

The Essential Ministry of the Holy Spirit, Part 1

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 90-330

Now we want to talk a little bit about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and I don't want to get bogged down and spend weeks and weeks and weeks defining every facet of the Spirit's ministry, but to basically look at what is important and critical and revealed in Scripture instructive for us and effective and necessary for our spiritual lives with regard to the Spirit of God. We have to assume a few things and one is that we're going to assume that you understand that the Holy Spirit is God. In fact, in Hebrews 9:14 He is referred to as the eternal Spirit. And so that in itself affirms that He is God who is eternal and who alone is eternal. Genesis 1:2 tells us that He was the one who moved across the formless deep and brought form to it. Therefore He is the Creator.

Scripture also tells us that He is the divine agent by which by whom the Scriptures were written, holy men wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. There are Trinitarian passages in the Scripture, such as the baptism of Christ where you have the Spirit descending as a dove, you have the Father speaking out of heaven, and you have the Son present. And so God is not just one God who appears in three different persons at various times, He is at all times three, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We understand then that when we talk about the Holy Spirit, we're talking about God...God, the third person of the Trinity, fully God, worthy of praise, worthy of worship, worthy of all that we render to Christ and all that we render to God the Father.

We're going to leave that as the foundation, that we understand that the Holy Spirit is in fact as He is so designated in Scripture the Spirit of God, just as Jesus is the Son of God. But I want us to look based on that assumption of what His divine ministry is. How He works to accomplish the purposes of God. In eternity past when the Father and the Son agreed on the unfolding glorious work of redemption, the Father determining to create a world and out of that world to call into eternal glory a redeemed humanity as a love gift to His Son...the Son responds by being willing to receive that gift and to be incarnate in this world and therefore pay the price necessary to purchase that gift, the price of redemption on the cross.

And so we think about that pledge between the Father and the Son that sets all of redemptive history in motion, but it's important to affirm as well that the Holy Spirit agrees in all of that and becomes the one who makes application of that plan. It is the Spirit, for example, who comes upon Mary and she is given a child without a human father. It is the Spirit who fills the Lord Jesus and who works through Him so that to deny the power of Jesus was to blaspheme the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit in the

Father's will who raises Him from the dead. It is the Spirit who comes down and establishes the church. It is the Spirit who regenerates every believer. It is the Spirit who has given, as I said, full revelation of God so that all we know about God and all we know about redemptive history, and all we know about salvation is the product of the Holy Spirit.

So we're talking when we talk about the Holy Spirit of God the very God, as the ancients used to call Him. He is equal to God in every...to God the Father in every sense, equal to God the Son in every sense, and in no sense is He less than equal. And yet certainly He does not get equal consideration and that would be perhaps more true in this particular climate than it has been, at least in my life, in the past. I remember when I began to do ministry as a college student and speak here and there at youth conventions and places like that, almost everyone wanted me to speak on the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Everywhere I went I was asked to speak on what it means to be filled with the Spirit, what it means to walk in the Spirit, what it means to be sealed by the Spirit, what it means to be indwelt by the Spirit of God, what it means to be taught by the Spirit, what it means when the Bible says I'll bring all things to your remembrance through the Spirit, the Spirit of truth. This was a major emphasis. Many books were written about the Holy Spirit, on the ministry of the Holy Spirit. I would say that it was probably the ministry of the Holy Spirit that was the dominant theme in those early years of my ministry. There was a lot less being said about the person and work of Jesus Christ, there were some things that were sort of standard givens, very little was being said about the doctrine of justification, substitution, imputation, which is very popular in evangelical circles today. And frankly not a lot was being said about God and the character of God and the nature of God. If you wanted to find a book like that, you pretty much had to go back to Puritan literature and find Stephen Charnak's Existence and Attributes of God, or some old book on God, until A.W. Tozer's little book began to gain public interest, The Knowledge of the Holy, and then J. I. Packer's very impactful book, Knowing God arrived on the scene in the early years of my ministry and people began to their focus toward God. And little by little the interest in the Holy Spirit diminished and the interest in the Holy Spirit among evangelicals began to diminish in direct proportion to the ascendancy of the Charismatic Movement.

As the Charismatics increasingly kidnaped the Holy Spirit and held Him hostage to their aberrant theology, interest in the Holy Spirit began to wane among other evangelicals who didn't want to start a fight with the Charismatics. So there was a certain setting aside of the ministry of the Holy Spirit for the sake of unity because if we are going to teach a biblical doctrine of the Holy Spirit, it's going to be an all-out attack on aberrant teaching concerning the Holy Spirit which is essentially rife in that movement. And so, little by little discussion, meaningful discussion, helpful, direct, accurate, precise, biblical presentations of the person and work of the Holy Spirit began to disappear.

After the Charismatic Movement had done its work of sort of coopting the Holy Spirit for its own definitions, along came the Pragmatic Movement. And pragmatism basically said we can do the work

of the church, we can do the work of the ministry through human means. If we just figure out sound marketing strategy, we can win people to Christ. If we figure out how to effectively present the message and approach people on the basis of their felt need, we can convince them by our technique and by our style to embrace the gospel. If we can figure out the psychological keys to people, if we can find out what makes them tick, if we can define them psychologically and know where their points of psychological contact really are, then we'll be able to reach them. And so as the church moved from the Charismatic Movement to the Psychological Movement and into the Pragmatic Movement, interest in the Holy Spirit continued to diminish and diminish and diminish until here we are today and it is a very rare thing to hear a message on the person of the Holy Spirit or the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

On the one hand we're reluctant to teach the truth as over against the error that's so popular about the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, we aren't really sure that the Holy Spirit is that critical about everything because we're so good at what we do in terms of marketing and strategies and we have figured out people so well with our psychological analysis that we know basically how to get to them and maybe the Holy Spirit's ministry isn't as critical as it once was. In addition to that, we've got so many resources, we have so many books and tapes and CDs and seminars and opportunities for people to get the information that they need and digest and process that information and we have so many ministries, endless ministries, so many teachers on radio, and television, and so many authors proliferating the landscape that there's certainly enough out there for people to absorb. And we wouldn't say it but it makes the Holy Spirit a little less critical.

Well something like that was going on in Galatian thinking, in the churches in Galatia and Paul addressed it. Turn to Galatians chapter 3, a little different approach but the same idea. They too were diminishing the place of the Holy Spirit. Chapter 3 of Galatians, and I don't want to take the time to develop the whole argument here, but we'll read the first three verses and make a couple of comments just to set the context. "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, it's down to this, 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?

The Galatians, like all other believers, began their Christian lives in the power of the Spirit. That's how they began. But they were coming under the influence of Judaizing teachers that would be Jews who would affirm the gospel and the Lord Jesus Christ, but also would add the necessity of circumcision, literal physical circumcision, and obedience to the Mosaic Law as a necessity for salvation so that they are essentially asking people to be saved by the Lord Jesus Christ and then to live their lives if their salvation is to be legitimate, following Mosaic ceremonies, circumcision, and Mosaic Law. The gospel of grace then disappears and in its place a system of human effort.

Paul calls this being bewitched...bewitched describes their condition, *baskaino* is the Greek verb. It means to fascinate. It means to charm in a misleading way. Who has charmed you away from reality? Who has charmed you away from the truth? They had become willing victims, succumbing to a flesh-pleasing kind of spirituality. They received the Holy Spirit by faith. They began the Christian life by faith. Is it going to be perfected by flesh? Is it going to be perfected by fleshly methods, by circumcision and the keeping of the Law and ceremonies? Paul's point is pretty simple. If a person receives eternal salvation through trust in Christ who is publicly displayed as crucified, verse 1, and at that point by believing in the crucified Christ has received the fullness of the indwelling Holy Spirit as all believers do at the point of salvation, and if with the Spirit taking up residence in that believer's life, the power of God is therefore placed at that believer's disposal, why would anyone turn to human effort to achieve spiritual goals? The Holy Spirit is the Christian's source of life and power. The Holy Spirit is to the Christian what the Creator is to the creation. Without God the Creator, the world does not come into existence. Without God as the sustainer, it does not continue in existence. It is God who created it and God who sustains it. And so it is with the Holy Spirit and the Christian. Without the Holy Spirit we wouldn't be the new creation. Without the Holy Spirit we wouldn't be born again, we wouldn't be regenerated. And without the Holy Spirit we would not continue to be constantly being sanctified by divine power. We would immediately, apart from the Holy Spirit, fall back into spiritual deadness from which we came. The creation cannot continue, it cannot survive without the upholding power of God the Creator, and neither can a Christian sustain that Christian life by works or by ceremony or by religious rite or ritual, it can only be sustained by the Holy Spirit. Were it not sustained by the Holy Spirit, I say it again, we would drop right back into spiritual deadness. We live in the Spirit. We are being kept by the Spirit. He is the source of our life. He is the sphere of our spiritual existence. No one is saved without the Spirit or sanctified without the Spirit. We cannot minister in the flesh, we minister effectively and only in the Spirit.

So why...he says to the Galatians...would you begin understanding the power of the Spirit that saved you, and then turn from the work of the Spirit by grace in your heart backwards to those things which you left, those outward external fleshly shadowy symbolic elements. Why begin in the power of the Spirit and try to perfect what was begun in the flesh?...in the flesh?

I have the feeling that the evangelical church today that certainly would claim to have begun in the power of the Spirit at salvation has now tried to perfect itself in the flesh. This massive movement called the Charismatic Movement ascribes itself to the Holy Spirit but it is far more a work of the flesh than it is the work of the Spirit because the Spirit of God does not invest convincing expressions of His power into aberrant theology. The Spirit of God doesn't do that. If there were a gift of healing, it wouldn't belong to a heretic. God doesn't verify heretics. It wouldn't belong to a false teacher. It wouldn't belong to a charlatan. It wouldn't belong to a fraud. It wouldn't belong to somebody getting rich at the expense of sick people. If God gave those kinds of abilities to do miracles, He wouldn't

give them to people who want to take your money and run. He wouldn't give them to scam artists. He wouldn't give them to those who teach wrongly about the work of the Holy Spirit. God does not validate and verify error.

But we've backed away as if people in that movement are the only ones who have a right to affirm certain things about the Holy Spirit, and it's time without necessarily focusing only on that movement to say we need to go back and understand what the Bible says about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Now if you want to know more about that specific movement, I have written a book called Charismatic Chaos, it still speaks to that issue clearly on the subjects that are necessary. But it isn't just that. As I mentioned a little while ago, we've become very good at what we do, very crafty at what we do in the church, very skilled at our style and technique, very good at developing music that attracts a crowd, very good at assessing people's psychological felt needs. We've become very adept at marketing strategies so that we can sell millions upon millions of books when we figure out the strategy that's going to work in a given market and a given culture. We're good at that kind of stuff. And that's a big head trip. And when many numbers of people respond to that, it gives the illusion of spiritual success and it may have absolutely nothing to do with the Holy Spirit. Very little talk about the work of the Holy Spirit today, very little interest in the filling of the Holy Spirit, very little interest in walking in the Spirit.

And as I said, in the early years of my ministry, everywhere I went this was the main issue to talk about. I had a period of about two and a half, almost three years just before I came to Grace Church, way back in the sixties, when I was traveling around preaching about 35 times a month...about 35 times a month. I did that for about two and a half years, almost three years. And I was speaking mostly to youth groups here and there. And in variably everywhere I went they wanted me to talk about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. That was just what everybody was interested in. That was before things got so confusing with the development of the Charismatic and the Pragmatic and the Psychological Movement.

This is to dishonor the Holy Spirit, of course, and we need to go back and give to the Holy Spirit the honor that He is due as God. You cannot set Him aside without bringing dishonor upon God for He is God. So what are we going to learn about the Holy Spirit? Let me give you some things to think about, just a little bit of a list, okay? We're going to kind of work our way through this list.

Before I do that, just one other comment or two. I really believe that this is a sin in the life of the church to diminish and depreciate the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is a serious sin. It is a sin to think that we can do what only the Holy Spirit can do, that we can by our cleverness convert people. Plagiarism, if you will, is a sin, that is to believe that people are saved by their own will and all we have to do is manipulate their will. It is a sin against the Holy Spirit. It is a sin to think that we can win people to Christ by our techniques. It is a kind of usurping of the role of the Holy Spirit. It is a kind of

blasphemy, if you will. It's a kind of profanity, really. And we know that the Holy Spirit always works His work through the Word, and you cannot honor the Spirit without honoring the Word...for the Spirit is the author of the Word.

It comes down to the fact that the church has lost its interest in the ministry of the Holy Spirit, feeling that perhaps it can do things better. And I'm deeply concerned. And I think the Spirit is quenched and grieved over this. So let's talk about the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

First of all, we have to start where we have to start, and that is that the Holy Spirit is the agent of salvation...the Holy Spirit is the agent of salvation. I don't know if I'll get past this, that's okay. What do we mean by that? Let's begin by looking at John 16....John 16.

And I want you to know that there's so much in the Scripture about the Holy Spirit that we could never do an exhaustive study of this in a few Sunday nights. We're not attempting to do that, rather to give you an overview. This is Holy Spirit, class 101. This is not the advanced study of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. If you want the advanced and more extensive study, you can go to the book store or the library and you can dig tomes out of the shelves that will expand on the marvelous breadth of biblical revelation concerning the Holy Spirit. But there are some things that are so foundational regarding the ministry of the Holy Spirit, that we need to understand them and understand them well.

In John chapter 16, the Lord Jesus is promising to send the Holy Spirit. He has been saying that. He says it in chapter 14, He says it in chapter 15 and He says it again in chapter 16. Look at verse 7. "If I do not go away," the middle of the verse...the helper, the *paraclete*, the one who comes alongside, the Holy Spirit who has been so designated in the earlier mention in chapter 15 and verse 26 and back in chapter 14 verse 26, the Advocate, the Helper, Paraclete, the Comforter. "If I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you and He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me, concerning righteousness because I go to the Father and you no longer behold Me. And concerning judgment because the ruler of this world has been judged." Now we'll stop there for the moment, anyway.

What is this ministry of the Holy Spirit? Convicting the world...convicting the world. That is, bringing upon the heart and soul of unredeemed humanity, the awareness of sin. He does a convicting work. He convicts of sin, first of all, because they do not believe in Me and that is THE sin that damns. Finally and ultimately, no other sin finally and ultimately will damn you but that one. Those who go to hell go to hell because they do not believe in Christ. Any other sin is forgiven when one does believe in Christ. So this is that ultimate damning sin, rejection of Jesus Christ. The Spirit then convicts, the Spirit works in the heart to produce guilt and fear and anxiety and trepidation and terror and the reality of sin.

And then secondly, righteousness, "Because I go to the Father and you no longer behold Me." What does that mean? It means the Spirit convicts the sinner not only of his own sin, but the Spirit convicts the sinner of the righteousness of Jesus Christ who is utterly unlike the sinner and that is why the Father received Him at the right hand. He went to His Father and His Father received Him and sat Him at His right hand because of His perfect righteousness. It is the Spirit of God then who works those great realities in the human heart...the reality of the sin of the sinner and the righteousness of the Savior.

And the Spirit also produces in the heart conviction concerning judgment, that sin will be judged because the ruler of this world has been judged. As Christ bruised the serpent's head at the cross, as Christ crushed His enemy as the seed of the woman of Genesis 3:15 destroys the enemies of our souls, we see the judgment power of Christ displayed and all who are part of Satan's domain will experience that same judgment. Those are the things that the Spirit of God wants to produce in the heart by way of a conviction...conviction of sin because people don't believe in Christ, conviction of the absolute perfect righteousness of Christ who has therefore satisfied God with a sufficient atonement and propitiation and entered into heaven and seating...and being seated at His right hand, and of the reality of judgment upon those who remain a part of Satan's domain. Since those are the areas which the Holy Spirit works to convict sinners, then those should be the areas which we proclaim, right? The Holy Spirit doesn't do this work in a vacuum. As we preach sin and righteousness and judgment, we provide the necessary truth for the Spirit of God to work His great work. Admittedly, preaching sin is not popular, it's not what people want to hear, but it is absolutely necessary. Preaching the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ and the fact that His sacrifice is there...is therefore a perfect satisfaction to the holy law of God and the perfect...a perfect offering to satisfy His holy wrath, He then receives Christ to His right hand. And so we are preaching here the great doctrine of substitution, the great doctrines of propitiation. And, of course, we preach judgment. And that means the judgment of the prince of this world and all who are a part of his kingdom of darkness, we preach eternal judgment, eternal hell, eternal wrath, eternal retribution.

The Spirit of God works to produce these things. The Spirit of God needs the Word to be proclaimed in these categories in order to do His work. And there are literally all throughout the pages of Scripture, all throughout the pages of Scripture, these truths over and over again rehearsed...in the Old Testament by way of prophecy and type and symbol, and all throughout the New Testament. Listen to 1 Thessalonians 1:5, "Our gospel did not come to you in Word only, but in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction." When you preach the gospel in the power of the Spirit, He produces conviction. If I want to evangelize somebody, if I want to preach a message that really can change people's hearts, the first thing I have to understand is I can't do that...I can't do that on my own. There's only one who transforms people and that's the Holy Spirit. So I want to ask the question, what is it that the Spirit of God does, what is it that the Spirit of God uses to begin the work

of conviction? And it is the truth about sin and the truth about Christ and the cross and the truth about judgment.

Secondly, if we're going to begin at the beginning, we have to understand that it is the Holy Spirit who produces conviction when the truth is proclaimed and heard and understood. It is also the Holy Spirit who produces repentance. It is also the Holy Spirit who produces repentance. In fact, I'm confident that's precisely what we have in the eleventh chapter of Acts in the eighteenth verse. "When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God saying, 'Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.'"

And how did this come about? The preaching mentioned earlier in verses...prior verses. And then in verse 15 the Holy Spirit fell upon them, just as He did on us at the beginning. Verse 17, God gave to them the same gift that He gave to us, also after believing in the Lord Jesus because the same Spirit who came upon us is the Spirit who came upon them who had prior to that granted them repentance. The Spirit produces conviction about sin, conviction about the truth of the cross which is related to sin and our sinfulness and the only hope we have to escape judgment, and the Spirit produces conviction about judgment in order to produce repentance.

And, of course, we can add to that, look at 1 Peter 1:12...1 Peter 1:12. The Spirit energizes the gospel, and these are just different ways at looking at the same dynamic work of the Spirit, but 1 Peter 1 it says, "It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you in these things...speaking about the Old Testament prophets...in these things which now they have announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven." The gospel when it is truly preached is preached by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.

Why do we say that? Are we talking about some mystical power? Well we're talking certainly about the divine power of the Holy Spirit. We're also talking about the gospel which has been given to us by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. So the Spirit who is the author of the gospel is also the Energizer, those who preach the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Again the indication here is the Holy Spirit is the Energizer of gospel preaching. First John 5 says, "The Spirit who bears witness because the Spirit is the truth." Whatever is a representation of the truth of Scripture comes from the Holy Spirit and is therefore the witness of the Spirit, it is further energized by the Spirit.

Go back to John chapter 3, and we're just touching on these things ever so briefly in order to keep moving a little bit. But in John chapter 3 it all kind of comes together here where Jesus has His conversation with Nicodemus. "How can a man be born when he is old?" talking about the new birth, talking about how to get into the Kingdom of God, necessary to be born again. And then in verse 5, "Truly, truly...Jesus says...I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." The point here is the Spirit regenerates. So the Spirit convicts of sin, righteousness and

judgment. The Spirit produces repentance by means of that conviction. The Spirit energizes gospel preaching. And the Spirit then regenerates. If there is regeneration, it is because the Spirit has done that, the Spirit gives life. That's why we're talking about being born of the Spirit.

In Titus chapter 3 it says in verse 5, "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 by the Holy Spirit." It's the Spirit that renews and regenerates. Those are almost synonyms in that passage.

So the whole work of salvation then is a work of the Spirit of God. He's the author of Scripture which is the source of truth about sin, righteousness and judgment. He is the author of Scripture which is the call to repentance. He is the author of Scripture which is gospel truth. It is He who then through the proclamation of the Scripture convicts, produces repentance, energizes gospel preaching and witness and regenerates, gives new life.

Now that is not all that the Holy Spirit does, but that's the initial work. And there are a lot of ways to see that in the general flow of New Testament teaching. Let me just give you a couple of illustrations. Look at 2 Thessalonians 2:13 and here we get a little broader look at this initial ministry of the Holy Spirit...2 Thessalonians 2:13, "We should always give thanks to God for you, brethren, beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth." We're not talking about progressive sanctification here, we're talking about the sanctification here that is synonymous with salvation. And sanctification often is synonymous with salvation. The word sanctification means to be set apart, it means to be cleansed, it means to be separated. That's what salvation is, we are separated from sin, we are separated from iniquity, we're separated from condemnation, we're separated from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son. So initial salvation is a launch of sanctification, it is a separation. And that's what we're talking about here because he says, "For salvation through sanctification." It is this kind of sanctification that saves you and it is by the Spirit and faith in the truth. It happens in that perfect combination of believing the truth when proclaimed and experiencing the glorious power of the Holy Spirit. He sets us apart to God. This is another way of saying everything I've already said, that He convicts and He causes repentance and that He gives the gospel power and He regenerates...just another way to say the same thing.

There are many other things that the Holy Spirit does but everything starts with His mighty work of salvation. So that...going back to our text in Galatians chapter 3, you don't need to turn to it, just listen...Paul says, "Having begun in the Spirit are you now perfected by the flesh?" We know we began in the Spirit, it all started with the work of the Spirit. And we needed to be reminded again the fact that any evangelism that bypasses the agencies which the Spirit uses, that is the biblical revelation about sin, righteousness, judgment, the biblical truth about repentance, the biblical truth about the gospel and we talked a little bit about that this morning and what's involved in a true and

appropriate presentation of the gospel, and the biblical truth about regeneration and that it's not something the sinner can do for himself but it's something that only God can do and all the sinner can do is cry out to God and beg God to do that on his behalf, when we preach that kind of message, then we preach the truth which the Spirit of God applies.

Having begun in the Spirit, can we then be perfected by the activity of our flesh? That's the question Paul is asking and while it relates to the specific issue going on there, are you going to go off now into some fleshly form of living, some external ritualistic ceremonial kind of living and assume that's a necessity to hang on to your salvation and to progress with God? If you do, then you're forsaking the Spirit with whom you began and you're now living in the flesh. And this is a kind of bewitching. We need to continue in the Spirit now that we have begun in the Spirit, we need to continue in the Spirit.

What does that mean? Let me give you a few things to start and I probably have about...oh, I could give you 15 or 20 things the Spirit does but we'll see how many I finally kind of boil it down to. But there are a couple of things that we need to start with here, okay?

Number one, He brings us the knowledge of and communion with God. He brings us the knowledge of and communion with God. The Spirit is the one who gives us access into fellowship with God. He is the source of all our communion, all our fellowship. Turn to Romans 8...Romans 8, there's a couple of passages that say this and they'll be good enough to suffice for the moment to make the point. But in Romans chapter 8, this is the chapter on life in the Spirit and I would suggest to you that you couldn't study anything better than this entire eighth chapter to find out what it means to live in the Spirit. And we looked at it a little bit earlier in our doctrinal study when we were talking about the doctrine of sanctification. But it's about the Spirit. Verse 9, for example...well, we can go back to verse...you can go all the way back to the beginning of the chapter, but let's go back to verse 6, "The mind set on the flesh is death, the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace." Verse 9, "You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you." Verse 11, "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you." Verse 13, "If you're living according to the flesh, you must die. But if by the Spirit you're putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. All who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God." So we're talking about life in the Spirit here clearly...clearly.

We begin in the Spirit and we live in the Spirit. We go on living in the Spirit, not according to the flesh. But just look down to verse 14, and we'll pick out one of the elements of this that it should be a treasure to us all. "All who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." When you experience the direct leading of the Spirit of God in your life, it is an affirmation that you belong to God as a true son. "For you have not received a spirit of slavery, a spirit or an attitude of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."

Now this is a marvelous reality in our lives. We literally say Abba, Father. That's a...basically it's a diminutive for papa, daddy, signifying endearment, intimacy. It's like the writer of Hebrews saying, "Let us draw near," or James, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." This is an immense privilege to call God daddy, papa. And we do that by the Spirit. The Spirit frees us from fear, frees us from dread, frees us from terror that one might have in one's heart in approaching God an all holy, glorious God. And we come into God's presence as children and we come eagerly and we run into His presence and we speak to Him intimately and we unload our issues and our desires and our prayers and our petitions and our praise and we say papa, and daddy, and that's the work of the Spirit.

When one has been born again, the Spirit of God produces that attitude in the heart of a believer. We feel drawn to God, not fearful of Him. We feel privileged to ask Him for anything and the Spirit of God gives us that internal freedom. The Spirit of God has revealed in the Scripture as the divine means by which the Scripture has come to us all these things that are true about our relationship but I don't think it's just talking about information, I think it's talking about a spirit or an attitude. That's verse 14. If you're led by the Spirit, these are the sons of God, you have not received a spirit of slavery. That's gone. You hear people talk about being converted and the burden being lifted. You hear people talk about never wanting to pray, having no knowledge of God, no interest in God. All of a sudden they're converted to Jesus Christ and they're eager to pray and they're eager to read the Word and they love to commune and they want to sing praises. And they sense that God is open. There is a true joy of fellowship because access has been opened. We can even cast all our care on Him because we know He cares for us. We can unload every issue in our lives. We can be honest with Him about our sins. We don't have to hide them from Him. We can be honest with Him about our sins, we should be honest with Him about our sins. We should confess them all before Him without fear knowing that they are all covered by His grace through the sacrifice of Christ.

So the Spirit then opens to us communion with God. And as you grow as a believer, this joyous communion, this joyous prayer and praise takes over more and more of your life and there's a wonderful freeness in that. We sing hymns about God's holiness. We sing hymns about God's glory. We sing them with a smile. We sing them with joy in our hearts. We sing them with gladness. We come before the Lord, as the psalmist said, with singing. We're a truly happy people. We're without fear because of the work of the Holy Spirit.

There's a second ministry of the Holy Spirit that I'll talk to you tonight, and I'll just cover this one briefly, leave the rest for next time. He illuminates the Scripture...He illuminates the Scripture. We just wrapped up our little look at the doctrine of Scripture and the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture. And you can build a little bridge in your mind to this particular function of the Holy Spirit, He illuminates Scripture. As I mentioned earlier, according to the words of Peter in 2 Peter 1, "No

prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation. No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." That tells us the Holy Spirit is the author of Scripture. But He's not just the author of Scripture, He is the illuminator of Scripture...the illuminator of Scripture.

First John 2, look at it for a minute...1 John 2. I'll give you a couple of passages to look at. First John chapter 2 and verse 20, "You have an anointing from the Holy One, you have an anointing from the Holy One and you all know," or some versions say you know all. What is this anointing? Well it's none other than the Holy Spirit who is the source of our understanding of Scripture. Down to verse 27, if you will, "As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you." Now we know we're talking about the Holy Spirit. We've received Him from the Lord and He abides in us. "And you have no need for anyone to teach you." We don't need any human philosophy, human wisdom, human teachers. It doesn't mean we don't need Spirit-filled teacher, it doesn't mean we don't need believing teachers because the Lord has given to the church evangelists and teachers, pastor/teachers, with teaching of Scripture. But we don't have any need for anyone other than those who are the means by which the Spirit teaches us the Word because as His anointing teaches you about all things and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. He in us and we in Him. The Spirit lives in us and we live in the Spirit. We live and move and have our being in the realm of the Holy Spirit. We literally possess the life of the Spirit and the Spirit lives in us. This is a marvelous thing. And the ministry of the Spirit therefore, this anointing, this gift from God, this deposit placed upon us, is our teacher, the one who opens to us an understanding of divine truth. The Word anointing here is the word *chrisma*, it means ointment, something placed on us like an anointing oil. And it is the Spirit of Truth. As I said, in John 14, John 15, John 16, the Spirit of Truth comes to lead us into all truth, to guide us to see the glories of Christ. We'll see more about that later. All this is referring, of course, to the Holy Spirit.

But for the passage that's most critical on this, turn to 1 Corinthians 2 and we'll finish up here...just five minutes or so. First Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 9. Now verse 9 borrows from a couple of passages in Isaiah, "Just as it is written, things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard." All right, this would be truth not available to empirical search. It's not available to empirical search. Secondly, "And which have not entered the heart of man." It's not available through intuition. You can't find it externally and you can't find it internally. "But it's truth about all that God has prepared for those who love Him." Everything that God has for those who are His children is unavailable in terms of understanding to the unregenerate. It's not available to them. You can't find it externally by scholastic effort. You can't find it internally by intuition. Verse 10, "For to us God revealed them," that is these things that He's prepared for them that love Him, "through the Spirit." God revealed them through the Spirit. "For the Spirit searches all things even the depths of God." That is to say that the Spirit knows everything the mind of God knows for the Spirit is God. To us, God revealed them through the Spirit. The Spirit again is the agency by which all that God knows and wants to dispense

to us is provided.

And He gives a little analogy. "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 no one knows except the Spirit of God." If you want to know the thoughts of God, then God's going to have to determine to reveal those thoughts to you and He has done that through His Spirit. "So we have received...verse 12...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." All these wonderful things which you can't find by external academic search, you can't find by internal intuition, all these things that God has prepared for those that love Him are unavailable to anyone apart from those who are taught by the Holy Spirit. "And we, verse 12, have received the Spirit." So we have an internal resident truth teacher who illuminates us. This is part of the doctrine of illumination. Inspiration brings us the message. Illumination is the work of the Spirit which gives us an understanding of what the message means. The Spirit illuminated us to understand our sinfulness. The Spirit illuminated us to understand the gospel. The Spirit illuminated us from the very beginning and continues this work of shining the light of truth brightly in our minds.

So, says Paul, verse 13, "Which things we also speak. So we speak the things which the Spirit has disclosed to us, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. A natural man doesn't accept the things of the Spirit of God, they're foolishness to him and he cannot understand them because they're spiritually appraised."

I received a phone call a few months ago from the History channel. And the History channel keeps doing all of these religious documentaries about Jesus and the New Testament and the Old Testament, and the Bible, and you've seen some of them. And they said, "We would like for you to be one of our regular experts on the Bible. Would you be interested?" And my reply was, "Absolutely not...absolutely not, because there's no concord between Christ and Belial. There's no fellowship between light and darkness." You can't have a whole list of people denying what the Bible says and I understand their denial of it because they're explained right here, they are natural men who do not accept the things of the Spirit of God. They're foolishness to him. He can't understand them because they're spiritually appraised. He's spiritually dead. So he comes up with some intellectual answer or some intuitional answer which is not anywhere near the truth and why would I get aboard that ship of fools? I don't need...I don't need to be just another voice in the cacophony, particularly when it would be my tendency to say, "Well you're all wrong and I know exactly what the truth is." I would last about one program, I think. They would have edited me down to nothing. And it's not because I'm brighter than them, I'm not. It's not because I'm more school than them, I'm not. It is because I have the resident truth teacher in me who illuminates the Word when I diligently apply myself to understand it. And the marvelous thing of all is in verse 16, "Who has known the mind of the Lord that He should instruct him?" Who knows the mind of the Lord but the Spirit of the Lord, that's the implication. And we have the mind of Christ.

It's an amazing thing to realize that we expect...I expect unregenerate people to botch Bible interpretation. I expect them to misunderstand the Old Testament and the New Testament. I've sat down with some rabbis, some very fine gentlemen, some very bright, articulate, far brighter than I and more articulate than I am, who don't get any of it in the Old Testament. They don't get it at all. And I understand that. I have read and interacted with New Testament quote/unquote students and scholars who don't get it at all. And I get it not because I'm smarter, but I get it because I'm like you, I have the teacher...I have resident in me the One who wrote the Scripture and who interprets it. And I know that sometimes you think that I come up with things that are just...you just can't find them. I even have...I had somebody ask me a week ago, "Where in the world do you get this stuff? I come every week and you come up with stuff and I never see that in the text." I just want you to know, there's no secret. As I told a young pastor many years ago who said to me, "What's the secret to great preaching?" I said, "Accurate interpretation of the text."

"How do you do that?"

"Keep your rear end in the chair till you've understood what it means." You have the promise of the truth teacher, but it's not going to happen in a vacuum of ignorance. You've got to apply yourself. You know what being a pastor really is? It's just being freed up to work hard enough to bring to you what you don't have the time to find, or perhaps the training. Maybe I'm justifying the necessity of my existence, but...(laughter)...what can I say? You're here and you're listening. That's a good thing. But it's so wonderful to come out of hours and hours of study every week and say, "I know what this means...I know what this means, the illuminating work of the Spirit of God has made it clear. It means this..." And what Paul is saying here is, "No one knows the person but the spirit of that person." And that's true in the divine sense by analogy. No one really knows the mind of God but the Spirit of God, and aren't we grateful that the Spirit of God wrote the truth here so that we have the true representation of the mind of God and the mind of Christ?" And then the Spirit's taken up residence in us to illuminate that truth to us.

Well that's two out of ten. We'll cover some more next week.

Father, again what a wonderful day to be together and we want to honor You, Holy Spirit. There's no reason we can't pray to You and praise You and thank You, blessed Spirit, for saving us, for convicting us of sin, righteousness and judgment. We thank You, Holy Spirit for producing in us repentance. We thank You for quickening and making the gospel live and penetrate in all its winsomeness. We thank You for regenerating us, giving us life so we can apprehend the glorious truth of the gospel. We thank You for sanctifying us. We thank You for giving us intimate knowledge of God. And we thank You for ushering us into His presence in which we enjoy fellowship in the sweetness of prayer and praise. We thank You for opening the Word to us, though we're not many

noble, or mighty, that we are the weak and the lowly and the nothings and the nobodies. We have the mind of Christ. We thank You that that's been made known to us and understandable to us by the work that You do, O blessed Holy Spirit. And we regret and we are pained by the attitudes today that shut You out. This must be of all times a time of grief for You. We are warned in Scripture not to grieve the Holy Spirit. We're warned not to quench the Holy Spirit. And we're called to give honor to You, O Holy Spirit. May You forgive the horrendous sins against You by those who claim to be the children of God. And may You give the church a new desire to know Your work and to know Your person, to experience Your power, to depend upon You. May we who are in the Spirit live by the Spirit and not by the flesh. May we not be like those Galatians, become bewitched by human means but know always that the work that You do is done through the Word. Make us faithful to that and may You be honored in our lives as we walk according to Your will and in Your power. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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