:20 and 21, "Holy men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit to write what they wrote." The Spirit is the author of Scripture. But more than that, the Spirit is the internal, indwelling, resident truth teacher so that not only do I have the Word of God to read but the Spirit of God to lead in the process of understanding. It's incredible. And to illustrate the Holy Spirit's unique qualification for revealing the Word, Paul compares the Spirit's knowledge of God's mind to a man's knowledge of His own mind. No person can know another person as well as he knows himself. As I said last time, we deceive ourselves and we don't perfectly know ourselves, but we're the only person who knows our thoughts. Even though we deceive ourselves about the reality of them it is still true that we alone know our thoughts. And so it is

with God. The only one who knows God's thoughts is the Spirit of God, as the only one who knows a man's thought is the spirit of that man.

So God's Spirit knows God's thoughts. On the one hand, He can thus reveal them in the Scripture. On the other hand, He can thus illuminate them to the one who studies the Scripture. He is the illuminator, or He is the one who turns the light on in terms of Scripture. He makes the word live.

Now, beloved, you know how I feel about the sufficiency of the Word of God, let me just remind you of it. Go to Psalm 19 for a moment, just as an illustration. And then I want to pull these two great thoughts together. But in Psalm 19 you have the single greatest treatment of the sufficiency of Scripture anywhere in Holy Writ. Just listen to what this says about Scripture. By the way, Scripture is called six things here. It is called law, testimony, precepts, commandment, fear, and judgments. Those are just different terms for Scripture. Law sees it as God's standards for man's conduct. Testimony sees it as God's own self-disclosure of His personal identity, His testimony. Precepts sees Scripture as life principles. Commandment sees Scripture as non-negotiable, non-optional demands. Fear sees Scripture as instruction on worship, for worship is fear. And “judgments” is a judicial word that means divine verdicts. It views Scriptures as God's verdicts on man's behavior, conduct, and life. Just different ways to view the facets of the diamond of Scripture.

But each of these gives us a marvelous statement about Scripture that in summary show us its sufficiency. The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul, or totally transforming the whole person, is what the Hebrew says. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. Wise means skilled in all aspects of daily living. The precepts of the Lord are right. That means a right path that they establish and they rejoice the heart. The commandment of the Lord is clear, it literally means lucid, enlightening the eyes so that we see through the dark things to the clear truth. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. It is so flawless it never dies; only flawless things untouched by sin will live forever. The judgments of the Lord are true and comprehensively righteous.

Now let me pull it together. The Scripture is perfect, sure, right, clear, clean, true. Scripture is able to totally transform the whole person, make a simple person wise, bring joy to the heart, enlighten the eyes, be eternally relevant and produce comprehensive righteousness. That is a statement of the sufficiency of Scripture that is really massive in its implication. Now listen to me. The sufficiency of Scripture is added to by the sufficiency of the illuminating work of the Spirit of God, to provide a resource on a supernatural level that exceeds any conceivable thing on the natural plane, any conceivable thing on the natural plane. Is it any wonder that the psalmist responds by saying the Scripture is more desirable than gold, yea than much fine gold, and sweeter also than honey and the

honeycomb? Is it any wonder that he says that the words of your mouth and the meditation of your heart should be acceptable? And Joshua 1:8 says, "And to be acceptable they must be day and night on the Word of God."

So what does the Spirit do? We know what He did at the beginning. He convicted, He caused repentance, He helped us to come alive to the Word and regenerated us. And then He indwelt us and He baptized us and He sealed us and He gifted us and He separated us from sin. And in the ongoing process, what does He do? He opens up access to God with intimacy so we can say, "Papa, Daddy," and we can crawl up, as it were, on His supernatural knee and sit on the throne with Him and cry to Him with regard to our needs. And we can be there for fellowship and we can be there for love and we can be there for resources and we can be there for wisdom and it's all available if we pray. And then to make sure the conversation has two sides, what else does the Holy Spirit do? He not only gives us an inspired Word but He comes to live within us to illuminate that inspired Word so that Word which is already able to totally transform the whole person, that Word which is already able to make wise the simple, rejoice the heart, enlighten the eyes, be eternally relevant, and produce comprehensive righteousness becomes to us a living thing applied directly to our own lives by the power of the Spirit of God.

What gifts! What unimaginable gifts the Spirit has given to us! And so I submit to you, beloved, that the solution to every spiritual need in the life of every believer is not to live on the natural plane, it is not the systems of men, it is the Spirit of God. And until Christians get seriously in touch with the reality of walking in the Spirit, of living in the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit, they will continue to flounder all over the place. And the legacy of the invasion of contemporary thinking into the church of Jesus Christ has made them so sophisticated that they have become unable to get in touch with the reality of true sanctification, the results of which are tragic.

Well, I want to give you five more things that the Holy Spirit does, but I'll have to wait two weeks to do that. You know, beloved, as you look at these truths, frankly I'm not telling you anything that you don't really know. But it's amazing how much of ministry is a ministry of reminder. I got a little note on a green card last week that said, "Would you please try to make your sermons more practical." Now my response to that was there could never be a sermon preached more practical than how a believer is to tap the supernatural resources for his spiritual life. But in a sense, that points out to me where we have gone. When you're talking about life in the Spirit you're talking about something that isn't practical, amazing. And it's even a more amazing confession after having heard that sermon, amazing how deep we are into believing that pragmatism is the solution and human ingenuity, when it is the Spirit of God. We're so out of touch with it we don't even know what we're hearing when we hear it. There are no tricks. There are no fast answers. There are no quick fixes. There are no

panaceas. If you want a godly life you pray and you move into the presence of God and you let the Spirit of God through the Word of God transform your life. That's how sanctification takes place. And there are some other things that go along with that process that we'll get into next time. May God help us. May God help us to get back to that place where we see the sufficiency of the Spirit. Let's bow together in prayer.

Father, I want to thank You for the reminder that comes to me through the prayer of one of the Puritans who prayed this way, "Oh Lord God, I pray not so much for graces as for the Spirit Himself because I feel His absence an act by my own spirit in everything." Who prayed, "Give me not weak desires but the power of His presence, for He alone can help, heal, quicken, humble. Suddenly and easily He can work grace and life effectually." Who prayed, "Save me from great hindrances, from being content with the little measure of the Spirit." Who prayed, "When I feel my lack of Him light up life and faith, may I turn to Him rather than human resources." Father, teach us to know the fullness of the Spirit. May we never foolishly, foolishly like the Galatians, try to perfect in the flesh what You began in the Spirit. Fill us with your Spirit, oh God, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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