

Sense and Nonsense about The Holy Spirit
Richard C. Miller, June 15-19, 2009
Summer Bible Conference at Redwood Christian Park

Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version, ©1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. unless otherwise noted. While not a necessarily a fan of the *Textus Receptus* on which it is based, I believe this to be a good, accurate and readable translation of the Word of God and, in many ways, better than more recent versions.

I have long admired Loraine Boettner for the notice found in his *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*: “Anyone is at liberty to use material from this book with or without credit. In preparing this book the writer has received help from many sources, some acknowledged and many unacknowledged. He believes the material herein set forth to be a true statement of Scripture teaching, and his desire is to further, not to restrict its use.”

Everyone is encouraged to consult the books mentioned where even more valuable material is to be found. Beyond this, whatever I have provided is to be freely used despite copyright notices which are given merely to protect my right to use this material in the future.

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Monday evening, June 15, 2009

Who Is the Holy Spirit?

Introduction

- A. I want this to be helpful to all—I’m convinced a sermon should meet three tests: it must be Biblically correct, helpful to the people, and pleasing to God
 - 1. In Agatha Christie’s *A Murder is Announced* there is mention of a clergyman: “He was leaning out of his pulpit and preaching fervently to a couple of old charwomen. He was shaking his finger at them and saying, ‘Aha! I know what you are thinking. You think that the Great Ahasuerus of the First Lesson was Artaxerxes the Second. But he wasn’t!’ And then with enormous triumph, ‘He was Artaxerxes the Third!’” (*Op. cit. pp. 20-21*)
 - 2. At a previous conference we had a family from the Romish Church; as the speaker began I had a sinking sensation that he was way over the heads of these people—and quite a few OPs as well
 - 3. One of the nicest things anyone ever said of my preaching in Delaware was from two little girls while I was in South Carolina and they missed Rev. Miller because they could understand him

- B. I will be referring to many different Bible passages
 - 1. You may want to look them up and follow along as we go, but you probably won’t be able to keep up—Jo Ellen complained that she couldn’t back in the mid 60s, so I gave up saying, “Turn in your Bible to Hezekiah 15:34”
 - 2. There will be a notebook here in which I will put the outlines after each meeting; you can look at them, but please do not remove the book from the room—and this will make it convenient for you to collect evidence for the heresy trial
 - 3. Now at the outset let me answer a question many of you probably have had: Why do we find references to the Holy Ghost in the King James Version and in song? Why don’t modern versions use that term? And the answer is that the word **ghost**

has taken on the bad connotation of the disembodied spirit of a person who has died; we naturally want to avoid creating any such misconception about the Spirit of God

C. Why this subject?

1. A few years ago a brochure was produced containing a “broad” outline of OP belief—and, apart from mention of the Trinity, the subject of person and work of Holy Spirit was totally ignored
2. The dangers of the “charismatic” movement—an reaction that tends to extremes
3. There is an enormous amount of ground to cover
 - a. I have extremely extensive outlines—and I will have to condense as we go
 - b. But you can look at the outlines if you want to see the fuller exposition of the material
 - c. No doubt you will find typographical errors—let that be a lesson to you that Scripture **alone** is inspired, inerrant and infallible!

D. Let me suggest some books on the subject

1. Edwin H. Palmer: *The Holy Spirit*. ©1958, 1974: P&R Publishing. This book is very clear and helpful, and I am indebted to the late Dr. Palmer for a goodly amount of material adapted from his book.
2. Sinclair B. Ferguson: *The Holy Spirit*. ©1996: Inter Varsity Press. This book is heavily footnoted—but the footnotes are (conveniently for the publisher and extremely inconveniently for the reader) printed at the back of the book.
3. William A. Nolen, M.D.: *Healing: A Doctor in Search of a Miracle*. ©1974. Random House, New York. The late Dr. Nolen did a study of various kinds of “miraculous” healing, including a careful and exhaustive study of Kathryn Kuhlman, discovering that no claimed healing could be medically substantiated.
4. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: *Healing and the Scriptures*. ©1982, 1987, Nashville: Oliver-Nelson Books. On p. 24 he mentions a book by Kuhlman (*God Can Do It Again*) claiming that healings were substantiated by medical men, but no details are given.
5. Iain H. Murray: *The Undercover Revolution*. © 2009, Banner of Truth. The tragic abandonment of the Christian faith by Robert Louis Stevenson and Thomas Hardy is described.
6. Frederick Dale Bruner: *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*. ©1970 Eerdmans. This is a critical examination comparing the pentecostal experience and the New Testament witness.
7. J. I. Packer: *Keep In Step With The Spirit*. ©1984 Fleming H. Revell.

E. So we begin with the most basic consideration: WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

1. Jesus in **John 14:16-17, 26** promises the Holy Spirit
2. He says that they know Him **vs 17**—and so do all Christians
3. But we need to know Him more accurately, and we need to experience His work and power in our lives
4. So we undertake this study with the prayer that this series of messages will be encouraging, uplifting, and to use the word properly: **inspirational**
5. Let me point out that while we differ with the Roman Catholic position at a number of points, on this point all of Christendom agrees:

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON

- A. The lie of heretics: the Holy Spirit is not a person, but a **power** or a **force**
1. You are all familiar with the cult of so-called **Jehovah's Witnesses**; you may not have heard of the **United Pentecostal Church**
 2. These groups differ in some respects; but one of the basic ideas of both is to deny the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, and specifically, the **personhood of the Holy Spirit**
 3. One of the points they will make is that the word for Spirit (**pneuma**) is neither masculine nor feminine, but neuter; yet in **John 10:9 Jesus is the gate, a feminine noun, but that does not impugn His masculinity!**
 4. Whenever the Holy Spirit is mentioned in any other way than by the specific word **pneuma** He is always referred to in the masculine gender
- B. The truth of the Bible, however, is that the Holy Spirit is not a **power**, but a **powerful person**
1. After Jesus' baptism and temptation we are told in **Luke 4:14 Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee**, •If the Spirit is merely power, then this would amount to a redundant saying: "In the power of the power"
 2. In the benediction of **Romans 15:13** you would have similar nonsense: "...by the power of the power; **Now may the God of hope fill you all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.**
 3. Similarly in other passages there is reference to what would be the power of the power of God if you believed the lies of these cults: Viz. **Romans 15:18; I Corinthians 2:4**
 4. But these verses alone do not show that the Holy Spirit is a person
- C. The Holy Spirit is said to engage in activities that only a personal being can do
1. **1 Corinthians 2:10-13**
 - a. Searching (studying) **vs 10**
 - b. Knowing **vs 11**
 - c. Teaching **vs 13**
 2. **Acts**
 - a. Speaking **Acts 8:29; 10:19; 11:12; 13:2; 21:11**
 - b. Seeming good **Acts 15:28**
 - c. Forbidding **Acts 16:6-7**
 - d. Witnessing (though taken alone this would not prove personality, because Jesus said His miracles were a witness to Him)
 3. **Romans 15:30** speaks of the **love** of the Spirit
 4. **Ephesians 4:30** Grief: **And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.**
- D. Considering all these together I think you can understand why the Orthodox, Roman and Protestant churches all agree that the Holy Spirit is a **person**; but more than that, we all agree that:

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A DIVINE PERSON

- A. That the Holy Spirit is God is seen in the way Old Testament passages are quoted
1. **Isaiah 6:9-10**
 - a. Who is speaking here? **Isaiah 6:8 [Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying....]** says it was the Lord (note that this refers to Jehovah because in

vs 1 the same word is used clearly referring to the LORD [vs 3 And one cried to another and said, “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!”]

- b. Yet in Acts 28:26-27 the passage is quoted and the Apostle Paul says in Acts 28:25 “The Holy Spirit spoke rightly...”
 2. Similarly Hebrews 3:7-11 attributes a quote to the Holy Spirit [Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,] which comes from Psalm 95:7-11 where it is said the Jehovah said it
 3. Again Jeremiah 31:31,33,34 compared with Hebrews 10:15 And the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before,
 4. So the only conclusion we are left to is that the Holy Spirit is Jehovah!
- B. That the Holy Spirit is God is seen in Trinitarian formulas
1. The baptismal formula Matthew 29:19
 2. The apostolic benediction 2 Corinthians 13:14
- C. That the Holy Spirit is God is seen in qualities attributed to the Holy Spirit
1. He is **infinite**
 - a. He is omnipotent
 - 1) In creation Genesis 1:2; providence Psalm 104:30; miracles Luke 1:35; new birth John 3:6; resurrection Romans 8:11
 - 2) Think of the many references to the **power** of the Holy Spirit
 - b. He is omniscient 1 Corinthians 2:10-11
 - c. He is omnipresent
 - 1) Psalm 139:7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?
 - 3) John 4:21-24
 2. He is **eternal**: Hebrews 9:14 ...Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God.
 3. I have not found it, but perhaps someone here can find a verse that describes the Holy Spirit as **unchangeable**
- D. That the Holy Spirit is God is seen in the fact lying to the Holy Spirit is lying to God Acts 5:1-5
- E. Now not only is the Holy Spirit a divine person, but:

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A SEPARATE DIVINE PERSON

- A. The heresy of Sabellianism or Modalism
1. Sabellius taught that there is only one person in the Godhead, but that he progressively revealed Himself in different **modes**: as Father in creating, as Son in redeeming, and as Spirit in sanctifying—and this was properly condemned by Pope Dionysius in A.D. 263 at a council in Rome (not everything Popes have done was wrong!)
 2. The heretical idea is that the Father is the Son is the Holy Spirit—like a quick-change actor he goes back-stage and comes out in different clothes as a different character
 3. While that would preserve the Deity and make the Trinity **understandable** to the

mind of man, it is a flat-out lie, and contradicts the plain teaching of the Bible

- B. But doesn't the Bible seem to support this idea of one person playing different roles?
1. **John 14:18** "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you."
 2. **2 Corinthians 3:17** Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.
 3. But then remember **John 14:26** "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send **in My name**, He will teach you all things...."
 - a. When the Holy Spirit acts, He acts in Jesus' name
 - b. J. I. Packer calls the Holy Spirit Jesus' **deputy** (*Knowing God*, p. 59)
 - c. When you pray in Jesus' name (and you are commanded to!) that does not mean that you are Jesus, but it does mean that you have the same **right** of access to the Father as Jesus!
 4. So the Holy Spirit is variously referred to
 - a. The Spirit of the Father **Matthew 10:20**
 - b. The Spirit of Christ **Romans 8:9; Galatians 4:6**
- C. How do we know they are separate persons?
1. Because of the difference between sinning against Jesus and sinning against the Holy Spirit **Matthew 12:31-32**
 2. Because in speaking of Christ Paul says in **Ephesians 2:18** **For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.**—note three **different** prepositions and three **different** persons
 3. Because of their separate manifestations all at the same time at Jesus' baptism **Matthew 3:16**
 4. Because Jesus so speaks in **John 14:16-17** **And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth....**
 5. Incidentally, how many passages in the New Testament mention the three persons? [about 100]

IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A SEPARATE DIVINE PERSON SENT TO HELP US

- A. We don't have time to go into that today
1. I have here laid the groundwork so you can understand **who** the Holy Spirit is
 2. I propose, God willing, to go on this week to expound the **work** of the Holy Spirit
- B. But let me ask you a couple of questions
1. Are you a person who is earnestly seeking for faith in Christ?
 - a. Perhaps you know a Christian, you like what you see, and you somewhat wistfully wish you could have that kind of faith
 - b. Perhaps you are a church member—but you are without Christ
 - c. Perhaps you are a covenant child, and as you grow older you are beginning to have serious doubts about the truth of Christianity
 - d. Perhaps you find you can not repent of some sin and believe
 - e. Now make no mistake about it: repenting of sin and believing in Jesus is no easy matter—and that is why you have the struggle within yourself
 - f. I can confidently say that if such a struggle is going on within you it is evidenced of the work of the Spirit of God bringing you to Christ
 - g. So pray that Jesus would by His Spirit give you the gifts of repentance and faith

2. Or are you a Christian who is living in defeat and depression just now?
 - a. Perhaps you have many struggles with unbelief
 - b. Perhaps you have given in to temptation and feel that you are a complete failure
 - c. Today I call upon you to rejoice, not in your defeat, but rejoice in that the Holy Spirit of God can help you

ask Him?"

Tuesday Morning, June 16, 2009

The Holy Spirit's Work in The World

- A. Last night I sought to answer from the Bible the question, "Who is the Holy Spirit?"
 1. The Holy Spirit is a **person**
 2. The Holy Spirit is a **Divine** person
 3. The Holy Spirit is a **separate** Divine person from the Father and the Son

- B. Now we turn to the work of the Holy Spirit
 1. Immediately we want to jump to the work of the Spirit in salvation, with all its ramifications—and we'll get to that
 2. First, I want to draw your attention to what the Bible says about the work of the Holy Spirit in the world
 - a. This is a part of the work of the Holy Spirit that affects all people, whether they are Christian or not
 - b. The fact of the matter is that **everyone** has a RELATIONSHIP with the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS CREATIVE

- A. He had a part in the creation of the universe
 1. We all know that God the Father is the Creator—we confess that in the Apostles' Creed
 2. Fewer people realize that God **the Son** was active in creation **John 1:3 Hebrews 1:2**
 3. Even fewer people stop to realize that God the Holy Spirit also had His part in the creation **Genesis 1:2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.**
 - a. He did not create *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), as that appears to have been specifically the work of God the Father; rather, He hovered over the face of the waters and developed the potentialities already present
 - b. Someone has said that the Holy Spirit is the **executive** of the Godhead

- B. What does the Bible say about the Holy Spirit's part in the creation?
 1. He made the **heavens** **Psalm 33:6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.**
 - a. Now you will notice there what may be taken as a reference to both Christ and the Holy Spirit: **the word of the LORD** certainly can be taken in light of **John 1:1**; and breath is just another word for Spirit
 - b. Even more telling is **Job 26:13 By His Spirit He adorned the heavens; His hand pierced the fleeing serpent.**
 2. He is the **giver of life** **Psalm 104:30 You send forth Your Spirit, and they are**

created; And You renew the face of the earth.

- a. Psalm 139:13-16 For You have formed my inward parts; You have covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. compare vs 7 where David specifies that he is talking about the Spirit Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?
- b. Isaiah 32:15 portrays the Spirit as changing desert barrenness into fruitful fields as a symbol of His saving work
- c. Ezekiel 37:9-10 portrays the Spirit (breath) as coming into the bodies of those who had been dry bones, making them live
- d. Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

3. He is the Creator of men

- a. Genesis 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and **breathed** into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.
- b. Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.
- c. Job 33:4 The **Spirit** of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

C. He is behind all human **creativity** and invention

1. As creator of the intellect Job 32:8 [above]
2. He is the giver of **artistic, inventive** and **technological** gifts Exodus 31:3-5 "And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of workmanship."
 - a. When you admire great works of art, you should give thanks to the Holy Spirit who endowed Michelangelo, Leonardo, Tiffany, Norman Rockwell
 - b. When you admire technological marvels you ought to praise the Holy Spirit who enabled people to design a locomotive, the Golden Gate Bridge, the personal computer
3. He is the giver of gifts of **leadership**
 - a. Numbers 11:17 Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone. Numbers 27:18 And the LORD said to Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him.... vs 20 And you shall give some of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.
 - b. Judges 3:10 [of Othniel] The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war....
 - c. Later, when King Saul offended God, the Spirit departed from him 1 Samuel 16:14; by the same token, when David was anointed King the Spirit came upon him 1 Samuel 16:13
 - d. "When the Spirit came upon Samson or upon Saul, it was not to render them holy, but to endue them with extraordinary endowments...." (Hodge,

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS SUPPORTIVE

- A. Consider the works of providence
 - 1. How doth God execute His decrees?
 - 2. What is the work of creation?
 - 3. What are God's works of providence?
 - 4. Does the Holy Spirit have anything to do with providence as I have shown you He has with creation?

- B. The Holy Spirit is active in providence
 - 1. He causes the withering of the grass, which is symbolic of other things **Isaiah 40:7-8** The grass withers, the flower fades, Because the **breath** of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.
 - 2. He is the sustainer of all of life **Job 34:14-15** If He should set His heart on it, if He should gather to Himself **His Spirit** and **His breath**, all flesh would perish together, And man would return to dust.
 - 3. He is the omnipresent Sustainer: **Psalm 139:7-10**

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS RESTRAINING

- A. He restrains the expression of sin
 - 1. **Genesis 6:3** "My Spirit shall not stive with man forever"
 - 2. Someone is now restraining **2 Thessalonians 2:6-12**
 - 3. In **Romans 1:18-32** you can see exactly what is happening here in America today
 - a. People abandon the truth of God for the lie **Romans 1:25**
 - b. People are "liberated" **Romans 1:26-27** For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the man, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.
 - 4. This removal of restraints has been very limited, bad as we see things; but as the end nears the restraining work of the Holy Spirit is going to be more and more removed, and people will more and more abandon themselves to all sorts of evil
 - 5. Politicians like to end their speeches, "God bless America!"
 - a. Then they pass laws and appoint judges diametrically opposed to God's Law
 - b. And we need to remember the question of **Psalm 94:20** Shall the throne of iniquity, which **devises evil by law**, Have fellowship with You?

- B. The restraint, as you can see, is most necessary
 - 1. Because of the power of Satan and demons: **the moral battle in which we are engaged is first of all a spiritual battle** **Ephesians 6:12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against **spiritual** hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places
Thank God, He has not abandoned us in this time of need!
 - 2. We also need the restraint because of what the Bible says about the depravity of

people

- a. The Bible tells us that people are inclined to evil, to evil alone, and that continually
 - b. We ought to give hearty thanks to God for what remains of the restraint of the Holy Spirit
 - 1) He uses public opinion to restrain evil—but as public opinion becomes more and more depraved (it brings its totality to more consistent expression) we see that restraint disappearing
 - 2) He uses laws and law enforcement to restrain evil—but as righteous laws are abolished and evil laws are passed we see that restraint disappearing
 - 3) The church is not immune, and some of the most prominent men in the OPC have gotten involved in homosexual sin
- C . You see, **the restraint of the Holy Spirit is temporary**
1. So the warning of **Genesis 6:3 “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever....”** comes as a prelude to the judgment of the great flood of Noah
 2. Now is the time for sinners to repent; now is the time for respectable people who do not know Jesus Christ to seek Him and their Redeemer and Lord
 3. The preaching of the Gospel is part of the work of the Spirit—but it is not necessarily saving: **Hebrews 4:2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the world which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.**
 4. Listen to these words of an old gospel song by A. J. Hodge in 1923: “There’s a line that is drawn by rejecting our Lord,/ Where the call of His Spirit is lost,/ As you hurry along with the pleasure-mad throng—/ Have you counted, have you counted the cost?/ Have you counted the cost if your soul should be lost,/ Tho’ you gain the whole world for your own?/ Even now it may be that the line you have crossed./ Have you counted, have you counted the cost?”

The Holy Spirit and Old Testament Saints

Introduction

- A. The Holy Spirit was given after Jesus' work on earth was done **John 7:39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.**
- B. Yet the Holy Spirit was active before that time
 1. From the beginning of the Bible **Genesis 1:2**
 2. Throughout the history of Israel
 3. So we have the statement of Paul in **2 Corinthians 4:13 And as we have the same Spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke, we also believe and therefore speak.**
 - a. Now this is a quote of **Psalms 116:10**
 - b. Whatever else this is saying, it surely says that the Holy Spirit who brings **us** to believe also was active in the saints of the Old Testament era, and particularly the author of **Psalms 116**
 4. The Old Testament was divided into three sections which Jesus refers to in **Luke 24:44 ...the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms....**

I. THE HUMAN CONDITION IS THE SAME

- A. Do you believe that people are basically good?
 - 1. This is a very popular idea and has been for a long time—most people will probably insist that people are basically good
 - 2. You might then ask how they can explain some of the horrible events we hear about daily

- B. Total depravity
 - 1. This does **not** mean that each person is as bad as he or she could possibly be
 - 2. It **does** mean that the whole nature of every person except Christ is tainted with sin
 - a. We were made in the image of God in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, enabling us to be prophets, kings and priests
 - b. But we fell in Adam and left to ourselves are false prophets, unrighteous kings, and unholy priests
 - 3. And we have this all outlined for us in a New Testament quote of the Old Testament **Romans 3:10-20**
 - 4. So people today stand in exactly the same position morally and spiritually as people three thousand years ago described by David in **Psalms 14 and 53**

II. THE WAY OF SALVATION IS THE SAME

- A. We know that today people are saved by faith in Christ
 - 1. Everyone here is familiar with **John 3:16**
 - 2. Anyone who comes under conviction of sin and trembles before a holy God is to be dealt with as Paul and Silas dealt with the Philippian jailor in **Acts 16:31** So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

- B. The way of salvation in the Old Testament era was exactly the same as it is today
 - 1. It was true in Abraham's day **Romans 4:1-3** What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something of which to boast, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”
 - 2. Some people follow a theology which said that at the time of Moses a new dispensation of law was given whereby people were saved
 - a. The whole argument of Paul in **Romans** and **Galatians** is that no one was **ever** saved by keeping the law
 - b. And the clincher that should put to rest the idea that the law ended salvation by faith is **Galatians 3:17** And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, [than Abraham] cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.
 - c. I used to wonder what happened to people saved by the law who lived when God supposedly changed the plan! Were they lost, caught in some heavenly bureaucratic outrage?
 - d. Then I was brought to see how much more Scriptural **Covenant Theology** is than Dispensationalism, and realized that all who are saved are saved in exactly the same way, and in heaven we will together sing the praises of the Lamb

- C. So people are saved as various things happen to them
1. They hear the call of the gospel
 - a. Outwardly today you hear me call you to repent of your sins and come to Christ for salvation
 - b. The Spirit of God works inwardly to make people realize that this is what they need to do—may the Spirit of God do that to you if He has never done it before
 2. Regeneration takes place
 - a. This is the new birth or conversion
 - b. It was something that certainly took place and was even understood by Old Testament saints—Jesus is astounded that Nicodemus, a teacher would not understand **John 3:10** Jesus answered and said to him, “**Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?**”
 - c. In the New Testament era it is called the baptism of the Holy Spirit **Titus 3:5** ...the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit
 - d. In the Old Testament era it was called circumcision of the heart **Deuteronomy 30:6** And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.—note that heart circumcision initiated spiritual life
 3. Conversion takes place
 - a. People are given the gift of repentance **Acts 11:18** ... “**Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.**” and faith which they then exercise
 - 1) Repentance **2 Timothy 2:25** ...if God perhaps will **grant** them repentance, so that they may know the truth
 - 2) Faith **Philippians 1:29** For to you it has been **granted** on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake. **2 Peter 1:1** ...To those who have **obtained** like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.
 - 3) The Bible is quite clear that the **invariable** result of being born of God is faith in Jesus Christ **1 John 5:1** Whoever believes that **Jesus is the Christ** has been born of God....
 4. Justification
 - a. It means not merely to forgive, but actually **to declare righteous**
 - b. It is something received by faith alone **Romans 5:1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
 - c. It was something the saints of the Old Testament era enjoyed
 - 1) Abraham is the prime example cited in **Romans 4:**
 - 2) David had the experience of being delivered from the deepest sense of guilt and brought to the highest joy of forgiveness and peace with God, and he put it to song in **Psalm 32**
 5. Adoption, Sanctification and Glorification follow, but we do not have time to go into all these things today
- D. One thing I must do, however
1. It is one thing to understand that the plan of salvation is the same under both Old and New Testaments—the Messiah of promise and the Christ of history are the same Jesus
 2. But it would be a tragedy of the greatest conceivable proportions if you would

- come to agree that God saved people in the Old Testament era in just the same way as He saves them today—and you yourself are unsaved!
3. Remember that Judaism was not merely a way to save yourself by keeping a different set of rules from those of the pagans; rather, it was God reaching down to save people by grace
 4. By the same token, Christianity is not a new set of rules by which we can save ourselves, but it is God reaching down in Jesus to save people **Colossians 1:13-14 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.**
 5. So I have to ask you whether God has delivered **you** from the power of darkness, and transferred **you** into the kingdom of Christ, and whether today you know that **you** have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins
 6. The Spirit of God dealt with unbelievers as He does today—but you may be near the limit of his patience **Genesis 6:3 And the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever....”**

III. THE YEARNING OF SAINTS FOR GOD IS THE SAME

A. The Spirit dwelt within them

1. Joshua: **Numbers 27:18 And the LORD said to Moses: “Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is **the Spirit....**”**
2. Daniel: **Daniel 4:8 “But at last Daniel came before me (his name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; in him is the Spirit of the Holy God)....”**
3. Don't forget David in **Psalm 51:11-12 Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me with Your generous Spirit.**

B. Yet they yearned for a new day, and a new fullness of the Spirit

1. In Christ
 - a. **Isaiah 11:1-2 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.**
 - b. **Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound.**
2. To bring people to Christ **Joel 2:28-32**
3. To give them great joy **Isaiah 12:3 Therefore with joy you will draw water From the wells of salvation.**
4. To give them blessing of assurance **Isaiah 44:3-5 For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, And My blessing on your offspring; They will spring up among the grass Like willows by the watercourses. One will say, “I am the LORD's”; Another will call himself by the name of Jacob; Another will write with his hand, “The LORD's,” and name himself by the name of Israel.**
5. That day has now come, and today Jesus calls you **John 7:37-38 “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”**
6. God has not promised to lay a damp palm on your head, or dab you with a bit of

water, but floods upon the dry ground—this He has given as we know from Titus 3:5-6 ...according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

7. Now let me conclude by asking if this describes us
 - Do we with joy draw water from the wells of salvation?
 - Do we have a life of refreshing grace overflowing to others?
 - Do we have the fullness of His Spirit?
8. The Spirit is sent by Jesus, so let us heed the words of Jesus: “Come to Me and drink!”

The Holy Spirit Comes and Goes

It is my considered opinion that the following (and other similar Bible passages mentioning to fire, brightness and glory) refer to the Holy Spirit. This differs from the view of many that these are Christophanies.

Exodus 3:2 And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, but the bush was not consumed.

Exodus 13:21 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night.

Exodus 14:19-20 And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. So it came between the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness to the one, and it gave light by night to the other, so that the one did not come near the other all that night.

Exodus 34:29b Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him.

Isaiah 63:9-10, 14 ⁹In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them All the days of old. ¹⁰But they rebelled and grieved **His Holy Spirit**; So He turned Himself against them as an enemy, And He fought against them. ¹⁴As a beast goes down into the valley, And the Spirit of the LORD causes him to rest, **So You lead Your people**, To make Yourself a glorious name.

I Kings 8:10-11 And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.

Ezekiel 10:3-4, 18-19 ³ Now the cherubim were standing on the south side of the temple when the man went in, and the cloud filled the inner court. ⁴ Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, and paused over the threshold of the temple; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD's glory. ¹⁸ Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim. ¹⁹ And the cherubim lifted their wings and mounted up from the earth in my sight. When they went out, the wheels were beside them; and they stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD's house, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them.

Ezekiel 11:23-25 ²³ And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain, which is on the east side of the city. ²⁴ Then the Spirit took me up and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to those in captivity. And the vision that I had seen went up from me.

²⁵So I spoke to those in captivity of all the things that the LORD had shown me.

Luke 2:9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

Matthew 2:1-2, 9 ¹Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men [**magoi**] from the East came to Jerusalem, ²saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.” ⁹When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was.

The late Rev. Duane Spencer of Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church in San Antonio, Texas, in his book *Word Keys Which Unlock Christmas*, made a powerful argument for understanding the star to be the glory cloud and the magi to be magistrates who were familiar with promises of the Messiah.

John 4:20-26 Location would not matter, for the Holy Spirit was going to manifest Himself everywhere.

Acts 2:1-4 ¹Now when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. The glory cloud no longer would be over the tabernacle, nor in the Holy of Holies of the temple, but each Christian would be a temple for the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. ¹⁸But we all with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Tuesday evening, June 16, 2009

The Holy Spirit and Christ

Why Did Christ Need the Holy Spirit?

Introduction

- A. A series on the Holy Spirit
 1. We explored what the Bible has to say about the **person** of the Holy Spirit, and learned that He is a divine person separate from the Father and the Son
 2. We began to consider the **work** of the Holy Spirit
 - a. His work in the **world** in creation, providence and common grace
 - b. His work in connection with your Bible: the difference between **inspiration** and **illumination** will be covered Wednesday morning
- B. Now we turn to the matter of **redemption**, and that is considered under two headings
 1. Redemption **accomplished**: what God did **for** us in Christ
 2. Redemption **applied**: what God does **in** us in bringing us to Christ
 3. And as we consider Christ and His work we are faced with passages of Scripture that show His dependence upon the Holy Spirit
 - a. Now you might wonder why the Lord Jesus Christ should have had any need of the Holy Spirit, since Jesus is God and in many instances manifested that fact in the clearest possible way
 - b. Why should He who is God need the help of God the Father? Why should He spend so much time in prayer to His Father?

- c. And why should He need the help of God the Holy Spirit?
- 4. Here we must recognize something involving big words that theologians love
 - a. We sometimes come across the term **the ontological Trinity**—and that just means the Trinity as He is in Himself: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, co-equal, (WSC Q/A 4 & 6)
 - b. Now sometimes you hear the expression “the economic Trinity”
 - 1) Professor John Murray told us we should not use that term
 - 2) It is, or should be, “the **economic relations** the persons of the Trinity sustain to each other in the works of creation and redemption”
 - c. Sinclair Ferguson in *The Holy Spirit* (p. 53) mentions, “the patristic maxim *opera ad extra trinitatis indivisa sunt* (‘the external works of the Trinity are undivided’) even if these *opera* are ‘appropriated’ to one or other person of the Godhead.”
 - d. Very well, then, we are going to consider some of the **economic relations** between Christ and the Holy Spirit in the accomplishment of redemption, and we must first consider:

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CHRIST’S INCARNATION

- A. God the Son became man
 - 1. Of all the miracles of the Bible this must be the most stupendous—that God the Creator would become man
 - a. For Him to become man in a perfect, unfallen world would have been magnificent condescension
 - b. For Him to become man and enter into a **sinful** world is condescension that beggars description
 - c. For Him who is holy and righteous beyond all human understanding to put Himself into the position described in **Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.**
 - d. Again, Prof. Murray said that this statement is saved from blasphemy by the words **the likeness of**
 - 2. Let us never forget or underestimate the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is **true man**—and to deny this is an old heresy named **docetism**
- B. God the Son became true man by the power of the Holy Spirit—I call this the forgotten Spirit of Christmas!
 - 1. After all the **begats** **Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.**
 - 2. The record of a physician: **Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.**
- C. The boy Jesus was nurtured by the Holy Spirit
 - 1. **Luke 2:40 And the Child grew and became strong in S/spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.**
 - 2. **Luke 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and**

- men.
- 3. He had to learn obedience **Hebrews 5:8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.**
- 4. Fulfillment of **Isaiah 11:1-2 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.**

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CHRIST'S MINISTRY

- A. His baptism
 - 1. **Luke 3:21-22**
 - 2. **Luke 4:18-19**
- B. His temptation
 - 1. He was led by the Holy Spirit to be tempted **Mark 1:12 And immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil..**
 - 2. Remember **John 1:3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.**
 - a. So the devil was a good creation of Jesus, but the devil later fell and now defies His Maker
 - b. Jesus could have overcome the devil in an instant by the exercise of His divine power
 - c. But that would not have been of much encouragement to us in our dealings with the devil and the forces of evil, because we are not divine
 - d. So the man Christ Jesus defeated the devil using what is available to us today:
 - 1) The Bible, called in **Ephesians 6:17 the sword of the Spirit**, which is available to us today
 - 2) He depended on the Holy Spirit who is available to us today
 - 3) Someone, A. W. Pink I believe, compared Him to David who selected five smooth stones, but used only one to bring down Goliath; so, there are five books in the Pentateuch, but Jesus used only Deuteronomy to defeat the devil
- C. His miracles
 - 1. His casting out demons **Matthew 12:28 But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.**
 - 2. His whole ministry **Acts 10:38 "...how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.**
- D. His message
 - 1. **Luke 4:14-15**
 - 2. **Luke 4:18-19** is the fulfillment of **Isaiah 61:1-2**

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CHRIST'S ATONEMENT

- A. His death
 - 1. Remember how Paul put it in **2 Corinthians 13:4 For though He was crucified in**

weakness....

2. **L Hebrews 9:14** how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through **the eternal Spirit** offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?
3. Jesus as He suffered on the cross represented you as a sinner
4. Except for His gracious words to the dying thief He does not on the cross make use of His divine attributes—for that would be inconsistent with His representing you
 - a. He did not do miracles from the cross
 - b. He did not even forgive anyone from the cross as He had done other times before, but prayed for the Father to forgive them **Luke 12:34**
5. So profound is your need that all the persons of the Godhead were involved—and only by the help of the Holy Spirit could He bring you to the Father

B. His resurrection

1. We generally forget that the resurrection of Christ is not just a nice end to the story
2. The resurrection of Christ was as essential to our salvation as His death
 - a. **1 Corinthians 15:17** And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!
 - b. What, specifically, was it that Christ achieved for us in His resurrection?
 - 1) Justification **Romans 4:25** who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised **because of our justification.**
 - 2) Sanctification **Romans 6:4** Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection
 - 3) Glorification **1 Peter 1:3-8**
3. And the Spirit had no less part in the glorious events of that first Easter than He had in all the rest of the work of Christ
 - a. **Romans 8:11** But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through the Spirit who dwells in you.
 - b. **1 Timothy 3:16** And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, **Justified in the Spirit**, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.
 - c. But the real clincher for showing that the Holy Spirit was active in raising Jesus Christ from the dead must be **1 Peter 3:18** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but **made alive by the Spirit.**

How The Spirit Glorifies Jesus

John 16:5-14

Introduction

- A. We come now to a very important point, and that is **John 16:5-14**
 1. This is part of the upper room discourse in connection with the Last Supper which St. John does not mention—probably because it had earlier been recorded
 2. Shortly, Jesus will be arrested, put on trial, horribly mistreated, and crucified
 3. Within 24 hours Jesus will be dead, and the disciples' world will be turned upside

down

4. Here Jesus speaks again of the coming of the Holy Spirit, and note that He explains the **main element of the work of the Holy Spirit** in vs 14 **He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.**

- B. Note three things that are striking in this passage:
1. The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus in His **absence**
 2. The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus in **the world**
 3. The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus in **the church**

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT GLORIFIES JESUS IN HIS ABSENCE

- A. Jesus is going away vs 5
1. From the very beginning of His ministry He had taught about this—it is absolutely central to the plan of God, the thinking of Jesus, and the core of His teaching
 - a. At His first cleansing of the temple **John 2:19-22**
 - b. In His discourse with Nicodemus **John 3:14-16**
 - c. When Peter confesses Him as the Christ **Matthew 16:21-23**
 - d. At His transfiguration **Luke 9:31 & Matthew 17:22-23**
 2. You will remember that the disciples were not at all happy to hear Him speak of this
 - a. Peter tries to dissuade Him **Matthew 16:22**
 - b. The disciples are **exceedingly sorrowful** **Matthew 17:23**
- B. Sorrow fills their hearts again vs 6
1. It was because He **said** these things to them
 2. Of course, they could see how events were turning out, so when Jesus was going to raise Lazarus Thomas said in **John 11:16** “**Let us also go, that we may die with Him.**”
 3. Think of the sorrow that must have increasingly filled their hearts
 - a. Their hearts are filled with sorrow **just at hearing Jesus talk about these things**
 - b. How much more as they see Him seized, subjected to trial by kangaroo courts, whipped, and crucified?
 - c. How much more when He does not descend from the cross, but died there, to be taken down and buried in a borrowed tomb
- C. It is expedient that Jesus goes away vs 7
1. Certainly this is something beyond their comprehension
 2. But another Helper will come **only after** Jesus is away
 - a. Thank God Jesus is physically in Heaven rather than here on the earth
 - b. If He were physically here on earth in, let us say, Philadelphia, most people could never get to see Him and have real fellowship with Him
 3. But the Holy Spirit is everywhere: and everywhere He is He is doing His job—glorifying Jesus **He will glorify Me vs 14**

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT GLORIFIES JESUS IN THE WORLD

- A. The coming of the Holy Spirit
1. Remember that He was always in the world and active
 2. But He was to come with a new and different fullness **John 7:37-39**

3. This was fulfilled at Pentecost
- B. The Holy Spirit will come to convict the world
1. There has been much discussion among the scholars as to what that amounts to: it is variously translated as **reprove, convince, expose, show him his fault, convict**
 2. Certainly the meaning depends on the context
 - a. So in the context of sin it would be **convict, reprove**
 - b. In the context of righteousness it would, perhaps, be the more positive **convince**
- C. This conviction involves 3 things
1. Sin vs 9
 - a. The world knows nothing about sin
 - 1) It practices sin
 - 2) But sin is not only addicting, it is also **blinding**
 - 3) If the world uses the word at all (and the word is **not** politically correct!) It means individual sins
 - b. But the world knows nothing about the great malady of **original sin of the heart** from which all individual sins come (WSC Q/A 18)
 - c. It is only when the Holy Spirit enters the human heart that a person realizes that the problem is not just sins, but **sin**—and then the person begins to look for relief
 2. Righteousness vs 10
 - a. What does the world think of righteousness? Generally it is again little acts of religious activity or kindness
 - b. Far from thinking of the world is the idea that God demands absolute perfection of life in thought, word and deed
 - c. And the nominal Christian will have the vain idea that somehow little acts of righteousness can be used to counterbalance little acts of sin on the scale of God's justice—so if you can just keep a little bit ahead you will go to Heaven
 - d. Far from thinking of the world is the idea of how God views our righteousness: **Isaiah 64:6 But we are all an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags...**
 - e. Jesus is going to be killed because of His alleged unrighteousness, but the reverse is the case and the ESV gets it right in **1 Peter 3:18a For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God....**
 - f. The world under the conviction of the Holy Spirit will know that it needs the gift of righteousness: **Romans 3:22 even the righteousness of God which is through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all who believe. 2 Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**
 3. Judgment vs 11
 - a. The world does not like to think of judgment to come
 - b. Satan does not want the world to realize that he, his hellish accomplices, and all their practices have already been judged and condemned
 - c. The Seed of the woman has indeed crushed the serpent's head, and what we see are the death-throes of the forces of wickedness; when I was a boy

- I was warned about the danger of a dying snake
- d. When the Holy Spirit grips a person that person realizes that there is judgment to come, and begins to tremble before a Holy Judge and long for salvation
 - e. Such a person is ready to look to Calvary to see the Righteous One who was condemned to die in our place beneath the judgment and righteous wrath of God—and when a sinner thus looks to Jesus and gets saved, Jesus is glorified

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT GLORIFIES JESUS IN THE CHURCH

- A. The believer and the church **vs 12**
 1. Today we have become accustomed to thinking of believers almost exclusively as **individuals**
 2. We have almost lost sight of the individual believer as part of the **body—the church**—and I propose to deal with this in some detail Thursday evening
 3. So there are many who consider themselves Christians who care nothing for the church
 - a. A church is nice to have around to go to when you feel like it
 - b. Some churches have nice buildings which are useful to make a wedding ceremony more impressive
 - c. But the idea of the church as a body of believers holding to Bible doctrine, administering the sacraments, and having a system of discipline—that is repugnant to them (we will consider the Holy Spirit and the church more fully Thursday evening)
 4. Jesus here speaks to the body
 5. Sometimes people are not ready for some aspect of divine truth **vs 12**
- B. Guidance into all truth **vs 13**
 1. Inspiration of the New Testament—we'll deal with it more fully Wednesday evening
 - a. Jesus was going to see to it that certain of them will recall and write down what He said and did
 - b. Others, like the Apostle Paul, will be able to give the Divine interpretation of the teachings and work of Christ
 2. Development of creeds in history
 - a. The church did not begin with any kind of a creed or confession of faith beyond, perhaps, **Jesus is Lord** or the marvelous statements such as **Titus 3:3-8**
 - b. But as heretics invaded the church she was forced to sit down to study what the Bible had to say about the deity of Christ, the Trinity, etc.; as we examine the development of the creeds and confessions we see taking place what Jesus said would happen: **He will guide you into all truth**
 - c. And one striking thing about the creeds and confessions is that they are absolutely Christ-centered and Christ glorifying
 3. Illumination of the individual Christian
 - a. While Jesus is here speaking to the apostles (the **you** is always plural in this passage) this does **not** rule out the work of the Holy Spirit individuals
 - b. In fact, it is only as individuals work together that the body is united to glorify Christ
 - c. So the Spirit works in you in the several ways mentioned in **vss 13-15**

- d. But remember, in all of the work of the Spirit in the world, including the church, and in you, His intent is to **guide you into all truth...take of what belongs to Jesus and declare it to you**, and, above all, **to glorify Jesus: He will glorify me!**

Wednesday morning, June 17, 2009

The Holy Spirit and The New Birth

Introduction

- A. What would you think if a preacher were to say that if a person begins to practice righteousness, that person will be born of God—and to support this position he quotes **1 John 2:29 If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.**
- B. How about if someone were to tell you that in church that morning the minister, using **1 John 5:4** said that a person can become born of God by overcoming the world?
- C. Or do we become born of God when we begin to be loving people? For we read in **1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.**
- D. You realize, I hope, that there is something wrong—not with the Bible verses, of course—but with the way they are misinterpreted
 1. You would probably realize that this approach teaches salvation by works
 2. I will explain presently how these verses are to be **correctly** interpreted

I. THE GREAT IMPOSSIBILITY

- A. Many evangelical Christians today know about regeneration
 1. You go to these churches and you hear sermons which show from the Bible that we need to be reborn
 2. Then they tell us that it is something that happens when we make a decision and indicate the same
 - a. Raise your hand while every eye is closed, every head bowed
 - b. Come forward at an altar call
 - c. Sign some sort of a decision card
 3. This system is called **decisional regeneration**
 4. And no doubt people **are** born again in churches that use this system; but then, again, I suppose people have been born again in Lutheran, Episcopal and even Romish churches when they have heard some truth of the Bible
- B. Remember what Jesus told Nicodemus in **John 3:6 “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”**
 1. It is impossible for people to give birth to themselves because the Bible says they are **dead** in trespasses and sins **Ephesians 2:1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,**
 2. I submit that many people who claim to have been born again were still-born, born dead
 3. Let me ask you a question: as a Christian do you need the help of the Holy Spirit when you are faced with an important decision in life?
 4. Now let me ask you if it makes sense to say that, when it comes to the most important decision a person could ever make, that person can do it alone, without God pushing or pulling
 5. Does it please God when people repent, believe, and come to Christ?
 - a. It not only pleases God, but there is rejoicing throughout Heaven **Luke 15:7,10**
 - b. Yet the Holy Spirit says in **Romans 8:8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**
 6. Let us never forget, then, that **that which is born of the flesh is flesh**, and it will remain

- so until changed by the Spirit of God
- C. The dead cannot raise themselves
1. Remember Ezekiel's vision in the valley of dry bones?
 - a. Ezekiel 37:3 And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Lord GOD, You know."
 - b. Then Ezekiel was given a most unusual job: Ezekiel 37:4 Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!'"
 - c. Now you could hardly imagin a more futile exercise than this!
 - d. Yet there is hope for dry bones
 - 1) Ezekiel prophesies to the dry bones, and they first come together and are clothed with flesh Ezekiel 37:7-8
 - 2) Then in Ezekiel 37:9-10 we read Then He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live."'" So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.
 2. Let us remember the lesson from Ezekiel
 - a. As we face a world of people dead in trespasses and sin we have a daunting task
 - b. If it depends upon the exercise of the free will of these people to come to Christ, they will never come—because the free will they have is that described in the latter part of Romans 1: where God has given them over to sin
 - c. If it depends upon our power of persuasion or argument, we will ultimately fail—the mind is corrupt and the will is rebellious
 - d. But if it depends on the work of the Holy Spirit to awaken people to spiritual and eternal realities, then there is hope for everyone
 - e. Bible truth is summarized eloquently in WSC Q/A 31 What is effectual calling? **Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, He doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.**—and if there is a sinner you want to pray for but don't know what to ask, this would be a fine prayer
 3. Let us remember what the Bible says about this matter of the will John 1:12-13 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of **the will of the flesh**, nor of the **will** of man, but of God. Romans 9:16 So then it is not of him who **wills**, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.
 - a. The will of fallen people cannot be trusted
 - b. But the mercy of God can!
 - c. Remember that Jesus put it a bit differently in Luke 18:25-27 "For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye that for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God," And those who heard it said, "Who then can be saved?" But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

II. THE HIDDEN MIRACLE

- A. Certain things that happen have hidden causes
1. Jesus in speaking to Nicodemus uses the wind as an illustration John 3:8 "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from or where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

- a. A child might ask, “Do the trees moving make the wind blow?”
 - b. Of course, the child has got it backwards
 - c. By the same token believing does not set the Spirit free, or give the Spirit permission to give us new birth, but new birth is a miracle of God that invariably brings people to faith in Jesus Christ
2. Today we are familiar with all sorts of hidden things that have interesting effects
 - a. Suppose you could bring Nicodemus to visit us today—and put an MP3 player on his head and turn it on—who do you suppose he’d think?
 - b. Or, you put a frozen pizza in the microwave for him
 - c. Then you take him into your living room and turn on the TV; sees and hears Billy Graham talking about the new birth, and goes around behind the TV to find him and set him straight that regeneration precedes faith
 - d. But it all happens because of invisible waves
- B. So it is with regeneration or Spiritual rebirth
1. In fact, in **John 3:3** a certain Greek word [**anoqhen**] is used
 - a. Generally it is translated **again**—and there can be no doubt from what he said that Nicodemus understood it that way
 - b. But it also means **from above**, and is so used in **Matthew 27:51** describing the tearing of the temple curtain
 2. You see, we are told something using a word that can be taken **two** ways, and **both** are **absolutely correct**
 3. The Holy Spirit from above comes and moves a person, gives new life, and awareness of God and eternal things; we cannot see the Spirit move, but we can certainly see the effect of the Spirit in the lives of people

III. THE STUPENDOUS EFFECTS

- A. The person becomes a believer in Jesus
1. Now some of you are saying to yourselves, “He’s got it backward. A person believes in Jesus and then is born again. But Miller is saying that regeneration precedes faith
 2. Now I assure you that this was no slip of the tongue, no Spoonerism such as Pastor Erickson is famous for
 3. Remember where we began a little while ago—you realized that those verses in **I John** could not really be teaching salvation or rebirth by works?
 - a. The key to it all is the phrase **born of God**
 - b. The word for **born** is passive in every case
 - c. Furthermore, the word is in the **perfect tense**—a special tense in the Greek denoting something that happened in the **past** and has a **continuing** result—and what might that result be?
 - d. In those verses being born of God comes **first**, and the **result** is practicing righteousness **1 John 2:29**; repentance from sinning **3:9, 5:18** ; loving one another **4:7**; overcoming the world **5:4**
 4. But look at **1 John 5:1** and you will find **exactly the same wording about believing!** **Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God...**
 - a. Far from saying that believing initiates the new birth, it really says the reverse, for **born of God** is in the **perfect tense**, meaning it happened in the past and has a continuing result
 - b. And that continuing result in this verse is believing—a **present active participle**
 - c. The **inevitable** result of Spiritual rebirth is faith in Christ
- B. But don’t forget the other **inevitable** results of rebirth: practicing righteousness **2:29**,

repentance from sinning 3:9, 5:18, loving one another 4:7, overcoming the world 5:4

1. Many people profess a faith in Jesus Christ, and they do it in a carnal way
 - a. Judas Iscariot did
 - b. Simon the Sorcerer did Acts 8:9-24
 2. Let us not be satisfied to manifest only one or two marks of the new birth, but let us examine ourselves to make sure we manifest **all** of them
- C. Let us beware of the philosophical mentality
1. It likes to work everything out in a very logical manner, and can follow an argument such as I have given here
 2. But everything is purely **theoretical**
 3. Remember, that it would be the greatest possible tragedy to experience a mere intellectual understanding of the new birth—that is something less than new birth by the Holy Spirit from above

The Child of God and the Holy Spirit

Romans 8:14-17

Introduction

- A. It should be wonderfully comforting to us, then, to learn how the Bible assures us who are Christians of our being a permanent part of the family of God
1. This is a particular work of the Holy Spirit from beginning to end as we shall soon see
 2. We examined the work of the Spirit in the new birth, and in bringing the world to conviction
 3. Concerning some of the multi-faceted aspects of our redemption we find no explicit mention of the Holy Spirit—repentance, faith, and justification
 - a. These **are** very definitely the work of God as I can show from the Bible
 - b. But the Bible does not particularly mention the Holy Spirit in those passages; I do not doubt that the Holy Spirit is the active person of the Godhead in these things, but we are not told this
 - c. There was a saying from the early church leaders, “*opera ad extra trinitatis indivisa sunt,*” = the external works of the Trinity are undivided (Ferguson, p. 53)
- C. And when we come to what we call adoption we find that the Bible is quite explicit that the Spirit of God directly operates here

I. WHO ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD?

- A. Not all people are children of God
1. It is true that Paul quotes a pagan source which correctly says **For we are also His offspring. [Acts 17:28]**
 - a. The word used there is **genoV**, a word much different in meaning from the words for children and sons; it is the word from which we get **genus** and **gene**
 - b. It is a word used to describe **kind** (as of fish in **Matthew 13:47**), but is nowhere used in a personal sense
 - c. So Paul goes on in **Acts 17:29-31** to say “**Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. Truly these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from**

- d. the dead.”
This is in the realm of **common grace**, not redeeming grace
- B. The Bible makes a distinction
1. Jesus in John 8:42-47
 - a. There are **two** fathers in the passage
 - b. There are **two** sets of children
 - c. One's actions with regard to Christ reveal which family we are of
 2. Paul in Romans 9
 - a. First in vs 8a That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God....
 - b. Then in vs 26 “And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ There they will be called sons of the living God.”
 3. John in 1 John 3
 - a. In vs 1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.
 - b. Then the contrast in vs 10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.
 4. An old warning from Bishop Ryle of the Church of England: “I warn you to beware of the delusive notion that all men and women are alike children of God, whether they have faith in Christ or not. It is a wild theory which many are clinging to these days.... It is a perilous dream, with which many are trying to soothe themselves, but one from which there will be a fearful waking up at the last day.” *Practical Religion*, p 407
- C. Who are the children of God?
1. According to Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.
 - a. The word for led [**agotai** 3 pl. present passive indicative] denotes a **settled** state and relationship
 - b. We will touch on the matter of Spiritual guidance tonight
 2. And what could be more important in the leading of the Holy Spirit than that we should **first** be led to Christ?
 3. So in John 1:11-13 you will note the contrast He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

II. THE FULLNESS OF ADOPTION

- A. Several different terms are used in the original Greek—they sometimes have nuances of meaning and sometimes are virtually synonyms
1. The first is the word *teknoV*
 - a. From it we get a word designating a **child** of science: **technology**
 - b. It is a word which is neuter and may refer to children of either sex
 - c. We find it many times in the New Testament, one of the most notable being the passage I just mentioned in John 1:11-13
 - d. Before our conversion the Bible uses this word to call us children of wrath [Ephesians 2:3], but after our conversion we are called in Ephesians 5:1 Therefore

- be followers of God as dear children.
- e. So we are given something a lot of people are very interested in today: a **right**—the right to become children of God
 - f. So Paul uses that word **teknoV** in **Romans 8:16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.**
2. The other word is **uioV**
 - a. This is a word meaning **son**—and it seems to be a special word generally reserved to describe a unique sonship (though not always)
 - b. So we have the paradox of **female sons!** **Galatians 3:26-28**
 - c. And sometimes that word is coupled together with another, and the new Greek word is translated **adoption**—it means to be **son-placed**
 - 1) In Roman culture a boy would reach a certain age and his father would formally adopt him
 - 2) There had up to that time been no question that he was a true child of his father
 - 3) But at that time the boy would be given certain legal rights
 - 4) Now that is said of us **Romans 8:15 For you did not receive the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”**
- B. The Spirit's work
1. The Spirit gives **new birth**, so people are born of God and are, in that sense the children of God
 2. But the Spirit also goes beyond that to make us aware of our wonderful position in the family of God
 - a. Jesus has secured this **Galatians 4:4-6 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son [uion] , born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. [uiotesian] And because you are sons [uioi] , God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son [uiou] into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!”**
 - b. And this was God's plan for us all along **Ephesians 1:3-5**
 3. And the Spirit does something more: **Romans 8:16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children [tekna] of God,**
 - a. Some commentators say it is just the illumination of the Spirit as we read the Bible, so that we can deduce this fact
 - b. Haldane and Lloyd-Jones think it is a direct influence of the Spirit upon our spirit whereby we are uplifted to be filled with a sense of the love of God, joy, gladness and wonderful assurance; Lloyd-Jones cited **Romans 5:5b the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**

III. THE PRIVILEGES OF ADOPTION

- A. The ability of approach God in an intimate way
1. The cry of Abba!
 - a. An Aramaic word similar to Papa!
 - b. A child's cry of delight and trust
 2. The sense of trust in times of great difficulty **Isaiah 43:1b-2 “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch**

you.”

- B. The confidence that God cares for us as His children
 - 1. He pities us **Psalm 103:13** As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him.
 - 2. He understands us **Psalm 103:14-16**
 - 3. He loves with an everlasting love **Psalm 103:17-18**
 - 4. He provides for us **Matthew 6:30-32**
 - 5. He disciplines us **Hebrews 12:5-13**

- C. The inheritance of God's children
 - 1. We are heirs of God **Romans 8:17** and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may be glorified together.
 - 2. We are co-heirs with Christ
 - a. We have a place in glory
 - b. When Christ comes again in glory, He will not be glorified at the expense of our shame, but according to **Colossians 3:4** When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Charismatic Matters

Introduction—What I’m going to say may make someone mad as a hornet—but we ought to read Galatians 5:19-23 and remind ourselves that **outbursts of wrath** are not part of the fruit of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22-23**), but are one of the **works of the flesh Galatians 5:20,19**

I. Salvation has never changed—it is grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone, Scripture alone, and for God’s glory alone

- A. The Old Testament era was one of preparation for the Christ of prophecy
- B. The New Testament era is one of fulfillment and celebration of the Christ of history

II. God changes His ways of dealing with His children appropriate to their times

- A. **Hebrews 1:1-2** God, who at various times and **in different ways** spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us **by His Son**, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.

- B. **1 Corinthians 13:8-10** Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are **tongues, they will cease**; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

- C. The position of the OPC is that these gifts have **ceased**, and the Rev. Arnold Kress was put out of the OPC ministry

III. Special gifts are sovereignly given for one purpose

- A. The Spirit is sovereign, and we must not make demands 1 Corinthians 12:11 **But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.**
- B. Special gifts were not meant for everybody: 1 Corinthians 12:29-30 **Not all are apostles, are they? Not all are teachers, are they? Not all are workers of miracles, are they? Not all have gifts of healings, do they? Not all speak with tongues, do they? Not all interpret, do they?** (A literal translation)
- C. The important thing in **not** having an exciting experience, but **edification of the church** 1 Corinthians 14:12 **Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.**
- D. We can rejoice that tongues and prophecy have given way to Scripture
 - 1. Someone claims to have a special message from God—but how can you be certain of that?
 - a. One man told me that God had spoken to him and said it was all right to commit adultery
 - b. Folks will argue that these things must be tested by Scripture—precisely, and why not just **start** with the Bible?
 - c. **2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be **complete**, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**
 - 2. Very recently a preacher on television was doing a pretty commendable job explaining covenant theology—but then burst into glossolalia; but when he asked for thousand dollar pledges he spoke plain English!

IV. What about healing?

- A. We do not deny that miraculous healing took place in the Bible
- B. We do not deny that miraculous healing takes place today
 - 1. The late William A. Nolen, M.D., F.A.C.S, studied the matter and wrote a book, *Healing: A Doctor in Search of a Miracle* (Random House, 1974)
 - a. He studied, among others, Kathryn Kuhlman and discovered that not a single claimed healing could be medically substantiated
 - b. Yet in his own practice a man with colon, bladder and liver cancer for which there was no surgical or medical treatment—that man was miraculously healed
 - 2. James Randi has also made a study of some professing Christian healers and concluded that they were engaged in flim-flam operations
 - 3. Compare televised charismatic service with a televised rock concert—they are very similar and both **appeal to the flesh**
- C. We have a **Biblical directive** on healing
 - 1. It is **not** to seek out a “faith healer”
 - 2. Here it is: **James 5:14-15 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the pray of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.**
 - a. Here is a much neglected privilege

- b. The perplexing phrase **if he has committed sins** (and everyone commits sins)
 - 1) Some sins may lead to physical suffering—drunk driving, unrighteous sex

born blind?” ³ Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.”

Wednesday evening, June 17, 2009

The Holy Spirit and Your Bible

The Spirit of Truth and Your Bible

John 14:26 *et al.*

Introduction

- A. Since we are seeking to find out what the Bible has to say about the Holy Spirit, it is only fitting to consider what the Bible says about how it came to be written, and how it is to be understood
- B. Consider what Jesus says in John 14:16-17 “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, even the **Spirit of truth**, who the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.”
 - 1. Now it is interesting that Jesus describes Him as the Spirit of truth
 - 2. Later, in His prayer in John 17:17 He prays, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”
 - 3. And in 1 John 5:6b John makes this remarkable statement: **And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.**

I. THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND GENERAL REVELATION

- A. The great denial today
 - 1. The world denies that God is the Creator—and has replaced the dogma of creation with the dogma of evolution
 - 2. These people insist that the universe is absolutely **meaningless**, and that we are imposing on the brute facts of experience our own meaning, whatever that may be, and it differs from person to person
 - 3. But this is really an attack upon what the Bible says concerning the universe, and it is an attack upon the Triune God who made it
- B. The Bible says that the universe is **revelatory of God**
 - 1. God is the creator of all things visible and invisible
 - 2. God is the God of providence who by His power upholds and governs all His creatures and all their actions (WSC Q/A 11)
 - 3. So every fact in the universe is a God-created fact; far from being meaningless, it is full of meaning, for **it reveals God**
 - 4. The problem is that **people don’t like the meaning God has displayed there**
- C. Consider the 2 main passages that deal with this
 - 1. **Romans 1:18-21**
 - 2. **Psalm 19**
 - a. This Psalm begins with God revealing Himself in Creation
 - b. But then it goes on to deal with His revelation in the Bible
 - c. It ends with the appeal concerning OUR revelation: **Psalm 19:14 Let the words of**

my mouth and the meditation of my heart, Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.

- d. E. S. Lorenz summed it up this way in a hymn, “Lift Up The Gates of Praise” written in 1884: “God’s works reveal His might,/ His majesty and grace;/ But not the tender Father’s love/ That saves a dying race./ The stars may praise the hand,/ That decks the sky above,/ But man alone can tell the pow’r/ Of Christ’s redeeming love.”
3. That brings us to:

II. THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND INSPIRATION

- A. The Bible is the Word of God written
 1. We must understand that Jesus is spoken of in the writings of the Apostle John as **The Word**
 2. While Jesus is the **personal Word** (**Hebrews 1:2**), the Bible is the **written Word of God**
 3. In **Matthew 22:31** after certain religious leaders posed a trick question, Jesus says, as part of His answer, “**But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God...?**”
 - a. He is saying that God spoke (referring to **Exodus 3:6** and other related passages)
 - b. He is saying that what God **spoke** was written down, so people can now read the very words of God as **spoken to them**
- B. How did the Bible get to be written?
 1. The word that describes how it got to be written is the word **inspiration**
 2. We have in the writings of St. Paul a statement explaining how the Bible got to be written: **2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly furnished for every good work.**
 - a. Now by Scripture Paul is referring to what we now call the Old Testament
 - b. He says it was **given by inspiration of God**
 - 1) You will notice that **spir** is part of the word inspiration—and that is very relevant because the original Greek word does the same thing
 - 2) In the Greek we find *qeo*pneustoV –please note the pneu = breath or Spirit
 - 3) The word literally means **God-breathed** or God-whispered
 3. We have in the writings of St. Peter some interesting comments
 - a. In **2 Peter 3:15** he makes a comment concerning how difficult it is to understand some of the things St. Paul has written, and then goes on to class Paul’s epistles with **the rest of the Scriptures**—so it was recognized that God was adding to the canon of Scripture what we now call the **New Testament**
 - b. But he also explains something of how the Bible came to be written as he says in **2 Peter 1:20-21 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but hold men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit**
 - 1) He is saying there that no part of the Bible is something invented by people, **no** part of the Bible is the work of mere human opinion
 - 2) Rather the writers were **moved (ferw** –a word meaning a ship carried by the wind, and from which we get our word ferry—even though the Golden Gate

- ferry has no sails)
- 3) This does **not** mean the the writers were mere stenographers; no, it is clear that each had his own favorite vocabulary and mode of expression
 - 4) It does mean that God the Holy Spirit so governed their activity that when they were finished (perhaps after revising and editing until they got it just right) what they had written down was just what God wanted written
4. And in the writings of St. John we are told that Jesus said in **John 14:26** “**But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.**”
 - a. The Holy Spirit was going to **teach** them—remember how slow they were to catch on to what Jesus was getting at?
 - b. The Holy Spirit was going to **remind** them of Jesus’ sayings, so they would be able to get them right when they wrote them down
- C. Very well, then, that summarizes how the Bible came to be **written**
1. We could spend a great deal of time examining each of these passages
 2. But we must go on to consider another question: **How can we understand the Bible?** And that brings us to:

III. THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND ILLUMINATION

- A. The truth is there in the Bible
1. Many people do not see it
 2. But that is not the fault of the Bible
 3. The fact of the matter is that people, left to themselves, are **blinded by sin**
 - a. They refuse to see God’s hand in the beauty of the earth
 - b. They are blind to the truth of the Bible—though they like to quote isolated phrases taken out of context: **Judge not.... God is love.**
 - c. Sometimes they will say they wish more had been written about Jesus—then they might be able to believe
 - d. Someone said would be as futile to double the size of the Bible as it would be futile to take a blind man who cannot see the sun, and put **two suns** in the sky
 4. Whether people recognize it or not, the Bible is the Word of God; it is inspired, inerrant and infallible—the truth is there
- B. What is needed by everyone is not **inspiration** (a word referring to how the Bible got written); what they need is **illumination**
1. There is a difference between the two which Peter brings out in **1 Peter 1:10-12**
 - a. Truth was revealed to them, and they prophesied **vs 12**
 - b. But then they had it all written out they had to go back and study it and try to figure out just was the Lord was getting at **vs 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.**
 - c. So Isaiah wrote about the person and work of the Messiah—yet neither Isaiah nor his later readers really figured out that the Messiah would be God and man in two distinct natures yet one person forever, who would come and suffer for the sins of all who repent and put their trust in Him
 - d. These people were blessed with lots of inspiration, but not much illumination

2. Today we are blessed with much illumination—and **no** inspiration
 - a. The Bible is finished—the Spirit is not causing people to reveal new redemptive truth; the Bible is entirely sufficient
 - b. But the Spirit today blesses us with flashes of insight and understanding—and that is what we must seek
 - c. The Holy Spirit graciously enabled many people to write the book we call the Bible—and now we have the **same** Holy Spirit to be with us to teach us what He was getting at as we read and listen to the Bible
 - 1) We do not trust ourselves to figure it out—it is not of **any private interpretation**, so we need the Divine Author to help us
 - 2) And we find help, too, in the creeds and confessions of the church, in sermons and books and the wisdom of our brothers and sisters in Christ—they will keep us from heretical ideas, and heretics have a way of appealing to scraps of Scripture
3. So the promise Jesus made to His apostles still has relevance to us today: **John 14:26** “**But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.**”
 - a. He **reminded** them of the sayings of Jesus so they could get them written
 - b. He **reminds** us of what we read previously, or heard in a sermon, or learned from the Shorter Catechism
 - c. And He teaches us how the Bible proclaims Jesus as our all-sufficient Savior and Lord
4. There are many words to describe the Bible—one of them is Law; and as we read our Bibles we can pray no better prayer than that of the Psalmist in **Psalm 119:18** **Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law.**
5. May the Holy Spirit who **inspired** the Bible give us the **illumination** so we can see ourselves as God sees us: people who desperately need Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord **things....”**

Holy Spirit, Faithful Guide

Romans 8:14

Introduction

I. GUIDANCE MISUNDERSTOOD

- A. It is not what is meant by the fanatic
 1. Harold Camping has repeatedly corrected his date for the second coming, and it is now, if I remember correctly, May 21, 2011
 2. A group of people got into trouble running some sort of a mutual fund, claiming that the Holy Spirit would guide them to buy the right stocks—the ones which would go up in value
 - a. Of course, they lost money
 - b. They should have paid more attention to *The Wall Street Journal*
 3. Misguided people have made all sorts of ridiculous claims about how God spoke to them and guided them
 - a. One poor chap actually told me that God had spoken to him and told him it was right to commit adultery

- b. But we must not let the misunderstanding of guidance rob us of a precious truth
- B. It is not something restricted to eminent saints
- 1. Note the text of **Romans 8:14** *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.*
 - a. This gives a definition: it equates two things—led by the Spirit and sonship
 - b. It is a statement that is as true backwards as it is forwards (some are not, you know
 - 1) A dog is an animal. But is that true backwards? No
 - 2) $2 + 2 = 4$. But is that true backwards: $4 = 2 + 2$? Yes
 - 2. This sentence says that this is true of **all** believers *For as many as....*
 - 3. That means it is true of you as a believer, and something you are to enjoy and give thanks for
- C. It is not something sporadic—that only happens once in a while
- 1. In both **Romans 8:14** and **Galatians 5:18** the verb is present tense *are being led*
 - 2. The action of the Holy Spirit affects all of your activity
- D. It is not to help us escape difficulties and temptations
- 1. In fact, we find the same word used in **Luke 4:1** *Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,*
 - 2. You might say it was a kind of boot camp experience
 - 3. If guidance by the Holy Spirit were to enable us to avoid suffering and escape temptation, then it is something given only to a select few Christians; but we are told that **all** the sons of God have this
- E. It does not deliver us from our responsibilities
- 1. We need to **think, study, plan and work**
 - 2. You can not expect to neglect your homework and then pray that the Holy Spirit will give you free answers when you take a test!
 - 3. It does not eliminate **common sense**
 - 4. We must **read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the Bible**
 - a. “We have no right to expect a special, extraordinary guidance to fill in for our laziness.” —Edwin Palmer, p. 103
 - b. “The Holy Spirit did not go to all the trouble to inspire the writers of the Bible and preserve its text down through the years, only to ignore it and whisper sweet nothings in our ears.” —Jay Adams
 - 5. It does not tell us about things indifferent
 - a. Should I fix chicken or steak for supper?
 - b. Should I buy Chevron or Shell gasoline?
 - c. Should I wear a red dress or a blue dress today?
 - d. Rather than fret over such decisions, or seeking special revelation from God, give thanks that He has given you several fine choices, then choose for yourself confident that in so doing you are being led by the Spirit

II. GUIDANCE EXPERIENCED

- A. *Lead* is a word of **action** appearing 71 times in the New Testament
- 1. The gospels and Acts are books of action; we find it there 63 times

2. The epistles are books of explanation, and we find it there only 8 times
 3. This word shows the **dynamic** of the Christian life
 4. This word *led* throws emphasis on **three things**
- B. First, we see the extraneousness of the influence—**we do not lead ourselves**
1. When one is **led** he does not go his own way, or he is not led
 2. So when it says that the children of God are the ones led it makes a distinction between **the leading Spirit** and **the led children**
 3. The power within us that makes for righteousness is not of ourselves, but of God
 - a. In both **Romans 8:14** & **Galatians 5:18** Paul previously mentions the inner conflict we have
 - b. There are within us our native impulses making for sin, and the Holy Spirit making for righteousness; in **Galatians 5:17** he says they are working against each other
 - c. So the Bible is not talking of the conquest of our lower impulses by our higher nature, but the conquest of those natural impulses by **the Holy Spirit** within us
 4. So Spiritual guidance is not a leading of ourselves by ourselves
 - a. The Christian person is not an **autonomous** man—a law unto himself
 - b. Rather, we are **Spiritual** people—led by the Spirit of God
- C. Secondly, we see the completeness of the control
1. It is **not** guidance or direction by one who explains how to go
 - a. Other Greek words precisely describe this idea; one is found in **John 16:13**
However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth....
 - b. The word used here in **Romans 8:14** is much **stronger**; the person being led can not by his strength withstand
 - 1) Used of animals **Matthew 21:2b Loose them and bring them to Me. Acts 8:32 He was led as a sheep to the slaughter**
 - 2) Used of conveying sick people who are not in a condition to control their own movements **Luke 10:34b ...brought him to an inn....** Or of a blind man in **Luke 18:40 So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him.**
 - 3) Used of enforced movements of prisoners **Matthew 10:18 And you will be brought before governors.... Acts 9:2b ...he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.**
 - 4) So the word denotes the **controlling** influence of the Holy Spirit over the children of God in leading them
 - 5) When the Holy Spirit leads and guides, He does not merely **suggest** what we should do
 - 6) Rather, He takes us in hand as we take our dog on a leash, or as we would take a sick child to the doctor, or as the officer takes a prisoner into the courtroom for trial
 - 7) So **Psalm 73:23-24 Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand. You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory.**
 - c. We are liberated, yet bound
 - 1) We are not under the law **Galatians 5:18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.**
 - 2) Does he mean that we are not under the Ten Commandments—that it is

- proper to steal, kill, and covet? Hardly!
- 3) He means that no the law is not something hanging over us like a sword of Damocles to condemn us, but something written on our hearts
2. One the other hand, while the word **led** emphasizes the controlling power of the Spirit, it does not mean that we are inactive—far from it!
 - a. One is not **led** when he is merely advised or given suggestions
 - b. One is not **led** when he is carried
 - c. The animal being led, the sick being led, the prisoner being led are under the control of their leader, but they go on their way **by their own locomotion**
 - d. Paul could have said we are carried by the Spirit; Peter certainly does say it of the writers of Scripture in **2 Peter 1:21**
 - e. So the Christian's own efforts enter into the progress made; we supply the force, but the Spirit controls the application of that force **Philippians 2:12b-13 work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.**
 - f. Not only does it not say we are carried, but also it does not say we are **drawn** by the Spirit
 - 1) He does not drag us by physical force
 - 2) The word **is** used of people coming to Christ in **John 6:44 No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws [= drags] him; and I will raise him up at the last day.**
 3. There the picture is of dead people being dragged to the Prince of Life; but once they have life in Christ they are not dragged, but led
- D. Thirdly, we see the pathway over which progress is made
1. One carried may be unaware of the road and its roughness
 2. But we are aware of the roughness, we gasp for breath at the steepness, we are frightened by the difficulties, and we rejoice as we look back and see the progress made
 3. We may be unaware of the specific guidance of the Holy Spirit at the time we are experiencing it
 - a. In 1963 I had been praying for a long time that God would lead me to her whom He had ordained to be my wife—seemingly with no success; but on August 6, 1963 as a result of events beyond my control and without realizing what was happening I suddenly walked into Jo Ellen's living room
 - b. Looking back now on my seminary training I can see not only God's hand in guiding me to Westminster, but I can see His hand in getting me there early enough to sit under Prof. Murray before he retired and Dr. Young before he died; somewhat later I reluctantly decided I had to take an extra year there, and that kept me there long enough to sit under Dr. Lloyd-Jones
 - c. At the time there did not seem to be a leading; but looking back I can see the hand of God

III. GUIDANCE TOWARDS A GOAL

- A. We rejoice in the sovereignty of God
 1. In making us children of God **Romans 8:15-7**
 2. In reassuring us in the midst of suffering **Romans 8:18-28**
 3. In affirming that everything has been planned, and nothing can thwart His purpose

Romans 8:29-39

- B. We grow in grace
1. Remember that **Romans 8:14 & Galatians 5:18** are set in the context of our struggle with sin
 2. We are told about the fruit of the Spirit **Galatians 5:22-23**—more about that tomorrow morning
 3. And then we are called upon in **Galatians 5:25** *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*
 - a. Now the word **walk [stoicwmen]** there is most extraordinary; not the usual word meaning ordinary walking, or even describing a life-style
 - b. The word means **to walk in line, in rank**
 - c. J. I. Packer had that in mind for the title of his book, *Keep In Step With The Spirit*, as he mentions on p. 11 “Walk there is not *peripateo*, as in verse 16, signifying literally the walker’s moving of his limbs and metaphorically the activity of living, but *stoicheo*, which carries the thought of walking in line, holding to a rule, and thus proceeding under another’s control.”
 - d. So with us: the Spirit gives us **marching orders** in the Bible
- C. We head for glory
1. **Hebrews 2:10** *For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the author [captain KJV] of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*
 2. Remember that you are called to become like Jesus **Romans 8:29** *For whom he foreknew, He also p*

Thursday morning, June 18, 2009

The Holy Spirit and Your Holiness

The Holy Spirit and Your Holiness

Introduction

- A. Are you a saint?
- B. What is sanctification?
1. We have an answer from the Shorter Catechism, # 35 Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.
 2. Note that three things are involved according to the catechism:
 - a. Renewal in the image of God
 - b. Dying to sin
 - c. Living unto righteousness

I. THE NATURE OF HOLINESS

- A. Separation
1. Another kind of separation is **death**—anytime you come across the word death in the Bible you could substitute the word separation and it would make perfect sense
 - a. Physical death is separation of the soul from the body
 - b. Spiritual death is separation of a person from God

- c. Eternal death is separation of a person after the Day of Judgment from eternal life
- 2. Holiness is a positive kind of separation
 - a. It is separation from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God **Colossians 1:13-14 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.**
 - b. It is separation from a life of defiance and rebellion against God to one of submission to God
 - c. It is separation from a life of guilt and alienation to one of fellowship and joy
- B. So we find the word used many times throughout the Bible to mean “to separate for a holy use”
 - 1. **Exodus 19:10,14** The people are consecrated to receive the Ten Commandments
 - 2. **Exodus 28:41** Aaron and his sons are consecrated as ministers
 - 3. In **Job 1:5** he sanctifies his sons by sacrifice
 - 4. The Sabbath is sanctified **Genesis 2:3, Deuteronomy 5:12**
 - 5. What may come as a surprise is that **Christ was sanctified by the Father John 10:36**
 - 6. Created things (especially foods) are sanctified **1 Timothy 4:5 for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.**
- C. Other uses of the word
 - 1. People are to sanctify themselves
 - a. From anything that defiles **Leviticus 11:44**
 - b. To holiness **Leviticus 20:26**
 - c. Christians **2 Corinthians 6:14-18**
 - 2. God sanctifies Himself or His name **Ezekiel 36:23, 28:23; Matthew 6:9 “Hallowed be thy name”; Luke 11:2**
 - 3. Man sanctifies God by worship and obedience
 - a. Unbelief is a failure to sanctify God **Numbers 20:17, 27:14; Deuteronomy 32:51**
 - b. Reverence for the names of God **Isaiah 29:23 But when he sees his children, The work of My hands, in his midst, They will hallow My name, And hallow the Holy One of Jacob, And fear the God of Israel.**
 - c. People are called upon to sanctify Christ **1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God [other mss. Christ] in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;**
 - 4. God sanctifies His church and its members
 - a. That is the prayer of Jesus **John 17:17,19**
 - b. That is the prayer of Paul **1 Thessalonians 5:23 Now may the God of peace sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**
 - 5. Even some unbelievers are in a sense sanctified **1 Corinthians 7:14—set apart to be exposed to the gospel and its power**

II. THE NECESSITY OF HOLINESS

- A. To go to heaven: **Hebrews 12:14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness without which **no one will see the Lord.****

- B. It is logical **2 Peter 3:11** Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.
- C. It is God's plan **Hebrews 12:10** For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed beat to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.
- D. It is Christ's prayer **John 17:17**
- E. It is Christ's purpose **Ephesians 5:25-27**
- F. It is the work of the Holy Spirit
 - 1. **Romans 15:16** that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
 - 2. **2 Thessalonians 2:13** But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation though sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,
 - 3. **1 Peter 1:2** elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ;
- G. To reject this is to reject God
 - 1. Today there are many so-called evangelical preachers who are playing down the necessity for holiness
 - a. They are preaching the death of Christ as the atonement for sins—and we must rejoice in that
 - b. They do not call people to repentance from sin, and to a life of holiness—perhaps because not so many people would go for that sort of thing
 - 2. But the fact of the matter is as the Holy Spirit puts it in **1 Thessalonians 4:7-8** For God did not call us to uncleanness, but to holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

III. THE FACETS OF HOLINESS

- A. Definitive sanctification
 - 1. This is something instantaneous, not gradual or progressive; it is true of all Christians, and there is ample evidence in the Scriptures
 - a. **1 Corinthians 1:2** To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of the Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:
 - b. The word is a perfect passive participle
 - 1) The perfect tense designates something that happened in the past but has continuing results
 - 2) It is passive—we did not do it, but God sanctified us in Christ and called us to be saints
 - c. As you continue to read on in **1 Corinthians** you might wonder if these people are really saints—there are all sorts of problems such as cliquishness, sexual immorality not dealt with, lawsuits among believers, disorders at the sacrament of Holy Communion, disorder in worship, and confusion about the idea of a general resurrection at the last day

- d. In spite of problems in Corinth and in the other churches, Paul, **writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit**, greets them as **saints**
2. It is by virtue of this that all Christians are called saints
3. It was achieved, not by **our** doing anything, but by the work of Christ
4. That is the reason why I have adapted for use at Holy Communion when we receive the bread the words of **Hebrews 10:10** **By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all**. So I say, "Take, eat, remember and believe that you have been made a saint through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."
5. And that puts people in a position where they begin to be gradually sanctified which we call:

B. Progressive sanctification

1. No Christian is ever perfect in this life **1 John 1:8** **If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.**
2. No Christian can continue in sin **1 John 3:9** **Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.**
 - a. This does not teach that Christians have reached or will reach a state of sinless perfection in this life
 - b. It does teach that Christians are no longer habituated and addicted to sin, but have been set free; (other passages teaching this are **John 8:32-36**; **Romans 6:1-14** n.b. **vs 7**)
3. The Christian life is a struggle with sin which is now **alien** to us **Romans 7:7-25**
4. The place of sanctification is the heart **Romans 6:17-18** **But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.**
5. The process of sanctification involves **putting off** of sin and **putting on** of righteousness—and you will note both concerning many aspects of life in **Ephesians 4:17-5:20**
6. The progress of sanctification [Bickersteth, pp. 143 ff.]
 - a. Deepening knowledge of the things of God **Ephesians 1:17 ff.**; **Proverbs 2:2-5**; **Colossians 1:9-10**
 - b. Growing delight in the duties of prayer and praise **Zechariah 12:10**; **Romans 8:26-27**; **Jude 20-21**; **Psalm 92:1**
 - c. More vigorous faith in the salvation of Christ **2 Thessalonians 1:3**; **Hebrews 10:22** cf **Romans 4:21**; **Luke 17:5**
 - d. More entire submission of our will to God's will **Hebrews 10:5,7**; **2 Corinthians 3:18**
 - e. More resolute crucifying of the flesh and cultivation of the fruit of the Spirit **Galatians 5:16-26**
 - f. Readier willingness to serve and suffer for Jesus **1 Thessalonians 1:3**; **Philippians 2:13**; **Acts 1:8**
 - g. Brighter prospect of reigning and rejoicing with Him forever **1 Peter 1:2-4**
{Not from Bickersteth}:
 - h. Delight in the Sabbath **Isaiah 56:2,4**; **58:13-14**; **Ezekiel 20:12,13,16,24**; **22:8**; **44:24**; **Mark 2:27-28**
 - i. Hope for the Lord's return **1 John 3:2-3**

- C. Entire sanctification
 1. At death the soul or spirit is separated from the body, and conducted into the presence of the triune God in heaven
 - a. Nothing sinful or evil may enter there
 - b. Yet we are told that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord **2 Corinthians 5:1-9; Philippians 1:21-23**
 - c. Because at death we will be sanctified entirely **Jude 24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen. [also Revelation 14:5; 1 John 3:2; Hebrews 12:23]**
 2. At the second coming of Christ: those who died will be resurrected, and those who are alive will have their bodies changed—and our bodies will never again be the avenue of solicitation to sin **Philippians 3:21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able to subdue all things to Himself. [Also Romans 6:5; Colossians 3:4; Revelation 21:1-5, 27]**

The Fruit of the Spirit and You

Galatians 5:16-26

Introduction

- A. Now we come to the matter of the fruit of the Spirit
 1. Let us be clear at the outset that there is a difference between the **fruit** of the Spirit and the **gifts** of the Spirit
 2. Every Christian has the fruit, but not every Christian will have special gifts for preaching or teaching
 3. Remember, too, that it is possible to have certain Spiritual gifts (an even be an ordained minister) without having the fruit—Judas is an example
 4. So you can lack Spiritual gifts and still be a Christian; but you can not lack the fruit and still be a Christian
- B. Now let me warn you right now that I am not going to deal with **each** of the nine things mentioned in connection with the fruit of the Spirit
- C. Very well, then, let us examine ourselves as we notice certain things in this passage

I. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT COMPARED WITH WORKS OF THE FLESH

- A. Intensely **practical** and not merely abstract
 1. Note how practical unbelievers are
 - a. They do not commit theoretical sex sins
 - b. They are not idolaters in theory—they actively and openly practice their false religions
 - c. Similarly, hatred, contention and jealousy come to expression in very real and destructive ways
 - d. He talks about outbursts of wrath—and we certainly see this all the time
 - 1) Sometimes it comes to expression in words and gestures

- 2) Sometimes it comes to expression in mass murders
- e. By the same token, drunkenness is the result of the practice of drinking too much beverage alcohol
- 2. So the fruit of the Spirit is practical, also
 - a. Remember what Jesus said concerning fruit: **Matthew 7:16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?**
 - b. Someone has rightly said that people know us by our fruit, but God knows us by our faith
 - c. So there is no such thing as theoretical love, hypothetical joy, peace in the abstract
- 3. Remember **Romans 6:13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.**
 - a. Have you ever noticed the energy that the people of this world have, the time they devote to their sins, and the money they lavish upon them?
 - b. Then such a person becomes a Christian, and in many cases seems to become too tired, busy and poor to get as involved in the things of Christ as he or she was before

B. Inequality in development

- 1. In the case of the works of the flesh—they may all be related to each other, at least in some people
- 2. Yet we may find that a person may be guilty of some and not guilty of some of the others
 - a. So there are people who are idolaters who would never **dream** of committing murder or adultery
 - b. Others like to be involved in drunken orgies, but would never get involved in sorcery or murder
 - c. There are some **heretics** who are sober, mellow, and even in a sense kind, gentle and scrupulously honest (which makes them extremely dangerous—the Mormons, for example, or the enemies of Dr. Machen)
- 3. So it is with the fruit of the Spirit
 - a. Some people manifest joy more than others, some kindness, some goodness
 - b. Christians are not all alike
 - 1) They are all people who have repented of sin and put their faith in Jesus: but even their repentance and faith will differ as far as strength and depth are concerned
 - 2) They **all** have received the Holy Spirit in great **abundance** **Titus 3:6**
 - 3) But we manifest different degrees of development of the fruit of the Spirit
 - 4) So in the Bible we read of the meekness of Moses, the patience of Job, and the faith of Abraham

II. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT CONTRASTED WITH THE WORKS OF THE FLESH

A. Outside help

- 1. The sinner does not need outside help in order to sin
 - a. Now it may be true that outside help is at hand in the person of the devil or one of

- his demonic underlings
 - b. And no doubt other people may be influential in promoting sin
 - c. And we must not discount the baneful influence of the media
 - d. But whenever the sinner sins, that person is just giving free expression to what is on the inside, to his or her true nature
 - e. Remember this important point: **People are not sinners because they sin, but they sin because they are sinners**
2. In contrast with this is the Christian
 - a. We have been saved by grace through the blood of the cross
 - b. We have been made new in Jesus Christ
 - c. Yet our bodies have not yet been touched by redemption; and so the Holy Spirit has been sent to indwell us and to manifest His presence in a practical way
 - d. While sinners can sin without any outside help at all, **no one** can manifest the fruit of the Spirit without the **help** of the Spirit

B. The unity of the fruit

1. Note that the works of the flesh is **plural**
 - a. There are many different works, many different manifestations
 - b. Sometimes they are related—drunkenness may lead to adultery and then to murder
 - c. But they are not all related; in fact, there is discord and chaos here
2. When we come to the fruit of the Spirit, however, we find something **striking**
 - a. How many fruits of the Spirit are there? Some people can count nine here in this passage
 - b. That may lead to the mentality, “What do I care if there are no bananas in my basket—I have eight other kinds of fruit!”
 - c. The fact of the matter is that the fruit of the Spirit is **one**—we are not talking about the fruits of the Spirit, but about the **fruit** [singular] of the Spirit
 - d. Now this fruit is described in nine different ways, with nine different characteristics—but it is **one fruit**
 - e. So you might be able to describe nine different characteristics about an apple; it would not be too difficult to find nine different ways to distinguish a banana from a strawberry
 - f. Not one of these nine characteristics is **optional**
 - 1) You have eaten seedless grapes, but never stemless grapes!
 - 2) There is no such thing as an apple without a peel
 - 3) So, there is **no such thing** as the fruit of the Spirit without love, or without joy
 - g. But that does not mean that the fruit of the Spirit will be absolutely identical from Christian to Christian
 - 1) Remember, we are people, not clones
 - 2) So some may manifest more love than others, but all will manifest love to some degree

III. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT EXAMINED

A. It is personal

1. Just as the works of the flesh are personal and real in the unbeliever, so the fruit of the Spirit is personal and real in the believer
2. The Christian is not one who is like a Christmas tree with ornaments hanging on it by hooks
3. No, the Holy Spirit indwells us and enables us to manifest His fruit because He indwells us **to the very core of our being**

B. It involves effort

1. A fight **Galatians 5:17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things you wish.**
 - a. Remember again, our bodies are not sinful in themselves—that is the heresy of Manichianism
 - b. But our bodies became habituated to sin in thought, word and deed
 - 1) A Christian at times can forget himself and start to use some of that language he used in the Navy
 - 2) A Christian might still have an Arminian brain and have a terrible time facing the reality of Bible teaching in certain areas
 - 3) J. I. Packer was asked about C. S. Lewis and noted that certain Christians have what he called intellectually besetting sins
2. A death: one thing we must do is realize we have died: we are **not** to crucify the flesh, note **Galatians 5:24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**
 - 1) Lots of people go wrong here, and imagine that this is a command; nothing of the kind
 - 2) It is, instead, a **reminder** of a fact which is true; compare **Romans 6:6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.**
 - 3) One of the devil's greatest maneuvers has been to dupe Christian people into thinking they are still sinners to the core, and that they can never expect anything better of themselves, **so it is no use to try**
 - 4) No, says Paul, we have been set free from all that
3. A cultivation **Galatians 5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.**
 - a. Remember above all things that we must be **Christ-centered**
 - 1) In **John 15:** Jesus calls on us to abide in Him and be pruned by the Father
 - 2) Remember that Jesus is the **source** of the Holy Spirit **John 7:37-38**
 - b. Remember that we must have God's word abide in us **John 15:7**
 - c. Remember that we are called upon to be **diligent 2 Peter 1:5-8 But also for this very reason, given these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

The Spirit of Grace and Supplication

Introduction

- A. What is the most difficult thing to do?
 1. Some kids have difficulty with math, others with chemistry, still others with grammar
 2. Perhaps there are very difficult things you have to do in your work

- a. You may have to cope with bureaucratic red tape—and what a hellish mess that can be
 - b. You may have to deal with difficult people
 - c. You may be confronted with extremely complicated problems which need to be solved
3. But all of these pale into insignificance when compared with the difficulty of prayer
- a. Some people have no difficulty with prayer because they simply have no prayer life
 - b. It is not difficult to pray in a perfunctory manner, reading from a prayer book or reciting a prayer (neither of which I condemn; these are crutches, and sometimes we need crutches)
 - c. But when you stop to think about it I think you will realize that true praying is a very difficult business
- B. This is because of what we are
- 1. We are people who have been saved by grace and called to glory
 - 2. We are called upon to glorify God
 - 3. Yet we find that even when we have the most holy desires and inclinations we are held back
 - a. So you begin to pray—and are interrupted by the imperious ring of the telephone
 - b. Or you find that at times your mind wanders, or you even fall asleep
 - c. So your experience might be that mentioned by Paul in **Romans 7:19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.**
- C. So we find that we can not do it on our own steam
- 1. We need the Holy Spirit who is described in **Zechariah 12:10 the Spirit of grace and supplication**
 - 2. And after reflecting upon his failure to live up to what he wanted to do, the Apostle Paul goes on to say in **Romans 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.**
 - 3. The Holy Spirit, you see, has a very great deal to do with prayer
 - a. We are so dull that we cannot understand the Bible, clear as it is, without the Holy Spirit helping us; we need Him in order to have God communicate to us
 - b. By the same token we are so dull that we cannot communicate to God without the Holy Spirit's help

I. **PRAY FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT**

- A. Because we so desperately need Him
- 1. Before the disciples could preach Jesus
 - a. You would think they could go right out after the resurrection and start telling people
 - b. They had been with Jesus for three years, had seen His atoning passion and glorious resurrection, and even been given the Great Commission
 - c. Yet Jesus Himself tells them after giving the Great Commission in **Luke 24:49 “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”**
 - d. They were not to tarry and do nothing: we learn what they were doing in **Acts 1:14**

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication....

2. What spiritual exercises can we do without the help of the Holy Spirit?
 - a. Let us not forget the principle of **John 4:24** “**God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.**”
 - b. So worship centered in the temple on a mountain in Jerusalem must give way to worship that is different
 - 1) We must realize that the human heart, not a certain geographical site, is the place where true worship begins
 - 2) We must realize that the reality of the gospel in Christ, and not a certain physical location or posture, is what makes worshipers and their worship acceptable to God
 - c. This is no less true in prayer than of any other exercise; in fact, any religious exercise apart from prayer is rote religion
 3. Why do we so desperately need the Holy Spirit to help us pray?
 - a. Because we are not completely sanctified yet
 - b. Because at times we are faced with **overwhelming trials, troubles and decisions**
 - c. Remember that the background of **Romans 8:** is one of realistically facing suffering: **Romans 8:18** **For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.**
 - d. It is not just the world, but Christians as well who face these things: **Romans 8:23** **And not only they, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.**
 - e. It is in such a context that Paul says **Romans 8:26** **Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.**
- B. Because we are encouraged to do so by our Lord
1. **Luke 11:11-13** “**If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”**
 2. The Holy Spirit is ours for the asking
 - a. Haven't we who are Christians already received the Holy Spirit? **Yes, and abundantly at that** as we confess from **Titus 3:5b-6** **...the Holy Spirit, who He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,**
 - b. Yet we are commanded to **be filled with the Spirit** (Ephesians 5:18)
 - c. And Jesus said concerning the Holy Spirit in **John 7:37b-38** “**If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scriptures has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.**”

II. PRAY BY THE SPIRIT

- A. The Spirit initiates all holy desires
 1. Isn't this circular reasoning?

- a. The Spirit initiates all holy desires—prayer among them
 - b. Yet we are to pray for the Spirit of grace and supplication
 2. It is, instead, a **gracious circle**, a fulfillment of **Isaiah 65:24 It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.**
 3. So we have the magnificent prayer of William Bright—magnificent because it is so entirely Biblical: “O Almighty God, from whom every good prayer cometh, and who pourest out on all who desire it the Spirit of grace and supplication, deliver us, when we draw nigh to thee, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship thee in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”
- B. The Spirit enables us to carry out our aspirations
1. Note **Philippians 2:12b-13 ...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.**
 - a. Without God helping us we can not even **will** to do what is right and good and pleasing to Him
 - b. But even once we have come to will to do something good we can't do it in the strength of the flesh: **it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.**
 2. And of course, from what we read in the Bible, we know that the Holy Spirit is the person of the Godhead who has this specific task or working in us
 3. Be warned of this:
 - a. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of grace and supplications
 - b. If you are a prayerless person, then in the nature of the case, you are a person without the Spirit of grace and supplications
 - c. And **Romans 8:9b Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.**

III. PRAY IN THE SPIRIT

- A. This statement is not as puzzling as it might appear
1. **Ephesians 6:18a praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit...**
 2. **Jude 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,**
 3. Now in these two passages we are commanded to pray in the Spirit, yet we are not told what that is, as if it were obvious!
- B. But other passages of the Bible surely clarify this for us
1. It does **not** mean that we are **to wait** for some special indication from on high that we are ready to pray
 2. It means first of all, that we have access to God the Father through the work of Christ **Ephesians 2:18 For through Him [Christ] we both [Jew and Gentile alike] have access by one Spirit to the Father.**
 - a. Let me ask you if you realize what you are doing when you pray: you are entering the sanctuary of the Almighty
 - 1) In the Old Testament era one had to be very careful about entering the temple—it was full of barriers
 - a) Gentiles could come here, but no further upon pain of death
 - b) There was a special court for women

- c) If you met certain requirements you could enter the sanctuary
 - d) But then there was the Holy of Holies into which the high priest alone could enter, and that only on and day in the year, Yom Kippur
- 2) Today we have gone to the opposite extreme and become **flippant** about entering the presence of God
 - b. It is only through Christ's finished atonement that we have access to God
 - c. And it is only as we are moved by the Spirit that we avail ourselves of this high privilege of fellowship with the Father in the throne room of the universe
- 3. You see, the Holy Spirit goes with us and leads us in to that hallowed place
 - a. He shows us our High Priest Jesus who is at prayer for us **Hebrews 7:25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them.**
 - b. He brings us right in and helps us as we make or bumbling efforts to pray **Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.**
- 4. He reminds us of the promises of God found in the Scriptures and enables us to plead those promises
- 5. He enables us to pray aright and to seek above all things the glory of God
- 6. He enables us to submit to the will of God, as Jesus **Luke 22:42 "... nevertheless not My will, but Y**

Some Sins against The Holy Spirit

- I. Grieving the Holy Spirit** **Ephesians 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.** This is in the midst of a passage about our relationships **with other people**—our speech, emotions, warfare, honesty, and Christlikeness
- II. Quenching the Holy Spirit** **1 Thessalonians 5:16-22 Rejoice always,¹⁷ pray without ceasing,¹⁸ in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit.²⁰ Do not despise prophecies.²¹ Test all things; hold fast what is good.²² Abstain from every form of evil.**
 Preachers: don't quit the ministry, or resort to worldly methods
 Laymen: don't neglect Bible reading, preaching, meditating; DO seek the help of the Spirit to understand the Bible
- III. Lying to the Holy Spirit** **Acts 5:3,9 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit....?"⁹ The Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?"**
 What about **solemn vows** taken today: ordination, membership, marriage?
 Aren't you glad that this action of the Holy Spirit has ceased?
- IV. Commercializing the Holy Spirit** **Acts 8:19-20 saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."²⁰ But Peter said to him, "Your money perish**

with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be **purchased with money!**”

Buying church offices was called the sin of **Simony**

What about commercialization of Christian music?

(There is nothing new here, as Fanny Crosby was practically swindled by publishers.)

What about shady borrowing practices by churches?

V. Insulting the Holy Spirit Hebrews 10:26-29 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. ²⁸ Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and **insulted the Spirit of grace.**

Here we are in the realm of **the unpardonable sin**

Matthew 12:31-32 “Therefore I say to you, every sin and

blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the **blasphemy**

against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

There is a sin for which Christ provides NO atonement—so the atonement **is limited!**

These people had some religious **experience**

These people **deliberately** turned away

God gives them the liberty described in **Romans 1:18-32**

These people forsake the blood of Christ which

cleanses from **all** sin **1 John 1:7**—so anyone who takes refuge in the blood of Christ, whatever horrible sins may have been committed, that person has not committed the unpardonable sin

Here is what Edwin H. Palmer has to say (*The Holy Spirit*, p. 171): “This is especially true of those who have been reared in orthodox Christian homes and churches where they have heard the gospel fully, plainly and properly over the years. It is possible for them to be warmed by the clear presentation of the Gospel and then willfull, hatefully and openly to renounce Christ completely.”

Iain H. Murray in his book *The Undercover Revolution* describes the lives of Robert Louis Stevenson and Thomas Hardy, showing how they deliberately deserted the faith

Thursday evening, June 18, 2009

The Holy Spirit and The Church

The Holy Spirit and the Church

I Corinthians 12:1-27

Introduction

A. Is the church visible or invisible?

1. The invisible church is all those who truly belong to Jesus Christ in all places and all ages

a. It is visible to the omniscient God, but invisible to us

b. That invisible church, however, properly seeks to manifest itself in the world

2. There is one thing sometimes forgotten
 - a. There are people who are **prima donnas**, who like the limelight—they are always putting themselves forward
 - b. Even in the matter of having a hymn-sing there is a governing principle often forgotten and sometimes flagrantly violated **1 Corinthians 14:26**
 - c. It is something every preacher, every Sunday School teacher needs to keep in mind: **Is it upbuilding? Is it encouraging? Is it something that will bring others into closer fellowship with Christ?**
 3. Remember that the work of the Spirit in the church is not to enable you to give yourself some emotional high, but is **for the profit of all**
- C. The Holy Spirit expands the Church by giving ministries **vs 5**
1. Ministries differ from person to person, from age to age
 2. The primacy of verbal ministries **vs 8**
 - a. Preaching **1 Thessalonians 1:5**
 - b. The topic of preaching **1 Corinthians 1:18,23**
 3. The Spirit is sovereign **vs 11**

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT UNIFIES THE CHURCH

- A. Unity by the Spirit **vss 11-12**
1. He deals with **individual** people
 2. But His aim is **unity** in the body
 3. Unity is something we must work at **Ephesians 4:1-6**
- B. Unity by division **vs 8-11, 25**
1. Please note that the Spirit does not provide unity **in spite of** division, but **by** division
 2. You would expect that in an organization with Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free people, and people with various talents that there would be great division
 3. As a matter of fact, the opposite is true
 - a. No one is perfect in this life
 - b. In an area where one is weak, another is strong; **but** that strong person has weaknesses, too!
 - c. One person is musically talented, another is skilled at organizing things, still another is a great teacher
 4. So the body of the church is like the human body **vss 14-25**
 5. And the goal of the Spirit is not schism or division, but **unity vs 25 that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.**
 - a. All too often harm is done to the church because one person demands to have his way
 - b. One of the guiding principles of activity, and a sign of the fullness of the Holy Spirit is a submissive spirit **Ephesians 5:21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.**
- C. Unity in Christ **vs 12**
1. We need to remember, in all the activities of the church, to seek the leading of the Holy Spirit
 2. As we think about this, we will recognize that whatever we might think of doing is not

- of the Spirit unless it has as its goal **unity in Christ**
3. We need to ask ourselves some questions:
 - a. Is this something that is going to build others up in Christ?
 - b. Is this something that is going to help others to become stronger witnesses for Christ?
 - c. Is this something that is going to develop in others a deeper gratitude for the love of Christ?

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT INDWELLS THE CHURCH

- A. Indwelling is manifested in what people say about Jesus vs 3
 1. The church is radically different from the world
 2. The center of that division is the Lord Jesus Christ
 3. The instigator of that division is the Holy Spirit who enables people to confess **Jesus is Lord**
 - a. Have you ever noticed how hostile people are to Jesus?
 - b. Recently I have been very disturbed by Christians who seem to be quite comfortable in leaving Christ out of their prayers; they neither begin nor end with Jesus WLC 180 What is it to pray in the name of Christ? **To pray in the name of Christ is, in obedience to His command, and in confidence on His promises, to ask mercy for His sake; not by bare mentioning of His name, but by drawing our encouragement to pray, and our boldness, strength, and hope of acceptance in prayer, from Christ and His mediation.**
 - 1) Increasingly in the OPC I've noticed prayers that do not mention Christ
 - 2) No doubt some would cite, "not by a bare mentioning of His name" as the reason
 - 3) But there is **not even** a bare mentioning of His name
 - c. Let's face it—if you are uncomfortable with Jesus, He will be uncomfortable with you, if you are ashamed of Jesus, He will be ashamed of you!
 - d. You take a hardened, pagan sinner, see that person converted by the work of the Holy Spirit in effectual calling, and all of a sudden that person will be full of what is rudely called "Jesus talk"
 - e. But it is the work of the Spirit! When anyone confesses Jesus we are in the presence of God! When we sing praise to Christ it is because the Spirit is manifesting Himself!
- B. Indwelling is manifested in activities vs 6
 1. People have been given all sorts of talent by the Holy Spirit
 - a. Remember that we learned long ago that the Holy Spirit is behind all of the artistic, musical and inventive creativity of people
 - b. When people take their God-given gifts and dedicate and use them for the glory of Christ, it is because the Holy Spirit is working
 - c. Maybe you have a knack for photography or art
 - 1) Some people take that gift and pervert it
 - 2) Christ calls you, and the Spirit enables you, to use it for Him; not all the photos for church bulletins have been taken yet
 - d. Musical talents must be taken and used for Christ
 - 1) There is a place in the church for this

- 2) There is a place in the world for such—many have been brought to conversion whom the Spirit began to reach through Christian music
- C. Indwelling is manifested for the profit of all **vs 7**
1. When someone has a gift, and uses that God-given gift not to selfishly promote himself, but for the profit of others, then **the Holy Spirit is there**
 2. Let's face it, we all tend to be proud and want to be recognized for our accomplishments
 - a. It's nice to know that you are appreciated
 - b. But let us remember the danger of seeking the applause of men—and have you noticed the tendency to bring applause into what **purport** to be worship services?
Galatians 1:10b For if I still pleased men, I would not be a servant of Christ.
 3. But where anyone is using God-given gifts for the profit of all in the church, rest assured that the Holy Spirit is there
- D. Indwelling is manifested for fellowship with God
1. The house of prayer **Mark 11:17 Then He taught, saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’”**
 - a. The perversion of the church is nothing new
 - b. The temple was perverted—especially the court of the Gentiles
 - 1) It should have been a place of evangelism, a place where people would be exposed to the grace of God
 - 2) Instead it had been perverted
 2. The solemn yet joyous truth: **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**
 - a. Your physical body is the temple of the Holy Spirit
 - b. But so also is the physical church
 3. The forgotten fact about the church **Ephesians 2:19-22**
 - a. It is true that each person is indwelt by the Holy Spirit
 - b. But don't forget that the visible church, in a larger sense, is **a habitation of God in the Spirit**
 - c. So remember, when you go to church you are to expect in a special way to meet God here

The Holy Spirit and Your Worship

Philippians 3:3

Introduction

Not many churches have a sign that says "Beware of Dogs!"

But in light of **Philippians 3:2** it would certainly be appropriate!

Do we really have to concern ourselves about dogs when we go to church?

Yes, but dogs of a different kind: people who would sabotage our worship

They would tell us that Reformed worship is boring and that people will be turned off by it; and we need to change our service around

I. WHAT WORSHIP IS

A. The meaning of the word

1. In English it is derived from the old English worth-ship

a. This can be seen in **Revelation 4:11 You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For you created all things, And by Your will they exist and were**

ourselves, because whatever such may be, it is far from the worship Paul speaks about here

5. What we see happening to worship is exactly the same sort of thing I saw at a Lion's Club installation of officers—it was treated as a big joke
6. **There is nothing new under the sun.** Thirty years ago churches were trying to keep the young people and liven up their worship with **PSYCHEDELIC** worship services with flashing lights in a dark room, and other things to appeal to those influenced by the drug culture
7. This sort of thing is dismissed out of hand by Paul in this verse we **have no confidence in the flesh**

B. The opposite extreme and pitfall to avoid is **ritualism**

1. That is what Paul has to contend with here: it is Old Testament ritualism creeping back in
 - a. You can easily understand how this would happen since the Christian Church was born from the womb of Judaism
 - b. There was naturally a tendency to think something was missing when the Jewish ceremonies were now ignored
 - c. When we read of circumcision here I believe it is synecdoche
 - 1) It is a literary form when you use the part for the whole as in “I have five mouths to feed” or “He had sixty head of cattle”
 - 2) So circumcision brings into view the entire ceremonial system of which circumcision was the initiating act
 - 3) There was a tendency of some to drift back into the old ways of worship which, they failed to see, had been fulfilled by Christ; to go back to them was tantamount to denying the finished work of Christ
2. But we find that the church has always been confronted with this problem
 - a. So the elaborate rituals of the Romish and Eastern Orthodox traditions are largely patterned after the ceremonialism of the Old Testament
 - b. And what do we find today? We find children of the Reformation toying with the smells and bells of Rome— “The opera of the masses” as Voltaire described it
 - 1) Folks have left the OPC for Romanism
 - 2) Others are leaving Reformed denominations for the Eastern Orthodox Churches (Greek, Russian, etc.)
 - 3) And some are seeking to bring these forms of worship into the OPC
3. This is a reaction against the informality, breezy and superficial approach
 - a. Reactions always tend to go to extremes
 - b. To avoid this:

III. WE NEED THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A. We are called upon to **worship God in the Spirit**

1. That does not at all mean that we have to eliminate a planned worship service or liturgy and turn the meeting into a sort of free-for-all where everyone does his own thing
 - a. Some people would indeed think that is the essence of worship
 - b. But we would do well to remind ourselves of what the Holy Spirit moved Paul to say in **1 Corinthians 14:33 For God is not the author of confusion [disorder] but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. vs 40 Let all things be done decently and**

in order.

2. If you think there is something lacking in a worship service where you have dialogue between God and man in the reading of Bible passages alternating with our responses in song and praise, the problem is no doubt found here
 - a. Do you believe the Holy Spirit is present in a real and living way?
 - b. If you have to answer “No” to that question I will put another question to you: Have you prayerfully asked for a visitation of the Holy Spirit in our worship?
 - c. Let me go on to ask another question: Do you yourself **have** the Holy Spirit? Let me warn you in the words of **Romans 8:9 Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.**
- B. Do you notice what worship in the Spirit means?
1. It means that we will **have no confidence in the flesh.**
 - a. That means that we can not solve the problem by **carnal** means
 - b. It means that we can change the order of service, eliminate any order of service, adopt an elaborate ritual—and we will have gotten nowhere
 - c. All these attempts to liven up worship are doomed to failure because they are **of the flesh**
 2. Remember the chief work of the Holy Spirit—I’ve been drilling it into you all week (old chemistry teacher that I am)—Jesus says in **John 16:14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.**
 3. So it should come as no surprise at all that worshipping God in the Spirit means that we **rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,**
 - a. We all like to commend ourselves; the natural tendency is to try to justify ourselves and be able to pat ourselves on the back and think God ought to do the same
 - b. Anyone who tries that approach will find Reformed worship a very boring and unfulfilling activity
 - c. Remember Jesus’ parable of two people who went to worship? **Luke 18:9-14** What a contrast!
 - 1) The one was trusting himself, boasting about himself, and, I suppose, went away content with himself thinking he had fulfilled a bit more of his duty
 - 2) We read of the other **“And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God be merciful to me a [the] sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”**
- C. Do you see why the Holy Spirit is so needed in our worship?
1. We tend to forget that we are engaging in an activity **radically different** from any other activity of life
 2. We need to be reminded that we are approaching God who is infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth **Our God is a consuming fire.**
 3. We can only approach such a holy God if He is pleased to accept us
 - a. You may remember in the book of **Esther** her hesitation to approach the king; if he does not graciously hold out his golden scepter it mean sure death to anyone who approaches **Esther 4:11**
 - b. God does graciously hold out His golden scepter to us in Christ

- c. In fact, so gracious is God that Christ says of Him in **John 4:23-24** “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for **the Father is seeking** such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth.”
- 4. And Paul sums it up for us when he speaks of Christ in **Ephesians 2:18** For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.
- 5. Let us, then, resolve that we will seek a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit so that it may be truly said

The Holy Spirit and the Sacraments

Introduction

I. THE MEANS OF GRACE

- A. We know that we are saved by grace alone
- B. But God works through means—in grace, as well as in nature
 - 1. So we know that if our garden is to grow we need to do something: plant, water and weed; then God will make it grow, using these means
 - 2. By the same token, God operates in the same manner in redemption as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 3:6** I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.
- C. So we speak about the means of grace, and there are a number of things which God uses to bless the human heart with the grace of salvation
 - 1. The Bible: the Word of God is the primary means of grace
 - a. No one can be saved without it **Romans 10:14,17** How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
 - b. This does not mean that the whole Bible is needed for a person to be saved—sometimes a person is saved when he becomes aware of only one verse
 - c. Nor does this mean that exposing a person to the Bible **automatically** saves that person! **Hebrews 4:2** For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; (Israel on the border of the promised land) but the word which they heard **did not profit** them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.
 - 2. Prayer is another means of grace
 - a. Back again to **Romans 10** and notice what the Holy Spirit says in **vs 12** For whoever calls upon the name of the LORD shall be saved.
 - b. Apart from infants dying in infancy and other incompetent people it is inconceivable that a prayerless person could ever possibly be saved
 - c. But even prayer does not **automatically** save a person—it may be insincere, or offered too late **Matthew 7:21** “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”
 - 3. The sacraments are also means of grace
 - a. They are not mere memory-jogs or signs of faith
 - b. They actually **do** something to those who participate
 - c. For those who participate in unbelief they do no more good than an unbelieving reading of the Bible

II. THE ABUSE OF THE SACRAMENTS

- A. Ordinances which God commands are disgusting to Him if practiced in a wrong manner
1. **Isaiah 1:11-15**
 - a. Had God not commanded all of these things: sacrifices, incense, holidays, Sabbath observance, prayers?
 - b. Why, then, the strong language: **...abomination.... ...I cannot endure.... ...My soul hates... ...I am weary of bearing them...?**
 - c. The answer is that these people were going through the **outward motions** of being religious, they **pretended** to seek God's face
 - d. In fact, they were very punctilious about getting everything just right
 - e. But they themselves were not right with God: **Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow...."**
 2. The Sacrament of Holy Communion in **1 Corinthians 11:27-32**
 - a. This is addressed concerning **believers** who partake in an unworthy **manner vs 29—what does God think of unbelievers who partake?**
 - b. One thing God hates in worship is hypocrisy
 - c. And to come to the Lord's table without believing in the Lord is blasphemy of a very high order
- B. Remember that there is a difference between flesh and Spirit
1. In **John 6:** the people follow Jesus because He fed the multitude
 2. So He warns them **John 6:27 "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."**
 3. As Jesus goes on in His discourse He speaks of Himself **John 6:48 "I am the bread of life."**
 4. But then He goes on later to say in **John 6:63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."**
 5. So the Catechisms stress that there is no virtue or power in the sacraments to automatically bless the partakers
 - a. This was written against the Romish idea of *ex opera operato*
 - b. Merely partaking of the elements will not automatically bless us—in fact, it may do harm
- C. The Holy Spirit is essential if we are to receive blessings from engaging in what God has commanded
1. We can not read the Bible and profit from it or even understand it without the help of the Holy Spirit
 2. We can never offer an acceptable prayer to God without **the Spirit of grace and supplication (Zechariah 12:10)**
 3. We can never properly engage in worship without the Holy Spirit helping us **John 4:23-24 "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and Truth."**
 - a. Now John speaks about our spirit, and about God being Spirit; but unless our Spirit is animated and controlled by the Holy Spirit our worship will be vain

- b. In fact, I must confess to see here what none of the commentaries I have available sees: that **spirit and truth** refer to the Holy Spirit and to Jesus who said, “**I am the way, the truth and the life....**”
4. But how does the Holy Spirit work in the sacraments?

III. THE SACRAMENTAL WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- A. Now as far as baptism is concerned, just note several things
 1. According to the directive of Jesus in **Matthew 29:19** we are properly baptized **into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit**
 2. **1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body....**
 3. There was an outward circumcision that reflected the inward one **Deuteronomy 30:6 And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.**
 4. So there is an outward baptism that reflects the inward baptism of the Holy Spirit—as St. Paul calls it in the magnificent confession in **Titus 3:3-8 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying....**
- B. The Holy Spirit's purpose: **John 16:14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.**
 1. Certainly this is true in gospel preaching, and Bible reading
 2. But can it be any less true in that sacrament that so forcibly reminds of the broken body and shed blood of Jesus?
 3. At the Lord's table we need this ministry of the Holy Spirit to take of what belongs to Jesus and reveal it to us
- C. Do we need to have Jesus revealed to us?
 1. That was what Paul yearned for and prayed for as he tells the saints in Ephesus: **Ephesians 1:16-23**
 - a. We do know Christ
 - b. But we need **the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him**
 2. Can we go without this to the Lord's table and expect to be blessed there?
- D. Do we want Christ to dwell in our hearts?
 1. We need not be concerned about Christ dwelling in our stomachs!
 2. But note what Paul says he prays for them in **Ephesians 3:16-1197 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**

3. Again I ask, when we prepare to receive the sacrament, can we expect to be blessed without the working of the Holy Spirit in our hearts?
4. Seeing, then, our desperate need, and God's glorious provision, let us pray that the Father and the Son would fill us anew with the Holy Spirit so that our fellowship at the table will do two important things:
 - a. It will offer acceptable worship to God
 - b. It will be a means of grace, so that we may, as Peter said in **2 Peter 3:18 grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.**

The Holy Spirit and Church Government

many passages of Scripture are referred to

Introduction

- A. One aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit is ignored today—the aspect of His work in church government
 1. There does not seem to get excited about here
 2. Attend a couple of presbytery or general assembly meetings and you may wonder what we bother with church government at all— isn't it just a waste of time?
 3. In connection with a meeting of a live steam locomotive club my son said, “There is something about meetings that can suck the joy out of anything.”
 4. Today you hear a lot about “The Emergent Church”
 5. Does the Bible really tell us anything about church government? Can't we just come up with whatever seems to work?

- B. But if we are tempted to think along the lines of modern anarchy or rugged American individualism, or “the emergent church” we are brought back to reality when we turn to the Bible
 1. One of the first thing that strikes us as we read the gospels is the emphasis upon **the kingdom of God**, also known as **the kingdom of heaven**
 2. Now it is true that there is an invisible aspect to this kingdom
 3. But we must also recognize that this kingdom manifests itself in an outward manner, and church government is an aspect of that

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT ESTABLISHES CHURCH GOVERNMENT

- A. It is rooted in the Old Testament
 1. As the people of God grow and become a nation under the leadership of Moses it soon becomes apparent that the work is too much for one man
 - a. So Jethro advises Moses in **Exodus 18:19-21 "Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be that every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear the burden with you.**

- b. We find that the Spirit comes upon the elders as described in **Numbers 11:16-30**
 - 2. There are some things worthy of note here
 - a. You have a system of levels of government and levels of appeals
 - b. They needed the Holy Spirit for their work—and that was manifested in their prophesying at a certain point **Numbers 11:25**
 - c. Moses longs for a coming day when he says, “**Oh, that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!**”
- B. It is developed by Jesus
 - 1. Jesus commissions twelve men
 - a. He calls them to discipleship **Mt 4:18-22**
 - b. He endues them with power **Mt 10:1** and sends them out **vss 5 ff.**
 - 2. Jesus promises to build His church **Mt 16:13-20**
 - a. He is Himself the Rock on which it is built; confessing Jesus as the Christ establishes one as a little stone upon that Rock **Mt 16:16-17**
 - b. Jesus is the builder of the church **Mt 16:18**
 - c. Jesus is committing to Peter the keys of the kingdom **Mt 16:19**
 - 3. Jesus promises His presence in church judicial **actions** **Mt 18:15-20**
- C. It is continued by the Holy Spirit today
 - 1. Jesus has died, risen, and gone to His throne in heaven
 - 2. But He gives gifts to men **Ephesians 4:7-9**
 - 3. People are to examine, develop and exercise their gifts **Romans 12:1-8**
 - 4. These gifts are gifts given by the Holy Spirit **1 Corinthians 12:**
 - a. The unity of the church is found in the diversity of gifts
 - b. This is by divine appointment **1 Cor 12:28** **And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.**
 - 5. So Titus was to appoint elders in every city **Titus 1:5**

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT GUIDES CHURCH GOVERNMENT

- A. There are many occasions where this is rejected
 - 1. The same was true in the nation of Israel
 - 2. It came to expression in Jesus' day when He was officially rejected, condemned and killed
 - 3. It comes to expression today when the highest courts of churches take a stand against Biblical morality as they condone abortion and homosexuality
 - 4. In such denominations the lone Christian must take a stand, and it will generally mean expulsion and the seeking of a church more true to the Word of God
- B. But we must not dismiss the matter of church government
 - 1. We dare not do this with civil government—horrible as it may become **Romans 13:**
 - 2. So in the Bible we have a fine example of appeal to higher church courts in **Acts 15:**
 - a. There arose a dispute in the church in Antioch concerning the ceremonial law **Acts 15:1**

- b. A meeting was called in Jerusalem vs 2-5
- c. Note that while there were **apostles** present, they did not lay down the law; but **elders** participated in the meeting
- d. James made a **motion** vs 19 **Therefore I judge....** which must have been put to some kind of a vote vs 22 **Then it pleased the apostles and elders....**—they **adopted** James' proposal
- e. Now note a remarkable statement concerning the debate, motion, and vote vs 28 **For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us,....**
- f. You might have thought that this would be boring, inefficient, and an impediment to progress, but the church thought differently: they rejoiced vs 31
- g. Surely this sort of thing must be avoided if we are to have church growth! On the contrary Acts 16:4-5 **And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.**

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT CALLS FOR SUBMISSION TO CHURCH GOVERNMENT

- A. Today many avoid church membership
 - 1. I suppose one reason is that so many churches are absolutely rotten—controlled by self-serving bureaucracies out of touch with God and believers
 - 2. So people become Christians and figure that it is not important to join a church
 - 3. They figure they can watch a church program on TV
 - 4. They can listen to radio programs and hear better preaching and music than they'd hear if they went to the local church
 - 5. But who will administer the sacraments to them, visit them in the hospital, bury them when they die? Who will send out missionaries? Who will guard them and their children against heresy?
- B. God calls believers to a **governed** church
 - 1. One of the evidences of the fullness of the Holy Spirit is a submissive attitude **Ephesians 5:21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.**
 - a. This is part of a section explaining the results of being filled with the Holy Spirit: **Ephesians 5:18b ...be filled with the Spirit**
 - a. This is really pretty democratic!
 - b. Isn't that really the idea when we vote on some issue? It is not a blind submission, but **in the fear of God**
 - 2. Certain people are called to govern, and others to submit **1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.**
 - 3. Or as the Spirit says in **Hebrews 13:7-8 Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.**
- C. It is true that at times church meetings can seem very tedious
 - 1. We wonder why these people waste time debating a question that does not seem to be very important to us—though it must seem important to them

2. Of course, it seldom occurs to us that they may have an insight into the ramifications of an issue that we do not have
3. And we are called upon to be patient and submissive with one another; I do not think this is important—but others do!
4. Above all, let us remember to pray for elders as they labor, meet in sessions, presbyteries and general assemblies, that the Spirit who guided the council in Jerusalem in **Acts 15:** would so manifest Himself that it could be truly said of the actions taken, **...it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us....**

Friday morning, June 19, 2009

The Holy Spirit's Love and Joy

The Holy Spirit and Christian Resources

Ephesians 1:15-23

Introduction

I. THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION

A. Spirit not capitalized

1. Obviously the translators did not believe that this refers to the Holy Spirit
 - a. One grammatical point is that the word for spirit in the Greek **pneuma** and it appears here without the definite article: **a spirit** instead of **the Spirit**
 - b. So, they tell us, Saint Paul is speaking of the human spirit just as he does at other times
 - 1) **1 Corinthians 4:21** where he mentions **a spirit of gentleness**
 - 2) **1 Corinthians 7:34** where he is discussing marriage and says **The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit.**
2. Then, of course, there are theological considerations
 - a. We must use the Bible as a commentary on itself, comparing Scripture with Scripture
 - b. And the argument runs that when a person becomes a Christian that person receives the Holy Spirit
 - 1) So in **vs 13** Paul speaks about being **sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise**
 - 2) And then he speaks of our having been given the Spirit as a kind of downpayment on Heaven **vs 14**
 - c. So why would he then backtrack and tell the people he is praying that God would give them the Holy Spirit whom they had already been given?

B. Why Spirit **ought to be capitalized**

1. To answer the latter objection consider this
 - a. The Holy Spirit is given to all believers in a kind of general way; but the Holy Spirit who indwells believers continually manifests His presence at times in certain ways, and that is what this is all about
 - b. Furthermore, while we **have** the Holy Spirit, we are not always **filled** with the Holy Spirit and need to be exhorted in **Ephesians 5:18** **And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.**

- c. They have the Holy Spirit in them perpetually, but Paul is eager for them to grow in wisdom, and prays that the Holy Spirit would minister to them in the particular way he describes here
 2. But now back to the grammar and the missing article; let me point out some passages of Scripture where the article is missing and see if you would want to scratch out the capital S in Spirit here
 - a. John 3:5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”
 - b. John 4:24 "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.
 - c. Romans 8:5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.
 - d. 1 Corinthians 2:4-5 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.
 - e. Galatians 3:3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you not being made perfect by the flesh?
 - f. Galatians 5:5 For we through the Spirit eagerly wait of the hope of righteousness by faith.
 - g. Galatians 5:18,25 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.
 - h. Ephesians 2:22 in whom you are being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.
 - i. Ephesians 3:5 which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by **the Spirit** to His holy apostles and prophets:
 - j. Ephesians 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,
 - k. Many others too numerous to read here: 2 Thes. 2:13; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 1:2; 1 Pet. 3:18; Rev. 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!”
 3. Where did St. Paul ever get the idea for this phrase **the Spirit of wisdom and revelation**?
 - a. Remember that this man was thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures
 - b. And so he is without a doubt thinking of **Isaiah 11:2 The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.**
 4. Now I think that is a pretty solid argument for saying that this refers to the work of the Holy Spirit
 - a. Dr. John MacArthur in his commentary on Ephesians says that the spirit of wisdom and revelation is not the Holy Spirit, but then goes on to say, nevertheless, that the Holy Spirit must be active here
 - b. Dr. Lloyd-Jones says that there can be no doubt that it is the Holy Spirit being referred to
- C. We desperately need this
1. We lack wisdom in ourselves—that being the ability to take the Bible and apply it in a practical way to every area of life
 2. Put down your buckets where you are
 3. William Randolph Hearst seeking a great work of art to purchase—only to be told that he already owned it

4. We are sitting on a gold mine and don't know it
5. God has given us tremendous **resources for Christian living**—and we need the work of the Holy Spirit to help us see and develop and enjoy them

II. THE RESOURCES WE HAVE

- A. The knowledge of God
 1. J. I. Packer in his book *Knowing God* mentions a British educator who was scorned by others for being a Christian; this man said, “But I have known God, and they haven't.”
 2. Think what a mercy it is that God should make Himself known to us
 - a. We know all kinds of things **about** God
 - b. But in Christ we have come to know God in an entirely different way
 - 1) We know forgiveness, removal of guilt, and peace
 - 2) We know the grace, mercy and love of God as our Father
 - 3) We know that God intervenes in the world, for He has moved in our own lives
- B. The hope of His calling
 1. Whatever else you may say about the world, I think you would agree that it is hopeless
 - a. Today we face an administration that, despite the oath of office, is making war on the Constitution
 - b. People are pinning their hopes on public education, socialized medicine, and bigger government to save them—but we can see through all that
 2. In contrast with all that, think of the prospect we have in Christ
 - a. We are part of the Kingdom of God—the greatest and longest-lived institution on the face of the earth
 - b. We are part of an endeavor which can not fail because God is behind it
 - c. We may be called upon to suffer many things—but then soldiers of Christ must expect that as they push on to victory—when the battle is over we shall still be standing **Ephesians 6:13**
 3. Remember that we are looking for Christ to come back in a great victory celebration and usher us into the fullness of **the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwells righteousness**
- C. The riches of the glory of His inheritance
 1. Christ has come into this world to die on the cross to save His people from their sins
 - a. If you came here today not sure you are one of His people, I hope that you will ask Him to make you one of His people and save you from sin
 - b. But think of the church—composed as it is of people like us with all sorts of besetting sins, coming far short of God's glory
 - c. Yet we are His inheritance!
 2. Here is the place for self-esteem in a Biblical sense—we are God's treasure!
- D. Immense power
 1. Don't you feel pretty powerless at times in this increasingly hostile world?
 2. Don't you at times despair of anything good happening?
 - a. You have a loved one who is living far from Christ and you see no prospect of

- change
- b. Perhaps you have been struggling with some besetting sin and have just suffered a setback and are about ready to give up
- c. Think back to your own conversion—the power of God's amazing grace that gripped you and changed your direction
- d. It takes a lot of power to change a sinner into a Christian—in fact, it takes the same power that it took to raise the dead body of Jesus from the dead vs 20
- 3. You see, you have forgotten that power of God
 - a. Here you have a tremendous conglomeration of power words 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion....
 - b. Now I can tell you about it, point out the wonder of what is before us in the text—but that is not enough
 - 1) St. Paul does not just write about this
 - 2) He says that he is praying that this will be their experience vss 16-17
 - 3) It is, you see, only the Holy Spirit who can open our eyes to the resources we have as Christians

III. WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

- A. I think we have developed a wrong emphasis in our prayers
 - 1. Our prayers are frequently involved with **purely temporary** things
 - 2. Now there is a place for prayer for the sick, the troubled, the jobless, the homeless
- B. Do you realize what it means to be a Christian?
 - 1. How much of our prayer life is devoted to increasing our devotion to the Lord, our obedience to His law, our consecration to His service?
 - 2. It won't do just to study these things
 - 3. Let's seek to learn to pray that **the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you [us] the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, they eyes of your [our] understanding being enlightened, that you [we] may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe..**

The Holy Spirit and the Love of God

Ephesians 3:14-21

Introduction

- A. Last time I sought to show you something about how the Holy Spirit works to help us develop the riches or resources we have as Christians from **Ephesians 1:17-23**
- B. Now today I want to show you something of the relation between the Holy Spirit and the love of God
 - 1. First, let me point out something that has long been neglected

- a. We hear a great deal about the love of God: **John 3:16**, etc.
 - b. We hear a great deal about the love of Jesus: **Galatians 2:20**, etc.
 - c. But when have you heard anything about the love of the Holy Spirit?
 - 1) At times one would think our idea of the Holy Spirit is almost like the heretical view of the “Jehovah's Witnesses”
 - 2) It is almost as if He were a cold, impersonal power
 - 2. But the Bible does speak about the love of the Spirit in **Romans 15:30** **Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,**
 - a. The Holy Spirit has personal affection for us
 - b. He came to us while we were yet sinners, entered our hearts, giving us the fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom, working repentance and faith
 - c. He bears with us, guides and directs us as the children of God as we stumble along
 - d. As He brings us to see, more and more, something of the wonderful love of God
- C. Very well, then, I draw your attention to another prayer of Paul in **Ephesians 3:14-21**; please note

I. WE NEED TO BE CHANGED ON THE INSIDE

- A. Paul's prayer
 - 1. Notice how Trinitarian Paul is
 - a. The doctrine of the Trinity is not some impractical, theoretical abstraction
 - b. Note that his whole approach is towards expanding our appreciation for the riches of God's love
 - c. So God is **the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ vs 14**
 - d. We have received the name of God as part of His family
 - 1) People are proud of their family heritage or genealogy
 - 2) We not only have a human genealogy, we have a spiritual one as well, for we bear the name of God as part of His family
 - 3) Outwardly this is manifested in Christian baptism by which we are baptized **into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit**
 - 2. Note how practical Paul is
 - a. We may be part of a family without a real appreciation of our heritage
 - b. We should have a deepening appreciation of the privilege of being part of the family of God
 - 1) Can you look back in your life and recognize that God made you part of His family?
 - 2) As you see what is going on in the world, do you not give thanks that He graciously snatched you from your downward course on the broad way that leads to destruction?
 - c. Now Paul could write about this, and explain and explain, and it would do no good
 - 1) What a masterpiece of literature and theology is this letter to the Ephesians!
 - 2) What a masterpiece is the Bible! Yet how many truly appreciate it and understand its message?
 - 3) Nothing less than divine power can open our eyes to these things
- B. The inner person
 - 1. Paul is not interested in mere outward change

- a. People can manifest some of the Christian virtues by turning over a new leaf and developing some new habits
- b. We might think such a person is a Christian **Matthew 7:17,20 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.**
- c. But some people are like Christmas trees—what they bear is not fruit, but **ornamentation**
- d. So he does not deal with their outward lives until **Ephesians 4:**
- e. Let us remember that until we get our inward lives in order we will never be anything more than hypocrites
2. So Paul is concerned, as God is, and as we should be, for the development of **the inner man**
 - a. Too often we get caught up in outward things and are satisfied with them
 - b. But real change must be within, and then it will evidence itself in an outward way

II. ONLY DIVINE POWER CAN BRING ABOUT THIS CHANGE

- A. The power comes from God the Father
 1. You will notice again that Paul does not make any appeal to these people at all until chapter 4!
 2. Here he is merely telling them that he makes appeals to God on their behalf
 3. Note that this all presupposes **our weakness**, for his prayer is that we **be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man**
- B. The power is through the Holy Spirit
 1. Having mentioned the Holy Spirit what is the next thing Paul mentions?
 - a. Remember, what is the chief work of the Holy Spirit? **John 16:14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.**
 - b. So the work of the Spirit is Christ-centered, not just to turn unbelievers into believers, but for those of us who are already believers
 2. His desire is **vs 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith**
 - a. Now what does that mean?
 - b. We hear a lot about receiving Christ into our hearts, accepting Christ, and I have no quarrel with that idea although some people carry it to extremes
 - c. We ought to be more concerned than we are about **Christ accepting us!** In fact, we ought to make that a far more prominent part of our evangelism than we do
 - d. Note that it is **through faith**
 - 1) It is not some literal or physical indwelling of Christ
 - 2) Christ is now seated in ascended glory at the right hand of God the Father; we must never forget the momentous words of the angel in **Luke 24:6 He is not here, but is risen!**
 - 3) It is true that Christ is God, and is spiritually omnipresent; but that is not what the disciples were looking for on that first Easter
 - 4) Christ dwells in our hearts through faith as we **think about Him in all His fullness as our Savior and Lord**
 - e. **Do you welcome Jesus into your secret thought life?**
 - f. Now the word here is very important
 - 1) He is not speaking of us welcoming Jesus for an occasional visit—brunch,

- perhaps, or even for a fine dinner
- 2) He is talking of Jesus **moving in, settling down and taking over**
 - 3) When you buy a house you move in, settle down, redecorate, remodel, and make that house what you want it to be
 - 4) You may even demolish part of the house and build something better in its place
 - 5) While that is going on the house will be a mess and there will be turmoil
 - 6) That is what Christ does to us as He dwells in our hearts by faith

III. THE CHANGE IS BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE LOVE OF GOD

- A. We begin with a sense of Christ's love
 1. If you want to build an addition to your home you have to establish a proper **foundation**-you can't just lay beams on the ground and build from there
 2. So in order to make progress and grow as Christian everything must be **rooted and grounded in love**
 - a. What is the meaning of what he says in **vs 19 to know the love of Christ?**
 - 1) It is His love for me?
 - 2) Or is it my love for Him?
 - b. You see, it has to be His love for me for two reasons
 - 1) My love for Him is small and weak and unstable—nothing that would serve as a foundation!
 - 2) This love **passes knowledge**
- B. The Holy Spirit constantly expands our horizons on the love of God
 1. He strengthens us
 - a. The word means to be fully able
 - b. The statement is formulated in such a way as to designate that the strength is exerted until is accomplished its objective
 2. He strengthens us to comprehend the incomprehensible
 - a. That sounds like double-talk, but it is not
 - b. There is a sense in which we know the love of Christ—and yet we do not
 - 1) We know some facts about it, and should be ever learning new facts about it
 - 2) But we are also, day by day, experiencing the love of Christ
 - c. The reason we need to grow is because the love of Christ surpasses knowledge
 3. What God wants of us is to grow in every way
 - a. He does not ask us to serve Him out of a sense of duty
 - b. Still less are we to do Christian things to win the applause of men
 - c. We are to do everything out of a sense of the wonder of **the love of Christ which passes knowledge**
 4. No matter how much you know of it, there is always more because it is infinite: he speaks in spatial terms because that is the only way we as creatures can think: **vs 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height**
 5. The goal is that we **may be filled with all the fullness of God**
 - a. Once again this brings us right back to the Lord Jesus Christ
 - b. For in **Colossians 2**: Paul says something similar
vss 6-7 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,

rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

vss 9-10 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

The Holy Spirit and Christian Joy

1 Thessalonians 1:5-7

I. JOY IN AFFLICTION

A. Different from worldly joy

1. There is nothing necessarily wrong with worldly joy
 - a. Some people enjoy baseball, others enjoy classical music, while others engage in what books describe as *The Joy of Cooking* and *The Joy of Sex*; still others find their joy in wealth
 - b. The good and pleasant things God gives us in life are meant to be enjoyed with gratitude to Him
 - c. And one man's joy will be another's bane: Mexican food, rock music, model trains
2. But worldly joy is temporary as a man named Asaph noted in **Psalm 73**
 - a. Once he was envious of other people **Psalm 73:3 For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.**
 - b. Later he came to himself when he realized as he says in **Psalm 73:18-19 Surely You set them in slippery placed; You cast them down to destruction. Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors.**
3. There is even a worldly “Christian” joy—the flash-in-the-pan Christian
 - a. Jesus describes such a person in the parable of the sower **Matthew 13:20-21 But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.**
 - b. Please note how different were the people in Thessalonica

B. Affliction often accompanies this joy

1. The joy of the temporary Christian evaporates when trouble comes
2. The joy of these people, on the other hand was mixed with affliction
 - a. You may recall that Paul and Silas brought the gospel to Thessalonica **Acts 17:1-10**
 - b. But you may also remember that there was a mob attack and riot, Christians were haled into court, and Paul and Silas were sent on to Berea
 - c. Now this is not a very auspicious beginning for a church, and one would not expect people going through this to be very joyful—yet that is what they were!
3. Perhaps you have had the experience of joy in affliction, or have been in the presence of one who, in spite of great suffering, is filled with joy
4. Sometimes affliction of soul precedes the joy of soul given by the Holy Spirit
 - a. John Newton “‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;”
 - b. Indeed, this is frequently one aspect of the work of the Spirit in bringing people to Christ: they first go through a period of earthly trouble, then they are brought to inner trouble of heart over sin and estrangement from God, and then they find

relief from Christ

II. JOY IN THE GOSPEL

- A. The gospel came in word **vs 5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only....**
1. The gospel coming in word only turns out to be a curse
 - a. The word is never without effect **Isaiah 55:11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.**
 - 1) So people are called upon to **Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. Isaiah 55:6**
 - 2) And those who do are promised eternal joy **Isaiah 55:12-13**
 - b. Let us never forget that God's word inevitably has an effect on every person exposed to it
 2. But it is also a curse to not have the word at all
 - a. In many places in America today that is indeed the case; there may be a church—but is the gospel preached in that church?
 - b. There are even churches that are styled evangelical—but there is precious little attention given to the atonement, to the matter of salvation from sin
 - c. The gospel came to Thessalonica in word—and they could be thankful for that for according to the Bible **Romans 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**
- B. The gospel came in power **vs 5 ...but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance....**
1. For the gospel to come in power does **not** require a dynamic preacher
 - a. Paul notes what happened when he preached in Corinth **1 Corinthians 2:1-5**
 - b. You will notice how similar the situation was in Thessalonica
 2. The gospel comes in power not when there is a dynamic preacher or a good, rousing sermon, but **when the hearers are gripped by the power of the Holy Spirit**
 - a. The preacher needs the help of the Holy Spirit in order to preach
 - b. But hearers need the help of the Holy Spirit in order to profit from hearing
- C. The gospel gripped them **vs 6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction....**
1. In spite of the odds being against their accepting the gospel they heard and believed
 2. It was obvious to them from the beginning that becoming a Christian was going to spell worldly trouble for them: there had been a riot, some were in trouble with the law, and Paul and Silas were off to Berea and unable to help them!
 3. People who become Christians in the face of such odds are likely to remain Christians
 - a. There is no room for easy-believism here
 - b. People who are confronted with opposition such as this at the beginning are people who will first count the cost, and then will persevere unto the end

III. JOY IN WITNESS

- A. The joy encouraged believers **vs 7 so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.**

1. Now you can imagine how others reacted to this
 2. At times affliction may become a pulpit from which to preach Christ **Galatians 4:13 You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first.**
- B. The word about this remarkable people spread **vs 8 For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth...**
1. This sort of joy arrests the attention of other people
 2. The result is that they talk to others about it, and the word begins to spread **vs 10**
 3. A gospel that can take people who should, by rights, be most miserable and fill them with unspeakable joy is one that will get attention
- C. These people were remarkably changed **vss 9-10**
1. They turned from idols
 2. They came to serve the true God
 3. Their lives were flooded with hope for the future **vs 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.**
 - a. There **is** wrath to come
 - b. But God poured out on Jesus all of His wrath against us, and we have nothing to fear
 - c. Some were afraid departed loved ones would miss out on the second coming—but Paul reassures them in **4:13-18**
- D. Such is Christian joy
1. It is independent of worldly circumstances
 2. It is a joy available to us because it is **joy of the Holy Spirit**