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

The Spirit-Empowered Life of Christ
Scripture: Romans 8:12-13
Code: 90-419

As you know, we are in a study of the person and work of the Holy Spirit, the member of the Trinity that often gets overlooked by some and by others, things are attributed to Him which He would have nothing to do with. We started out kind of talking about contemporary blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, grieving of the Holy Spirit, quenching of the Holy Spirit, and even showing disdain toward the Holy Spirit just to kind of give you the picture of what's out there so that we know how important it is for us to have a true and correct understanding of the Holy Spirit.

I want to continue our study and we are going to continue in Romans chapter 8, that's kind of our anchor passage for this. But I'm doing more than just expositing Romans 8, we've done that through the years. I'm trying to draw out of this those things that are important for us to understand about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Why is that important? Why is that critical? Because you are as a believer the temple of the Holy Spirit. You have been baptized by the Holy Spirit, placed into the body of Christ and the Holy Spirit has subsequently taken up residence in you, lives in you. You are commanded to be filled with the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, to manifest faithfully the gifts of the Spirit, to give honor to the Holy Spirit. It would be true to say that the very power of your spiritual life is the Holy Spirit.

And so, for us to understand the true ministry of the Holy Spirit, over against those things that are falsely attributed to Him is very, very important. And as I was thinking about a way that we can kind of come to grips with the full ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives, I was drawn to the fact that the best way to understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is to understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus Christ, in the life of our Lord and our Savior. And that's what I want to do this morning, and we're going to end up in the next little section in Romans 8 verses 12 and 13 but not for a while.

The Holy Spirit was Christ's inseparable companion…inseparable companion. One writer put it this way, "From womb, to tomb, to throne." All activities in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, all activities in His life from His birth, through His death, through His resurrection, until His ascension occurred in the full presence and by the full power of the Holy Spirit.

We often talk about the fact that Christ is our model. He is the one that is our example. Paul says, "Be followers of me as I am of Christ that in understanding of the person of Christ and the life of Christ, sets for us the course as to how to live. But I don't hear that discussed very often in the light of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Lord Jesus Christ. But that is the best way to understand the

Christian life. To understand that Christ lived the life that He lived because of the ministry of the Spirit of God, and then to understand that you having the Spirit in you can follow the pattern that is demonstrated in Christ. He's the model of the Spirit-controlled life. He's the model of the Spirit-filled life. He's the model of the Spirit-empowered life. He shows us what that is in its perfection…in its perfection.

We have to start at the beginning. Let's look at Luke chapter 1…Luke chapter 1 verse 26, "In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel comes to earth from the presence of God in heaven and arrives in Galilee at a town called Nazareth. And he comes to a young virgin, probably around twelve or thirteen years of age, and he wants to make an announcement. She is engaged to a man named Joseph. They are both descendants of David. Her name is Mary. He comes to this young girl and says, "Greetings, favored one, the Lord is with you. A visitor from heaven." This never happened. This is shocking. She is perplexed. She's trying to figure out what's going on. The angel says in verse 30, "Don't be afraid, you've found favor with God. You will conceive in your womb and bear a Son and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great. He will be called the Son of the Most High and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His Father David and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever and His Kingdom will have no end. You're going to be the mother of the Messiah, the Son of God, the Savior of the world."

Now this whole thing is staggering beyond comprehension, but the first problem that hits her immediately, how am I going to be pregnant, I don't…I don't yet have a husband and I'm a virgin?" She's a pretty practical girl. It all sounds wonderful but I'm a virgin.

"And the angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you." Those are synonymous statements. The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. The power of the Most High is the same thing as the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God's power in motion, the *ruach* of God, remember that? The violent force and energy and power of God. When the Holy Spirit comes on you, it is in His person the arrival of the power of the Most High. It will overshadow you. It will hover over you. Does that sound like a familiar scene? If you go back to the creation, you have the Holy Spirit hovering over the formless void of the material elements that God was going to create from and the Holy Spirit hovers and moves over the face of the waters and brings it in to specific creation as identified in the six actual days of divine creation.

In the same way, in a same kind of a creative act, an expression of power, supernatural power, the Holy Spirit will come and divine power will hover over you. And for that reason, for the reason of the presence of the Holy Spirit, the power of the Most High God, the holy child shall be called the Son of God. You're going to have a child by the creative power of the Holy Spirit while you're still a virgin with no man involved. This is a divine, creative act and that child will be the Son of God. That child will be a holy child. The very incarnation, the initial creation of the incarnate Son of God is a work of

the Holy Spirit…a work of the Holy Spirit.

The birth of Jesus Christ, an act of the Holy Spirit. Even more importantly, the conception of Christ, the Son of God, the God/Man in the womb of Mary, a creative act by the Holy Spirit. And from that moment, the Holy Spirit never left the presence of that life. Through nine months in the womb, and through the rest of his life to the ascension, the Holy Spirit is the constant, inseparable companion to the incarnate one, the Son of God. He is born holy. He is born holy.

Then you look at His youth and you ask, “What about those thirty years between His childhood, His infancy and the beginning of His ministry? What’s going on in His life?” Well we get a glimpse of that. We only have one incident and it is at the age, as you remember, of twelve when He goes with His parents to the temple. But although it is only one incident, if you look at the next chapter of Luke, you will find that it describes an entire period of His life, an entire process of His life.

In the second chapter of Luke and verse 40, we read this, referring to Christ. “The child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom and the grace of God was upon Him.” And then you read in verse…later in verse 49, He has an awareness that God is His Father. His theology is now clear in His mind and He has to be in His Father’s house, doing His Father’s business. And in verse 52, “He kept increasing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.” Although that is one occasion in His life at the age of twelve, it describes His entire life, the entire period of His development and His growth. And just mark the words, “He becomes strong, increasing in wisdom, grace is upon Him, knowledge increases as He becomes aware of His Father’s business and gives Himself to it. He increases in wisdom, stature, favor with God and man.

What is the power that is producing that? If you go back into the Old Testament, you find the answer to that question. In the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, there is a wonderful prophecy of the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah writes in chapter 11 verse 1, that a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, Jesse being the father of David and the far son of David, the Messiah, would come out of the line of Jesse, a branch from his roots will bear fruit. And this is a messianic prophecy. And notice what it says, without some regard to some period of time or some events in the life of Jesus, this is a definitive statement about Him. “The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him.” And if I may add what exactly the Spirit of God Himself has Isaiah write, it is the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and strength, the Spirit of the knowledge and of the fear of the Lord and He will delight in the fear of the Lord.”

The growth of Jesus, His development, His strength, His wisdom, His knowledge, the grace of God being upon Him is a direct result of the fact that from the beginning of His conception on through all the years of His life, the Spirit of the Lord was resting on Him. The Spirit was resting on Him.

In the forty-second chapter of Isaiah's prophecy, in another messianic prophecy, it says this, "Behold My servant whom I uphold," again referring to the suffering servant, the Messiah. "My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him."

Do we understand that any kind of spiritual growth in any of us is the product of the work of the Holy Spirit? Then we have to understand that in the incarnation, Jesus sets aside the independent exercise of His own attributes and fully submits Himself, becomes a slave of God, empties Himself of all those prerogatives and comes all the way down to a servant, all the way down to submit completely to the plan of the Father, through the power of the Spirit. And everything that happens in His life is a product of the working of the Spirit in the God/Man, the increase in wisdom, the increase in knowledge, the increase in grace, the increase in comprehension of the Father's plan, all of that is the work of the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge, and strength, and power that rests on Him.

So at the point of His conception, through His birth, through His life, the Spirit of God is the resource that develops Him into the one that God has ordained that He would be. You could say it this way, the Spirit is shaping Him because He is obedient to the Spirit's power in setting aside His own attributes and allowing the Spirit to mold Him and make Him according to the plan of the Father. It is the work of the Holy Spirit that produces in Him the spiritual development and maturity that we read of in Luke 2.

After those years of preparation are complete, the first event that we need to note in His public ministry as it begins is in the first chapter of Mark. Mark chapter 1, a very significant event, Mark chapter 1 and verse 10, coming up out of the water at His baptism, John the Baptist has baptized Him, coming up out of the water He saw the heavens opening and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon Him.

The Spirit is not a dove. There was no dove there. It's okay if you have a dove somewhere in your house to symbolize the Holy Spirit, but the Spirit has never been a dove, never appeared in dove form. He came down and lit on Jesus in some visible form, the way a dove might come down and gently settle on a man's shoulder. That's the idea. Like a dove might come out of the sky and rest. It's just an analogy or a metaphor. But what you see here is the Spirit descending upon Him. The Spirit has already been with Him. The Spirit has been there since His conception. He goes on in His life in progress because of the shaping work of the Holy Spirit in Him. And yet here the Holy Spirit comes down.

What does this signify? First of all, it signifies the approval of heaven. Verse 11, "A voice out of heaven, the voice of the Father, 'You're My beloved Son, in You I am well pleased.'" This is the official announcement that this man Jesus is the Son of God. He is the Son of God.

Another official announcement comes from John at His baptism in verse 15. "The time is fulfilled." The longtime of waiting for the arrival of the Messiah has come to pass. The Kingdom of God is at

hand because the King is here. Repent and believe in the gospel. So what you have here then is the Holy Spirit affirming His deity. The Father declaring His deity, He is identified as the long awaited Messiah. He is the Son of God. He is the suffering servant. And He is anointed in a special way for specific service. He is the anointed one. Again it's "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel." The Spirit is on Me, He's anointed Me to preach the gospel, that's Isaiah 61. The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Isaiah 42. The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, Isaiah 61, to preach the gospel.

So, He has the Holy Spirit as a constant companion, an inseparable companion, and yet in addition to that, there is an official declaration, affirmation, visible indication that He is being granted to ministry and a special anointing. We would understand that from the Old Testament when David prays, "Take not Your Holy Spirit from Me," as we saw in Psalm 51, he's not saying, "Don't take the Holy Spirit away from Me," in My spiritual life because He couldn't survive. Even Old Testament saints were sanctified by the work of the Holy Spirit. He's saying don't take the Holy Spirit away in the sense of My anointing, My special calling for special service.

So the Holy Spirit is the one who hovers over the body of Mary and by divine miracle, creates an embryo in her womb and He follows the development of that embryo with His presence in the womb and at the birth and through His life and becomes the one who shapes Jesus into the perfect Messiah, the perfect Savior, the perfect servant of God, the manifest Son of God, fully realized holiness, fully realized holiness, shaped on the submissive Son by the perfect Holy Spirit.

And then there is this anointing as the Holy Spirit sets Him apart in addition to His work on the inside for a particular ministry that He needs to do on behalf of the world.

The next event in the ministry of our Lord comes in the next verse, verse 12 of Mark 1. This is a very important thing. Immediately after His baptism and after the Father had declared Him His beloved Son, the Spirit drove Him, the verb is to drive, drove Him into the wilderness. And when He went into the wilderness 40 days, tempted He was by Satan. The Holy Spirit is there in His temptation. The Holy Spirit is not only there in His temptation, the Holy Spirit is not there to pick up the pieces of the temptation, the Holy Spirit is the one who drove Him into the conflict, okay? Everything Jesus did in His life was driven by the Holy Spirit. Remember the *ruach Elohim*, the violent force of God is operating in the person of Jesus Christ, driving Him into conflict with Satan. At the end of that conflict, Matthew 4:10 says that Jesus dismissed Satan. He had vanquished him. The Holy Spirit is the one who drove Jesus into the conflict. The Holy Spirit, in a sense, is the battle planner. He's the strategist who maps out the battle terrain and directs the warrior king, Jesus Christ, into the holy war.

Why does He do this? To demonstrate the invulnerability of Jesus Christ, to declare His triumphant conflict with Satan. The conflict didn't end there. He waged war with the Kingdom of Darkness throughout His whole ministry, didn't He? Casting demons out, day after day after day for the period

of three years of His ministry. But always He was triumphant. There's a sense in which what the Holy Spirit is doing here is driving Him into conflict with Satan so that He can give evidence of His power to take over all enemy territory. And He's going to take over all the enemy's territory for His own Kingdom one day and bind Satan with a chain at first, and then cast him forever into the Lake of Fire. The Holy Spirit literally drives Him into conflict so He can overcome the enemy and be triumphant and claim territory for His own Kingdom that belonged to Satan.

After that temptation, He began His ministry. How did He begin His ministry? He began His ministry, Luke tells us, the same way everything else had occurred in His life. Luke 4:14, the devil had finished every temptation he could throw at Jesus unsuccessfully and then immediately after that, in Luke 4:14, Jesus returned to Galilee…here's the key…He returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit…in the power of the Spirit. It was in the power of the Spirit, verse 15, that He began teaching in the synagogues. His whole ministry was in the power of the Spirit. He was empowered by the Holy Spirit. That power was demonstrated in His ability to do miracles, cast out demons, dismiss disease, overcome death, do physical miracles. It was all the power of the Holy Spirit…all the power of the Holy Spirit.

The testimony to that is given by Peter. Peter was there for all those three years. Listen to what Peter says in Acts 10:38, Peter is preaching to Gentiles and he's talking about Jesus Christ and he says, "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power." Okay? God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and that meant that God was with Him because that's the Spirit of God.

All these passages remind us of the essence of the incarnation is such a total self-emptying that Jesus is completely submissive to the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, who is shaping Him in every sense into the Holy One that God has designed Him to be. Whatever He did, whether He was teaching, He was teaching under the power of the One He called the Spirit of truth. He referred to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth many times. Or He was healing. It was in the power of the Holy Spirit, or He was casting out demons in the power of the Holy Spirit, or calming storms in the power of the Holy Spirit. That is why when the Jews said, "You do what You do by the power of Satan," in Matthew 12, He said, "You blaspheme not Me, but You blaspheme the Holy Spirit." He is the sinless one. He is the holy one. He is the incarnation of fully realized holiness. He walks perfectly in the Spirit. He displays all the fruit of the Spirit. He uses all the gifting of the Spirit. It is all the power of the Spirit coming through Him. This is His life. His is His ministry.

Even when He comes to His death, if you look at Hebrews chapter 9, and He faces the cross, and all that's involved, this amazing statement, Hebrews 9:14, says that the blood of Christ was offered without blemish to God. Christ offered His blood as a sacrifice, a blameless, without blemish sacrifice to God, verse 14, through the eternal Spirit. Even the power that took Him through the Garden, even

the power that caused Him to endure the cross was the power of the Holy Spirit. It was the power of the Holy Spirit.

It was the Holy Spirit that gave Him the power to say, “Not My will be Yours be done.” It was the Holy Spirit who gave Him the power to say, “Father, forgive them, they don’t know what they do.” It was the power of the Holy Spirit that allowed Him to stay there until He could say it is finished. It was in the power of the Holy Spirit that He said, “Father, into Your hands I commend My Spirit.”

What about His resurrection? Well, if you go back to Romans 1, we are introduced in Romans 1 verse 3 to the Son of God, born of a descendant of David according to the flesh. Mary was a descendant of David. But please notice verse 4, Romans 1:4, “Who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead according to the Spirit of holiness.” Who raised Him? The Spirit, the Holy Spirit raised Him from the dead.

First Timothy chapter 3 gives us that wonderful hymn at the end of the chapter, an early church hymn, no doubt, because of the structure in the Greek. The mystery of godliness that is the amazing mystery of God in Christ, the God/Man, fully man, fully God. And then it looks at His resurrection. This is a hymn on the resurrection. He was revealed in the flesh. He had a bodily resurrection. And this bodily resurrection was a vindication in the Spirit. Here again, testimony to the fact that it is the Holy Spirit who was the power that raises Jesus from the dead. It is His power.

You say, “Well, after His resurrection, did He take over? Did He say, “That’s good enough, Holy Spirit, You’ve certainly done Your share. I can handle it from here.”

Turn to Acts chapter 1. After His resurrection, forty days went by and then He ascended into heaven. Forty days went by and you can see what He did for 40 days in chapter 1 verse 3. Chapter 1 verse 3, “For a period of 40 days He was speaking of things concerning the Kingdom of God.” He was preaching and teaching His own. For 40 days He was preaching and teaching. Back to verse 2, “Until the day when He was taken up to heaven after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the Apostles whom He had chosen.” Who was the power of the forty-days teaching? The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit continued to empower Him for 40 days, it says that, He was giving orders to the Apostles, which is another way of saying He was speaking of the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and it was all by the Holy Spirit.

I don’t know if you ever looked at the ministry of Christ and the life of Christ in this way. But it’s a stunning thing. It really is. And can you imagine this, they’re used to this. They’re used to this, they know He attributes all of this to the Holy Spirit. They know the Jews have attributed to Satan and He said, “You blaspheme the Holy Spirit,” they were there. Do you remember when in the Upper Room discourse, Jesus said to them, “He has been with you,” speaking of the Holy Spirit? The Spirit of truth, He has been with you? Chapter 14 verse 17, “He shall be…where?...in you, you remember when He

said that? There's something there that maybe you haven't thought about. He has been with you is a very special statement. How had the Holy Spirit particularly been with them? In Christ. He has been with you. I've been with you, He's been with you. He's been with you and it's been wonderful. You've seen it all, you've heard it all. What an incredible experience. He has been with you. But He also said, "He shall be…where?...in you." That's better. You've seen Him in Me and He's going to be in You. You've seen His power in Me, the same power is going to be in you.

I mean, this is a stunning promise. That's why in John 16:7 He says to them, "It's better for you if I go away because if I don't go away, that's not going to happen. But if I go away, I will send the Holy Spirit and He will be in you."

If I had been standing there when He was talking like that, I would have been overwhelmed with expectations. Right here in Acts 1, Jesus says in verse 5, "You're going to be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. In a few days it's going to happen."

Earlier in John 20, after His resurrection, during that 40 days, He said to them in verse 22, "Receive the Holy Spirit and breathed on them," like power is coming Your way. Earlier than that, back in the seventh chapter of John and verse 37, "If any is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me as the Scripture says from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water." Again this is power. This is a force. "This He spoke of the Spirit whom those who believed in Him were to receive for the Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified." That's the same idea. You're going to have a powerful rushing river inside of you and you haven't received that, you've seen it in Me. I've been with you and He's been with you, but when I am glorified I will send the Holy Spirit and He will be in you.

Back to Acts 1, what's going to happen when that happens? Verse 8, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." You will receive power. What did we learn in Romans 8? "That if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, He's none of His." That's kind of where we were last time. So if you're a believer, you have the Holy Spirit, right? Haven't we been saying that? Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives in you. That's what happened on the day of Pentecost. It's incredible. It happened just a few days. Chapter 2 verse 1, "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place, suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind." We know who that is, don't we now? The *ruach Elohim*, the violent rushing wind, symbol of the Holy Spirit. And not only that, not only is there a violent rushing wind, there are little pieces of fire that look like dancing tongues of fire on top of people. Another symbol of the force and power of the Holy Spirit.

And verse 4, "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. And the promise that Jesus gave had come to pass. And every single believer since that day has received the Holy Spirit and with the Holy Spirit, the power comes.

Now let's use Jesus as our model because the same things that Jesus saw the Spirit of God do in His life are the very things the Spirit does in your live. Let's start at the beginning. He gave life to the incarnate Christ. And He gives us life. "You must be born of the Spirit." He's the one who regenerates. It is the Holy Spirit who grew Jesus in wisdom and knowledge. It is the Holy Spirit who grows us. Second Corinthians 3:18, "As we gaze at the glory of the Lord, as we gaze at the glory of Christ, we're moved from one level of glory to the next by the Lord who is the Spirit."

The Spirit is the one growing you up. The Spirit is the one teaching you, He's the anointing from God. The Spirit is the one who grows you in grace and wisdom and knowledge. Not only does He give you the resource in the Word, but He's the internal teacher that illuminates you. He's the force of growth in your life.

It was the Spirit who came down at Jesus' baptism, and it is according to 1 Corinthians 12 the Holy Spirit who is the means by which Christ places us into the body of Christ. We're baptized by the Holy Spirit at the moment of conversion into the body of Christ. And we become especially a part of the body of Christ, and we bear the anointing that falls on Him, and we take up His responsibility in the world, we are Christ in the world. He's our head. We're His body. We are sort of the church, the second incarnation of Christ. We've been set apart for special service in the world as Christ to the world by the baptizing of Christ through the means of the Holy Spirit.

It is the Holy Spirit, by the way, who provides the path of victory in the midst of conflict with Satan, right? It is the Holy Spirit who gives us power. We defeat all of the wiles of the devil, all of the tactics of the enemy by the sword of the Spirit. Not only by the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, but by the power of the Spirit within us. He gives us the victory in our temptation. He is the one who helps us overcome. The promise of Scripture is this, "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world."

When Jesus went to the cross, it was the Holy Spirit who gave Him power over the pain, power over the suffering, to endure the cross. And He is the same Spirit who gives us power in our suffering for the sake of the cross. That's why Peter said in 1 Peter that if you suffer for the sake of Christ, listen, the Spirit of grace and glory rests on you. The reason you can endure suffering and pain, all the difficulties of life that come is because the Holy Spirit gives you strength. He is the Spirit of grace and glory that rests on you. And when Christ came out of the grave, it was the Holy Spirit that raised Him from the grave and so it is with us. And that will get us to Romans 8. Romans 8 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." Did you see that? "Through His Spirit who dwells in you." He gave you life, He grows you into Christ's likeness. He baptizes you. He provides victory in the face of temptation, power to defeat Satan. He gives you power to go through suffering. And one day He will raise you immortal from the grave.

In the meantime, there's one other thing that He does and that's Acts 1:8, "You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and you shall be…what's the next word?...witnesses." He empowered Christ to preach. He empowered Christ to proclaim. And He does the same with us. He empowers us to proclaim…and if you question that, look at Acts chapter 2 and see what happen. This is kind of the end product. What is the purpose of the Holy Spirit giving us life? What is the purpose of the Holy Spirit growing us in to Christ's likeness? Placing us into the body? Providing victory over sin and Satan? What is the purpose of the Holy Spirit in making us mature through sufferings through victory and suffering? What is His purpose in all of that? His purpose is to make us effective witnesses so that…listen…so that the great commission can be fulfilled. You know when Jesus said, Go into the world and preach the gospel to everyone? That was to fulfill an Old Testament promise that He would be a light to the Gentiles, that God, Psalm 2, listen to me, would give Him the nations as His inheritance. Give Him the nations as His inheritance.

What the Holy Spirit wants to do in the end is to make you a powerful witness to the glory of Christ in the transforming power of the gospel. And you get a preview of it on the day of Pentecost. The Spirit comes down and what happened? What happened was there were, verse 5, people there from every nation under heaven. People there from every nation under heaven. And what happened, the sound occurred, the mighty rushing wind, the crowd came together, and every one of them was hearing the hundred and twenty believers speak in His own language. You know what this demonstrates? That the purpose for which the Spirit does His work in Christ and in you is to fulfill the great commission to take the message of salvation to the ends of the earth. And the preview of that is at the very moment the Spirit first comes.

And all of a sudden, people start hearing. Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, districts of Libya, around Cyrene, visitors from Rome, Jews, proselytes, Cretans, Arabs, and they're all hearing in their own language the mighty deeds of God, the great redemptive story, the salvation story, and powered by the Holy Spirit." And you get a preview there of the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

When the Father promised the Son, "I will give You the nations for Your inheritance," do you think He'll keep that promise? Go to Revelation and get a glimpse of people from every tongue, tribe, people and nation gathered around the throne. And the means by which that prophecy will be fulfilled and the Father will give the nations as an inheritance to His Son is the work of the Holy Spirit through believers like you and me." It's a staggering thing. It's a staggering thing.

Talk about important. You just happened to be the greatest force in the world for the fulfillment of the plan of the Creator and Redeemer of men. What does the Holy Spirit want to do in your life? He wants to shape you into the very image of Christ. Now He's got a whole lot less to work with than He had with Jesus.

When you were born, no one said, “O, another holy one.” But this is what He desires to do, is to take you from one level of glory to the next, to the next, increasing in the image of Christ. One day He will raise you and make you exactly like Christ. In the meantime, He’s working on it.

Now with that in mind, look at Romans 8, just a comment. You say, “Oh, this is great. I know what to do, I’ll just relax and let Him do His work.” Oh yeah, that’s the old…let go and let God…that was a whole movement, you know, Keswick movement, deeper life, Quaker, Quietist Movement. No, verse 12, with all this incredible work the Holy Spirit is doing with us, brethren, we’re under obligation. You have an obligation. You have a debt…that’s the word for debt. What’s your debt? Certainly not to live according to the flesh, right? You don’t owe the flesh anything. What did the flesh ever do for you? If you’re living according to the flesh, you’re going to die, that’s describing a non-believer. But you don’t have any obligation to your flesh. What that means is there are no excuses now because the power of the flesh has been broken. It is not a dominating force. There are no excuses.

You live by the Spirit and if you live by the Spirit, you are putting to death the deeds of the body. You will live. Another way to say it, you have life. What do believers do? They kill the remaining deeds of the body. This is called remaining sin. You know, you’re not like Christ who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, the Holy One. We have to battle sin. But in the same way the Lord Jesus triumphed over Satan, we have the power of the same Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit who will fight the battle in us but you can’t let go and let God, that’s not in the New Testament. You don’t find that attitude anywhere, that attitude of surrender is not in the Bible. What the Bible says is beat your body in to submission so you don’t become a cast out. What the Bible says, Paul says, “I run…I run a race, I box, I fight with all my might. I work to the point of sweat and exhaustion. I labor hard, he says. Over and over again he says things like that. The language here, “Put to death the deeds of the body,” you have to kill these things. This isn’t a matter of floating around.

The Holy Spirit is at work in this mighty way and your responsibility is to use all the powers that you have in His strength to kill remaining sin in your life. That’s what people who live do. That’s what people in the power of the Spirit do.

Father, we thank You that we’ve been able to consider some of these things, just some ways, lightly compared to all the richness that these things contain. But I ask that You’ll help these dear folks to grasp maybe in a new way, in a fresh way the reality of Your wonderful ministry in us as believers. May we love You more, thank You more consistently, pray for Your grace and filling and empowering. May we as Christ did manifest the fruit of the Spirit, may we as Christ did use the gifts of the Spirit that have been given to us. May we be faithful to the calling that is given to us as He was faithful to the calling that was given to Him by Your Spirit. O Holy Spirit, we ask that we would bring honor to the Son, that’s Your desire as You shape us into His image, as You show us Christ and we gaze at His glory. May we increasingly be like Him that the world may see Him on display and be drawn to Him.

Thank You for all the work that You do in us, and we are so unworthy of it all but so grateful. May we be faithful to kill the remaining sin that is in us so that we can be everything that would please You and the Son and the Father. Amen.

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