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

The Essential Ministry of the Holy Spirit, Part 2
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
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Tonight we're going to continue our look at the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We are in a doctrinal study and sometimes we dig a little deep and cover some more narrow aspects of theology. And sometimes we give a kind of general overview, a little bit more simple, straight-forward sort of beginning understanding of these various doctrines. And in doing so, we endeavor to speak to those who have been around a while, and who know and understand the great themes of theology, and at the same time talk to those who are new and need a basic understanding. And tonight, as we saw in our last look at the ministry of the Spirit, we're really talking about a very basic understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit.

I think it is obvious to all of us that the Holy Spirit is the member of the Trinity who gets the least attention. We have many, many songs that are written and sung about God, about the glory of God, the character of God, the mighty work of God from creation through redemption. We have hymnals filled with songs of praise to God. We have many songs, perhaps even more, about the marvelous realities of the person of Christ and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, there seems to be no end to the songs that are written about our Savior. We have far fewer hymns and far fewer songs that are dedicated to the person and work of the Holy Spirit. He is included here and there as a verse, or in a reference to the Trinity, but there is not just a substantial hymnology related to the Holy Spirit and that leaves us a little on the short end of giving worship to the third member of the Trinity, worship which is due to the Spirit.

We are also unlikely to tolerate a doctrinal error regarding the nature of God. We run, as it were, to rescue God from heretics and from those who would speak of Him in a way that is not a true reflection of His nature. We do all we can to protect the character of God and the work of God. We do the same for Christ. We are exceedingly eager to make sure that there is no misrepresentation of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are careful in defining the facets of the incarnation, of the nature of Christ, the inhumanated God, the God in human flesh. We are eager to understand every nuance of His redeeming work, to understand the cross and the significance of the cross and the great doctrinal themes of redemption in all their fullness and in all their minute detail. Careful indeed we are when it comes to God and Christ.

When it comes, on the other hand, to the Holy Spirit, we...we tend to be far more tolerant of misrepresentations of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, which, by the way, abound everywhere. We

don't often come to the rescue of the great truths concerning the Holy Spirit. I have endeavored through the years to do that from time to time, a number of years ago wrote a book called The Charismatics in an effort to call into question an unbiblical movement misrepresenting the work of the Holy Spirit. I had no idea at the time that the movement would continue to expand far beyond what I saw when I wrote that book back in the seventies. I wrote another book called Charismatic Chaos which endeavored to look again at that misrepresentation of the Holy Spirit in that particular paradigm of sanctification that we know as the Charismatic Movement.

It was also a few years after that, that I felt the need to address the issue of the paradigm of psychology and much of what I was preaching and teaching, not just here but in pastor conferences and other opportunities I had around the country and around the world, was to try to define a true biblical understanding of sanctification apart from the intrusion of human psychology. But again I often felt like a voice crying in the wilderness, like I was swimming up stream against the evangelical trend which was an ever-expanding Charismatic Movement and an ever-expanding Psychological Movement. Then came the Pragmatic Movement where we have pretty well defined the idea that we move ahead in our spiritual lives by techniques, by certain means and modes of operation that we can learn if we sit under the right teachers and apply the right principles. And pragmatism has done the same thing, it has deemphasized, it has deprioritized, it has in some cases almost banished the Holy Spirit away. There's very little talk in the pragmatic, market-driven ministry of evangelicalism today about the work of the Holy Spirit. So I come again with the same sort of agenda that I have occasionally through the years and that is to call our attention back to the reality of the person and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Having a true paradigm of sanctification, a true understanding of the work of the Spirit is critical because false paradigms of sanctification cannot restrain the flesh, they cannot lead away from sin, they cannot lead to spiritual growth and spiritual effectiveness, nor to the glory of God.

The church has very weak doctrines regarding the Holy Spirit, His person and work, and a very great tolerance for errors concerning the work and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

And so, we're looking at the issue of how the Holy Spirit ministers to us who are in the family of God. And we started as a good departure point with Galatians chapter 3 and a question that is posed in verse 3, "Are you so foolish, having begun by the Spirit are you now being perfected by the flesh?" We will, if we think about it, and think about it biblically, remember that our salvation is a work of the Spirit. We are begotten again by the Spirit of God through the means of the Word of Truth. We are born of the Spirit as we were talking about even this morning. So we understand that our new birth, our regeneration, our conversion is a work of the Spirit of God. It is not by blood, or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man but of God through the Spirit that we have been saved. And then having begun in the Spirit, that is begun our life in Christ in the Spirit, are we so foolish as to think that spiritual perfection can come through the flesh, through some human means? And the answer to the

question, of course, is we ought not to be so foolish, we ought to recognize that as we were regenerated by the Spirit, we will be sanctified as well by the Spirit and only by the Spirit.

Now we looked at the beginning at the saving work of the Holy Spirit. We talked about four things, that the Spirit convicts of sin. Jesus said in John 16 He would send the Spirit and when He comes He would convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. This is the initial work of the Holy Spirit in saving a person, to convict that person of their sin. This is not natural to man. This does not come by the will of man, as we saw in the words of Jesus who said concerning the rich young ruler, that this man is trying to do by himself something that is impossible. He cannot change his own life. Even conviction of sin, even the work of the Law rendering him guilty before God under a curse and headed for eternal judgment is a kind of conviction not natural to humanity but supernaturally granted by the Spirit of God. So He does the work of conviction.

Flowing out of that is His second work, He produces out of that conviction penitence, or repentance. It is also the work of the Holy Spirit to cause the sinner to repent.

Thirdly, the Spirit energizes the gospel in the individual heart. It is the Spirit who makes the gospel alive. It is the Spirit who quickens the gospel. Even in its preaching, 1 Peter 1:12 says, "The gospel was preached by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven." That is, it was preached so that it penetrated the heart and in a transforming way.

And, of course, then fourthly the Spirit does the actual work of regeneration, being renewed, being given new life. That's the saving work of the Spirit...conviction, repentance, energizing gospel truth in the heart so as to elicit faith and the work of regeneration.

That's all the work of the Spirit. Salvation is all the work of the Spirit. Like the wind, it blows where it wills. It comes from wherever it desires to come. It goes to wherever it desires to go. We have no control over it, we can only see its effect. So is the Holy Spirit. He does what He wills with whom He wills when He wills, even in the work of regeneration, as Jesus was pointing out to Nicodemus. So it is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Now at the time of salvation there are a number of other things that the Spirit of God does. According to the Scriptures, very clearly the Spirit of God immediately takes up residence in the life of every believer so that 1 Corinthians 6:19 says that we are the temple of the Spirit of God. Romans 8:9 puts it this way, "If any man be in Christ, he has the Holy Spirit. If any man have not the Spirit, he is none of His." So the Spirit of God takes up residence in the believer. First Corinthians 12:13 puts it this way, "We are baptized by Christ through the Spirit into the body." And so there is a baptizing work that Christ does by means of the power of the Spirit, placing us in the body of Christ. That's all at the very moment of salvation.

We should conclude also that at that very moment the Spirit secures us unto eternal glory. The first chapter of Ephesians makes this very clear, that we're given the Holy Spirit as a seal, that is we are sealed unto the day of redemption. So we receive the Holy Spirit, it takes up residence in us. The Spirit of God then by His power places us into the life of the church, the body of Christ. The Spirit secures us unto eternal glory.

There is even a separating work of the Holy Spirit. It says in 1...1...2 Thessalonians, rather, chapter 2 verse 13, that we have been sanctified by the Spirit and faith in the truth, meaning set apart from sin. Sin no longer has dominion over us. We are set apart from it by the work of the Spirit.

And another thing the Spirit does, according to 1 Corinthians chapter 12 verses 4 to 7, is the Spirit of God grants to us ministry capabilities, supernatural ministry capabilities. These are called the gifts of the Spirit. All of this converges at the very moment of our redemption, from conviction and repentance and faith in the gospel, this whole regenerating work to the Spirit taking up residence in us, the Spirit baptizing us in to the body of Christ, securing our eternal glory, separating us from sin and giving us ministry, spiritually supernaturally endowed ministry capabilities, all of this occurs at our salvation. So that's how we begin in the Spirit. It is a powerful, powerful Spirit dominated thing to become a child of God. It is a great, mighty, pervasive, lasting, permanent work that is supernatural and is carried out by the Spirit of God.

If you think about it Trinitarian sense, it is the Father who elects, it is the Father who draws, it is the Son who pays the price to purchase the redeemed and it is the Spirit then that applies the work of the Father and the work of the Son to the individual. Now that we possess all of these things by means of the Holy Spirit who has taken up residence in us so that we are as long as we are living in this world, indwelt by the living Holy Spirit, what is His ongoing work? Having begun in the Spirit, how are we then perfected in the Spirit?

Last time I gave you a couple of things to start. Number one, the Spirit brings us increasingly into intimacy with God. The Spirit brings us increasingly into intimacy with God. You heard John say when he was giving his testimony tonight that he knows God, that he knows Christ, that he loves Christ, that he knows there's a personal relationship with the Lord that exists in his life. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. This is the Spirit's ministry. And we pointed out a couple of verses, I will just briefly remind you of because they're important ones in this regard. Romans chapter 8 verse 14, "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God, you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out Abba, Father." Abba Father means daddy. All of a sudden we think of God as our papa, as our daddy, no longer a distant, awesome, fearful, transcendent figure not to be toyed with, but all of a

sudden we have been moved into a sense of intimacy with God where we rush in to His presence like little children, calling Him Papa in the most endearing way and we do it without fear, and that is because of a certain attitude, a certain disposition that has been wrought in us by the work of the indwelling Spirit. And it says so in verse 16, the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we're the children of God. This is the work of the Spirit, to confirm to us that we belong to God in such a true and intimate way as to be able to call God our Papa. The same wonderful truth is laid out for us in Galatians chapter 4 where it says in verse 6, "God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying Abba Father." When we speak to God with familiarity, when we speak to God with intimacy, when we talk about our God being personal and knowing God, this is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The second thing that I pointed out to you last time, not only does the Spirit bring us into intimacy with God, but He illuminates the Scripture...He illuminates the Scripture. We looked at 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and won't go through it again in detail, but remember what it says there, "God has revealed the things which eye has not seen, ear has not heard, neither can enter into the heart of man, God has revealed them through the Spirit...through the Spirit. And the Spirit has given them to us...verse 13...not in words taught by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words." God has taken spiritual truth, God the Spirit has taken spiritual truth and put it in spiritual words in the Scripture so that in the Scripture we have the mind of Christ. And as we learned from 1 John, we also had the indwelling Holy Spirit who is an anointing from God who teaches us all things. So we have the Word authored by the Spirit, spiritual truths put in spiritual words. And we have not only the Scripture authored by the Spirit but we have dwelling in us the teacher of Scripture, the anointing that comes from God.

All right, number three, and we'll move long in our little outline on the basic ministries of the Holy Spirit, He glorifies Christ to us...He glorifies Christ to us. Let's look at John 15 for a moment...John chapter 15, verse 26. And here our Lord says, "When the Helper comes, or when the Comforter comes, when the *parakletos*, from two words, to call and to be beside, when the One who is called to come alongside beside us, when He comes whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of Truth..." He's talking about the Day of Pentecost, talking about the time when the Spirit of God is dispensed. "He is the Spirit of Truth who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me." He will bear witness of Me.

In chapter 16, if you go down to verse 14, the same thing is said again. Actually verse 13, "When He the Spirit of Truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth." That's what we just saw in the second point. "He will not speak on His own initiative, whatever He hears He will speak and He will disclose to you what is to come." This, of course, relates to the inspiration that came by the means of the Spirit to the writers of Scripture, but it goes beyond that as well. He is the Spirit of Truth. He guides us into all truth in the Scripture and as the true interpreter of Scripture residing in us. Then verse 14 says, "He shall glorify Me for He shall take of Mine and shall disclose it to you." This is the wonderful

ministry of the Spirit of God, it is to point us to Jesus Christ.

Now if you'll look at 1 Corinthians chapter 12, you'll see this in a completely different context, but a very important one...1 Corinthians chapter 12. In the Corinthian church there was a debacle going on in the name of spiritual gifts. People were speaking gibberish as if it were a true gift of language from God. It was a kind of pagan gibberish, a kind of esoteric experience that is still common in some pagan environments. They were sometimes speaking, thinking it was the Spirit of God and they were actually cursing Christ. This could be be because they actually on some occasions spoke a language given to them somehow, or spoken through them by demons. Demons were using the disarray of the Corinthian church to misrepresent the truth and to blaspheme Christ. And so he says to them in verse 1, "Concerning spirituals, I don't want you to be unaware. You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to the dumb idols, however you were led." When you were in paganism, you were led away into mindless kind of experiences, led astray to the dumb idols, certainly by demons. And I want this to be made known to you, no one speaking by the Spirit of God says Jesus is accursed.

Can you imagine that in the name of some spiritual gifts from God, they were cursing Jesus? Paul says no one ever speaking by the Spirit of God says Jesus is accursed. "But on the other side, no one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit is concerned to exalt Christ. Anyone who exalts Christ is doing so under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit always leads us to ascribe glory to Christ, to ascribe lordship to Christ as the one glorious divine person who is our Savior and our Redeemer. Not only to lead us to salvation, it's not just to lead us to salvation. I believe that Jesus Christ is really the theme of all the Scriptures. He was He Himself who said on the road to Emmaus that He was the theme of the Old Testament. He said, "Search the Scriptures, they speak of Me," earlier in His ministry. And on the road to Emmaus He began at Moses and all the prophets and holy writings and showed them all the things concerning Himself. He is the theme of the Old Testament. He certainly is the theme of the gospels. His gospel is the theme of the book of Acts and His redemptive work is the theme of all the epistles and His glorious return is the theme of the book of Revelation. And so He is the theme of all Scripture so that the Holy Spirit continues in applying the truth of Scripture to us to point directly to the glory of Jesus Christ.

And what does He have in mind? Look at 2 Corinthians chapter 3 for just a moment, 2 Corinthians chapter 3 and the last verse in this great chapter. Second Corinthians 3:18, Paul says, "We all with unveiled face," unlike Moses who had a veil over his face in his experience of the glory of God in the Old Testament, the veil is off, "we behold as in a glass clearly unveiled the glory of the Lord." We don't see things in a shadowy way, as Moses saw when he was tucked in to the side of a rock and looked out and God let the glory pass by him, only the back part of it, not the full glory. We don't have a diminished view of God such as Moses did. We don't have, nor does the church of Jesus Christ have, a veiled view of God. In Christ God is unveiled in a greater way than ever in the Old

Testament, and He will one day be unveiled in a fuller way when He comes in His Second Coming and displays Himself in that glory which we will enjoy in eternity. But for now, the veil is off as it was on in the Old Testament. And we look in a clear glass and see the glory of the Lord. And where is that that we look? It is in the Word of God. This is where His glory is revealed. It is revealed in the Scripture. And as we continue to see the glory of the Lord revealed in Scripture, verse 18 says, "We are being transformed into the same image. We move from one level of glory to the next." This is ascending levels of glory.

Another way to say, we become more and more like Christ. As we gaze at His glory, we are being transformed into the same image. What image? The image of the glory of Christ that we see in Scripture. One of the reasons that we always preach Christ, one of the reasons that I never can be content to be out of the gospels of Christ is because Christ must always be on display. He must always be the focus of everything because as you gaze at His glory, you are transformed into His image, moving from one level of glory to the next, to the next. This is a typical biblical way to talk about an ascending or increasing glory. And who does the work? End of verse 18, "Just as from the Lord, the Spirit." So the Spirit not only shows us Christ at the time of our salvation energizing our faith in the gospel, but the Spirit continues to disclose to us the glory of Christ and as that is disclosed to us through the Word which He has authored and through the illumination as we read the Word, we are literally being transformed into the very image of that glory by the work of the Holy Spirit. So in an ongoing way, He glorifies Christ to us and shapes us increasingly into the glory of Christ. You remember what Paul said in Galatians 4:19, "My children with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you." Any faithful pastor understands that we want God's people to be like Christ. This is the prize of the upward call for which Paul gave His life. He pursued the image of Christ. As we gaze on the glory of Christ, a transformation takes place.

It is a in some ways an imperceptible, in some ways a slow not monumental transformation, it is a gradual moving, ever-increasingly up the glorious ladder toward the full image of Christ. This is done by the work of the Holy Spirit. And He does it through the Word which is where the glory of Christ is revealed and displayed.

Number four, the Holy Spirit personally guides us into God's will. Now you want to be careful when you talk about this because you have a lot of people running around today saying you need to listen for the voice of God, God wants to speak to you, be sure you tune in somehow and listen to His voice. And that can get a little bit dangerous. We're not talking about impulses. We're not talking about some kind of experience that you can feel. That can be very dangerous. What we are talking about is that there is a supernatural moving of the Spirit of God providentially in the life of a believer in the direction of that which God purposes. And sometimes we don't even know it until it's done.

I can think back to a...well, for example, my wife Patricia, I married her, I thought it was in the will of God. But I didn't have any supernatural inclination. There wasn't any halo over her head. There wasn't any supernatural work of God by which He spoke to me out of the darkness and said, "Marry this girl." I wanted to marry her, I knew that. I didn't want to marry anybody else ever, I just wanted to marry her. And I thought my life was right and so I thought that if I did what was right the Lord would be leading me. And so I married her. I had no idea what my life would be like, and she had no idea, right? She still has no idea of what's coming. We had no idea of what the future looked like. We had no concept of where it would go. God knew where it would go. God knew exactly what I needed. God knew exactly what the plan was and who the perfect helpmeet was. The Spirit of God led me.

Now this wasn't easy for the Spirit of God because when I began to notice her, she was engaged to somebody else. That's a serious problem. In fact, it was so far down the road that she had wedding invitations for the wedding to that guy addressed in the trunk of her car and she was supposed to take them to the post office. Who restrained her? There's no question. There's no question. Now at that time she didn't know what a good thing she was getting (laughter). But the bottom line was, what is going on here is this amazing moving of the Spirit of God who stops a young girl from sending out wedding invitations and she really doesn't know why. And at the time, I had no power to deal with that. But God knew everything about it and God knew the person I needed for my life and to be the mother of my children and the grandmother of my grandchildren, and to be my partner in ministry. And His subjective ministry is that kind of personal providential guidance.

And you say, "Well how do..how do...how do...how can you be sure that you're going to follow when it happens?" And the bottom line, and I've said this for years and years in teaching young people, you just make sure that you're walking with the Lord the way you ought to walk, and if you're walking with the Lord in obedience to His Word, that's what it means to walk in the Spirit. And if you're walking in the Spirit, He'll walk you right into the place He wants you to be.

Why did I come to Grace Church? Well there were a couple of other churches in other places that had talked to me about being a pastor. One was on an island in Hawaii. That had a small appeal. Another one was a church in Long Beach and why here? I came here...I didn't hear any voices from God. I didn't hear any signs from heaven. But it was so obvious that God was leading me here, more obvious when I arrived, more obvious now than ever. And this is back to Romans 8:14, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." He doesn't just start you out and then leave you on your own. You go from there.

It's a little more dramatic, for example, in the book of Acts in chapter 13 of the book of Acts. "There were in Antioch...at verse 1...in the church that was there prophets and teachers, Barnabas and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul, while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said,

'Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' And when they had fasted and prayed, laid hands on them, they sent them away. They were sent out by the Holy Spirit."

Now obviously the Holy Spirit spoke in that day before there was the Scripture completion and there were various miraculous things going on in the apostolic era. That's not the point. That's not how the Spirit of God works now. But the point that I want you to notice there is that the Spirit of God does determine who He wants to go where. And that hasn't changed. And so we can have the confidence that the Spirit of God providentially is going to direct us. It's not going to be a feeling. It's going to be the unfolding of His will and to be in the middle of it, you need to make sure you're walking in the Spirit which means to be walking consistently in obedience to the Word of God. And we'll look at that when we get down our list a little further.

I love what it says in Acts 15. "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden then these essentials." Now that's walking in the Spirit. It seemed good to the Spirit and to us. Here's the confidence that they were operating in the direction that was consistent with the work of the Spirit. Acts 16, they passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the Word in Asia. And when they had come to Mysia, they were trying to go to Bithynia, the Spirit of Jesus didn't permit them."

Now look, here they are again. In some cases it seems good for the Spirit to have them go this way. It was the Spirit's will to separate them out of the Antiochian church and send them elsewhere. On another occasion, the Spirit stops them from going in a certain place. The phenomena of that apostolic era are different...were different than now. But the same Spirit exercises the same purposes and the same will to have us go here and not go there. And if you want to enjoy the fullness of the Spirit in a life partner, in a life career, in a ministry, it behooves us then to be in the Spirit and that is to be walking in the Spirit, and that is to be walking in obedience to the Word of God so that we are under the Spirit's control.

So the Holy Spirit provides intimacy with God. The Holy Spirit illuminates the Scripture. The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ. And the Holy Spirit guides us into God's will...not by violence, not by violating our inclination, but by supernaturally bending our will, supernaturally changing our desires and by providence, the ordering of circumstances. The Holy Spirit stirs the heart as well as illuminating the mind. Psalm 143:10, "Teach me to do Thy will." Psalm 119:35, "Make me go in the path of Thy commandments and therein do I delight."

A.W. Pink described this leading of the Spirit with these words, "Those who are directed by this divine Spirit are moved to examine their hearts and take frequent notice of their ways, to mourn over their carnality and perverseness, to confess their sins and earnestly seek grace to enable them to be

obedient." Now as you pray that way and as you live that way, the Spirit of God directs your life. It's such a wonderful way to live. It's all I've ever known in my life. It's all I've ever known. The Spirit of God led me to the right woman. The Spirit of God led me to the right church. The Spirit of God led me to the right school, the right ministry, the right people to work with. My life is filled with people that have all been dropped into my life by the Holy Spirit. It's amazing...it's amazing. In fact, it's overwhelming to have the Holy Spirit drop so many gifted people into your life. People say to me, "How do you do so many different ministries? How...how do you do all that?" And my answer is I don't do all that, I just basically show up here on Sunday and preach and everything else happens because the Lord through the work of the Spirit has drawn into this ministry a myriad of gifted people. And I look at all these people and I say they're all gifts of the Holy Spirit. They're all given to me by the providential working of the Holy Spirit. And I hope that all these folks also feel that all the rest of us are given to them by the Holy Spirit. Just an amazing thing to live your life, never look back, never second guess. People say to me, "If you had your life to live over again, what would you do different?" My answer is, "I'm not in charge of my life...I'm not in charge of my life. My life has happened to me, I haven't made it happen." I still don't understand why it happens the way it happens. But what an adventure. If you just stay in the place where God wants you to be, then you're going to walk in the Spirit and you're going to just walk right in to the areas of the will of God that the Spirit has for you.

Well, I'll give you one more and then I'll save the last few for next time. I'll be gone a couple of weeks so it will be a few weeks before we get back to it. Number five, the Spirit ministers to us through the body of believers. And I wanted to say this because it fits what I've just been talking about. God surrounds us with people by His Holy Spirit. He draws us all together in a way that creates mutual ministry for maximum impact. This is not just a church where people sit in a pew and listen to somebody talk. This is not just a religion with adherence. This is, by the definition of the New Testament, a body of believers. We are the body of Christ. We have common life, the life of God, and we've been put together like a body is put together, with all the necessary parts for total and complete efficiency spiritually and to accomplish the will of God. And all the parts have to be there. We have to have people who have the gift of leadership and the ability to preach and teach and minister. We have to have those who can discern the knowledge of Scripture and apply the wisdom of the Word of God. We have to have people who serve and people who have the gift of faith who can pray. All of those functions, all of those ministries are crucial to the body of Christ.

Look at 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and we'll see how this is the work of the Holy Spirit. First Corinthians chapter 12, verse 4, "There are variety of gifts, but the same Spirit....the same Spirit, the very same Spirit by which we can say Jesus is Lord, is the one who empowers all of these gifts." We're not talking about somebody like a gifted child, that's a different use of the word all together. We're not talking about your ability to play the violin, or being precocious mathematically when you're six years old. We're not talking about your IQ, we're not talking about your athletic skill. Those are human things. We're talking about spiritual gifts here, spiritual abilities, ministry abilities. They are

given by the Spirit. There are a variety of ministries, same Lord, variety of effects, same God. There are differing abilities, they function in different ministries and they have a variety of effects. It's all the same God. It's all the same Lord. And it's all the same Spirit. "But to each one," verse 7, each believer, "is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." Every one of you as a believer, has the manifestation of the Spirit through a ministry ability. The Spirit of God has given you a ministry ability for the common good. It's not for you, it's for us...it's for us. To one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit, another is faith by the same Spirit. And then there were in the apostolic time gifts of healing, miracles, to another prophecy, the distinguishing of spirits, various kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues. One in the same Spirit works all these things distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

Every individual has a manifestation of the Spirit in a ministry ability in apostolic time...and that's a whole other study for another time. There were sign gifts which are miracles, healing, tongues, interpretation of tongues. Romans chapter 12 also has a list of gifts that needs to be compared to this one, Romans chapter 12, talks about one body, all members do not have the same function, verse 4. We who are many are one body in Christ, individually members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, leading, showing mercy. In 1 Peter 4 you have two categories, there are the serving gifts and the speaking gifts and they are manifold and multi-colored. And they are all given us by the Holy Spirit. That's what verse 11 says, 1 Corinthians 12:11, "One and the same Spirit works all these things." This is the amazing thing. The Lord by the Spirit collects all these people together so that we can mutually minister to one another in fullness that there might be a manifestation of the full glory of Christ through His body which is the church. That's why we are commanded in Hebrews 10, and this is...this is an important command, familiar to you, Hebrews chapter 10 verse 24, "Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds." How do we do that? Through our gifts...through our ministries to one another. "Not forsaking our own assembling together as the habit of some." Don't be like some who aren't here all the time. "Don't forsake the assembly, but rather encourage one another all the more as you see the day drawing near."

We meet together for mutual ministry. We meet together to stimulate one another to love and good works. You could add to that all the list of the one anothers in the New Testament, exhort one another, pray for one another, love one another, rebuke one another, reprove one another, restore one another, and they go on and on and on. This is how the body of Christ functions. All of this "one another," all of this gifting is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit then has an ongoing ministry through the body of believers. My gift is not for me, it's for you. Your gift is not for you, it's for me. And we're all enriched by the multiplicity of Spirit-given, Spirit-energized gifts.

So when you think about the Holy Spirit, spend some time worshiping the Holy Spirit. Worship Him. Worship Him the same way you worship Christ. Worship Him the same way you worship God the

Father. I know we don't have enough hymns to sing to the Holy Spirit, we need to write more. Worship the Holy Spirit as the One who has regenerated you, as the One who has drawn you into intimacy with God, as the One who has given you the Scripture and is illuminating you to understand that Scripture, as the One who is showing you the glory of Christ, as the One who is personally guiding you into the will of God, orchestrating all the issues of your life in the direction of God's will, as the One who has placed you in the body and gifted you and all the people around you for mutual ministry. Why? Let's look at Ephesians 4 and we'll stop there and see how this mutual ministry works. Ephesians 4 verse 12, it talks about the equipping of the saints for the work of service...the equipping of the saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ. Why? Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

What we want is a body that looks like Christ's. I appreciated what Rick said a moment ago when he said that people who come to the conferences go away not just talking about the teaching but talking about the ministry of the people. That is as much the work of the Holy Spirit as the teaching and the preaching is. And that is the fullness of the body manifesting the fullness of Christ. That's what a church should be. People should come to a church and they should say the teaching is obviously empowered by the Holy Spirit. But so is the loving and so is the fellowship and so is the mutual ministry at every level. It is obvious that the ministry of children and young people and adults is energized by the Holy Spirit. It is obvious that the ministry to the needy and those that are suffering is energized by the Spirit of God. It ought to be pervasive so that Christ is manifest everywhere because we have reached what Paul calls the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Well, my time is gone and I have a couple of other important ones, and then a kind of final picture about how to walk in the Spirit, but we'll save that for next time.

Holy Spirit, we come before You now to worship You and we ask forgiveness for grieving You, for quenching You, for not giving to You the honor and the glory that You are due. You are as worthy as are Christ, You are as worthy has God the Father, You are all glorious, You are wondrous, You are majestic, You are eternal. We worship You. We give You praise and honor and thanks for implementing all that the Father and Son have set in the eternal decree to unfold in the plan of redemption. We thank You for convicting us of sin, leading us to repentance, quickening our hearts under the power of the gospel, for regenerating us, we thank You, O Holy Spirit, for the ongoing work of sanctification, separating us from sin further and further. We thank You for coming to take up Your residence in us though we are unworthy. We thank You for placing us into the body. We thank You for equipping us with ministry capability that is supernatural. We thank You for glorifying Christ increasingly to us and shaping us into His image. We thank You for leading us, to understand the Word and to know Your will in the providences of life. We thank You for drawing us into the place

where You want us to be, enriching our lives with such good gifts. Thank You for putting us in the body of Christ where You can minister to us not only in our own lives but through the lives of those who surround us in the fellowship. We love You. Teach us to love You more and to rejoice in You. May we never, never assign to You those things that are not Yours. May we never cheapen You. May we defend the integrity of Your ministry as revealed in Scripture. May we defend Your honor and Your glory. May we be true representatives of Your work. May we put Your work on display by the way we live individually. May it be obvious that we are Spirit-filled, Spirit controlled, and Spirit led for there's no other explanation for our spiritual impact as individuals. And may our church respond so to Your powerful influences through the Word and through Your internal leading that we might come in the exercise of all our ministries to the very fullness of Christ, that Christ truly would be on display. We know this pleases You, for as Christ came to show us the Father, You have come to glorify the Son. And we praise You and we thank You for this work. We thank You that You sealed us to eternal glory and the seal can never be broken. You have secured us to our heavenly destination, for that as well, we praise You. And we commit again to walk in obedience to the will that is revealed through Scripture, that we might truly walk in Your power and in Your direction and know the fullness of joy that You grant for the Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Give us that joy in fullness, we pray, in Christ's name. Amen.

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