

The Spirit and the Church

1. Introduction.

a. Where we've been.

- i. There tends to be a separation made between being “Spirit-filled” and “Word-centered.”
- ii. The work of the Spirit can never be separated from the presence of the Word. The Spirit always works through His Word (Gen. 1).
- iii. The role of the Spirit in the unbelieving world (Jn. 16:8-11).
 1. The Spirit convicts concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment.
 2. Objective guilt and subjective guilt.

b. Today, we'll talk about the role of the Spirit in the life of the Church.

- i. What are the ministries of the Spirit?
- ii. This is a very brief introduction to an enormous topic. As such, I will only lightly touch on some of the ministries of the Spirit.
- iii. This is a talk about the works of the Spirit, which will lead into the next talk—the responsibility of the Christian in light of what the Spirit does (i.e., to be filled by the Spirit [Eph. 5:18ff.]).

2. The Spirit is the most prominent member of the God-head in our age.

- a. Christ said when He went away He would send the Spirit (Jn. 16:7).
- b. The Spirit is the member of the Trinity with whom we interact with most. He is the One who ministers among us.

3. The works of the Spirit in the Church.

a. The Spirit Regenerates (Jn. 3:1-8).

- i. The Spirit takes a heart of stone and replaces it with a heart of flesh, giving life to that which was lifeless and dead. This is the new birth.

- ii. We are generated by God in our natural birth, but then regenerated by the Spirit in a new birth.
 - iii. Cf., Gen. 1.
- b. The Spirit seals (Eph. 1:13).
- i. The Spirit protects (i.e., seals) God's redeemed possession for the day of redemption.
 - 1. There is no defection from being a true possession of God.
 - 2. God is securing the vehicle through which He will be praised for all of eternity.
 - ii. To be "sealed" is to be kept secure in your status of being "in Christ."
- c. The Spirit is a pledge (Eph. 1:14).
- i. The term, "pledge" could also be translated as "deposit" or "down payment." In this sense, the Spirit is the first fruits of everything the Christian will receive. The presence of the Spirit functions as a sign of everything God has promised to deliver.
 - ii. There is no retraction of this promise. We are God's possession, but God has also promised us a possession—an eternal inheritance.
- d. The Spirit teaches (Jn. 16:13).
- i. The Spirit takes what has been given to Him by Christ and reveals it to us.
 - ii. In the context, since Christ is talking to His disciples, He's actually speaking about the fact they would be writing Scripture. By the work of the Holy Spirit, the disciples would be inscribing the mind of Christ.
 - iii. "And He [the Spirit] will guide you into all truth" is better translated, "And He will guide you in all truth."
 - 1. The role of the Spirit is not to bring new truth, but to guide us within the realm of previously revealed truth (i.e., Scripture).

2. He will give understanding, illumination, and application of revealed truth.

iv. Cf. 1Jn. 2:27.

1. This is not a statement that the Church doesn't need teachers.
 2. Christ has gifted to the Church, teachers (Eph. 4:11). The Spirit then works through those teachers.
 - a. Indeed, the Spirit has given to some the gift of teaching.
 - b. As the teachers of the Church get the message of Scripture right, the Spirit then provides understanding, illumination, and application to the teaching.
 3. The point to understand is the Spirit never brings new revelation/teaching. He works with the revelation Christ has given Him, once for all (cf. Jude 1:3).
 4. The order:
 - a. The Father gave His message and purposes to the Son.
 - b. The Son gave His words to the Spirit and disciples.
 - c. The Spirit then aids in bringing Christ's words and work to the remembrance of the Apostles.
 - d. The Apostles inscripature the Words of Christ, passing it along to the Church.
 - e. The Church then goes out, bringing the message and Words of Christ to the world.
 5. The Spirit works through this entire process, functioning as the Teacher of the Church.
- e. The Spirit unites (Eph. 4:3-6).
- i. Jesus prayed for unity (Jn. 17:11-23).
 - ii. The Spirit is the agent that brings about this unity.

- iii. We are not commanded to attain the unity of the Spirit, but maintain/preserve the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 1:3).
 - 1. The command to maintain implies unity is something we already possess.
 - 2. As such, unity is an objective work and reality, wrought about by the ministry of the Spirit.

- f. We are baptized into the Spirit (Mark 1:8; Rom. 6).
 - i. Spirit baptism is not water baptism, nor is it connected with water baptism.
 - ii. Spirit baptism is an objective reality that happens to every Christian at the moment of conversion.
 - 1. It is not something we seek.
 - 2. It is not repeatable.
 - 3. It is not an experience, but an objective reality.
 - iii. The purpose of Spirit baptism is to incorporate believers into the universal body of Christ. You are placed into the realm in which the Spirit dwells—the Church.

- g. The Spirit indwells (Rom. 8:11; 1Cor. 3:16, 16:9; 2Co. 6:16; 2Tim. 1:4).

- h. The Spirit fills (Eph. 5:18).

- i. The Spirit leads (Rom. 8:11; Gal. 5:18).
 - i. When it comes to the Spirit's leading, the important point to understand is that His leading is not something we can discern, rather, it's an objective reality that takes place.
 - ii. If you're a Christian, the reality is that you are being led by the Spirit.
 - 1. There's not a command for the Christian to follow the leading of the Spirit.

2. Instead, the Spirit's leading (esp. Rom. 8:11) is a reference to the fact that the Spirit sovereignly leads us, but for God's glory and for our good.
 3. The Spirit is still in control of the unbelieving world, but He relates to believers differently. He leads believers in a manner that is good for them. He is working all things together for their good (cf. Rom. 8:28).
- j. The Spirit Prays (Rom. 8:26-27).
- i. In times of great struggle, the Spirit helps us in our weakness by petitioning the Father on our behalf.
 - ii. He always prays in accordance to the perfect will of the Father (v. 27). As such, we can have confidence that whatever the Spirit prays on our behalf, we know the Father hears.
- k. The Spirit glorifies the Son (Jn. 15:26; 16:13-14).
- i. Every single work of the Spirit has one final goal—to exalt the person, work, and words of Christ.
 1. The Spirit witnesses, not of Himself, but of Christ (15:26).
 2. The Spirit speaks, not His own words, but Christ's words (14:26).
 3. The Spirit glorifies, not Himself, but the Son (16:14).
4. Conclusion— when all is said and done, the role of the Spirit in the Church is to put the person of Christ on display.