

“SUBMITTING TO THE SPIRIT” / EQUIPPED TO SERVE / THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

Equipped to Serve (say it) Today we begin week 6 of this series in which our primary theme has been – WE, the bride of Christ, the body, the church has been and is being equipped by God to serve with Him in his grand redemption plan on this earth. Together, we are equipped to serve. Question: As we serve, in serving: **Do you believe God wants to live through you?**

I have good news for you today – no matter who you are – God wants to live in you and through you. *Today – God wants you to leave this place believing that He wants to live through you.*

You may be saying – John, you don't know me!

- *I have never believed in God; I have used people my whole life to get my way; I am used goods; **God wants to live thru me?***
- *I have been a part of church – but I have never heard God speak or really experienced him; **God wants to live thru me?***
- *I serve, I give, I do a lot for God, but I'm just not sure He is working - in me; **God wants to live thru me?***
- *I use to be close to God and I saw God do amazing things – but now ... He seems so far; **God wants to live thru me?***

The bible is full of stories of God living in and through broken messed up people. This whole book is a revelation of a great and loving holy God who redeems and restores broken people to Himself and for His great purpose.

Paul – who wrote two letters we will be looking in today was an amazing vessel of God. Not because of His great skills as an preacher or writer. He was a below average at speaking – above average writer. No Paul is amazing story and vessel because of how broken he was. He was extremely religious – moral, but was far from God. So far – he was murdering people thinking he pleasing God in orchestrating these murders. He was like a mob boss putting out hits on people. As far as we know – He did not raise his hand to murder one person. But, he was the one who put out contracts on many who were murdered. When Jesus revealed Himself to Paul and Paul fell off his horse blind – I bet he never thought he could be forgiven for his acts.

Imagine the guilt (he took many a dad and mom, brother and sister from families and friends). Imagine the shame. (He took these people and had them murdered believing he was doing this for God.) Everything he did was to make himself look good before God and in this he failed. The guilt and shame must have been huge. Yet – God showed him forgiveness through Jesus who took all of Paul's sin to the cross and paid for them under God's just hand. Somehow Paul believed this and God used Him. He lived in Paul and through Him for many years affecting many lives. If anyone knows what it is like to be used goods – it is Paul. If anyone knows what it is like to do church – but miss God – it is Paul. God loves broken vessels – like you and I.

Good News! **God ... wants ... to live ... through ... you!** Can't believe it – listen to God today. See if He doesn't help you believe today. You do believe this – but you're not sure you will ever really experience God's presence in or thru you: ask Him right now – God how can you live through me? Please, show me!

Here's the one question we are asking today: **Do you believe God wants to live through you?** 2 smaller questions:

01. How Does God Live Through You?

02. What Is Jesus' Role In God Living Through You?

01. How Does God Live Through You?

EPHESIANS 5:15-20 (ESV) 15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

- **What keeps you and I from believing that God's Spirit wants to live through us? What is it for you?**

1) **We don't know the truth.**

In Christ – God is with you. The Spirit of God lives in you. **v15 - wise**

EPH 1:13/ In him (Jesus) you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, **Trusting Jesus to be right w God – we are baptized in the Spirit.**

2) **We are not living under the Spirit's power and rule in our lives.**

- **Many in Christ are not living in need of the Spirit's presence.** **v16 – best use of time – don't be foolish** *“I don't sense God's presence.” “Do you need God - Why?” “In crisis – or I don't really need Him.”* **Needing God in a crisis is good, but when we only need the Spirit in crisis we fail to live in his presence the majority of our life – which is how he has designed us to live. Remember - we are united with Christ and his body on his mission – we need him because we are to be about his business – loving friends, serving our kids, caring for one spouse, listening to someone we don't understand but is hurting – engaging others, asking for forgiveness, forgiving, working hard when we are tired, showing mercy, and ... (all this requires Him)**

- **We are living under the power and rule of something else.** **v18 - wine – approval, power, comfort)**

- **How do we live under the Spirit's power and rule?**

EPHESIANS 5:18 (ESV) ... but be filled with the Spirit, **This is how God lives through us!**

filled (*plērousthe*) - to be filled to the full, overflowing. This verb helps us better understand God's desire to live through us. This verb "filled" is in the plural, imperative, present, passive form. This means:

- 1) for all in Christ (*plural*) *We*
- 2) it is a command (*imperative*) *must*
- 3) an ongoing action (*present*) *continuously*
- 4) that is done to you (*passive*) *submit*

Again – to be filled to the full is a picture. The passive implies "submission". We put ourselves under His rule, His power by willingly allowing the Spirit who lives in us to overflow us – to consume us!

How Does God Live Through You?

We must continually submit ourselves to God's Spirit. *If we are to live under His power and rule.*

What does this look like – to continually submit ourselves to God's Spirit?

- In prayer, I submit to the Spirit's covenant presence.

Help me believe that You are always with me and I am always completely accepted in Christ.

On the cross, sinless Jesus took my place. By faith in His work – He received all my crimes against God and my punishment. I received his perfect record so now I am completely acceptable (loved) and with God.

I prayed this when I walked into JZs assessment weekend – Temptation in praise or that crowd to be something I'm not or let praise make me think my efforts make things happen on this earth. So, I prayed God let me submit to Your Spirit's loving presence. I am completely yours, acceptable – loved. Make this beyond enough in my eyes.

- In prayer – I submit to the Spirit's rule and power.

I need Your Spirit to direct and empower my every thought and action.

In Christ, by the Spirit, I live in his ways from my acceptance – not for it. But I know I need the Spirit to direct my every thought and action. And even more, I need the Spirit to empower me to live in these actions.

CORINTHIANS 12:6 (ESV) and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. *God is the energy and the energizer for the gifts He gives us so He can live through us.*

CORINTHIANS 12:11 (ESV) All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. *He is not filling us just to do spectacular things – these gifts are for every day living.*

I use to picture the Spirit as electricity, the guitar was some gift (teaching, prophecy) and if I plugged into the Spirit – great things could happen for God when I took and used the gifts he had given me.

Does anyone see the problem in my picture? *I am not the musician on the guitar. I am the guitar. God is the electricity and the musician. All I am is the guitar. When you think you are the musician – you only want God's power. You and I think we can do this – God just please empower it.*

I don't want to live this way because I know this always ends in me living for my ways. Do you want to live God's way – so that He is living through you? Then, you and I must submit to the Spirit or I will be about my purposes.

What is one of the greatest helps in submitting – the more I see and know the beauty and power of Christ – that is who He is and what He has done. *This moves my gut to give up my puny throne – and kneel at His.*

02. What Is Jesus' Role In God Living Through You?

God the Father, sent Jesus, God the Son, to this earth with a great purpose that was part of God's grand redemption plan from the beginning of time.

EPHESIANS 1:4 (NLT) Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ

That great purpose was that thru his life, death, and resurrection – he would bring us to God. So God could live in us and through us. 1) You and I being with God is a part of His grand redemption plan. 2) God living through us bringing others to be with Him – is also a part of His grand redemption plan. To enact this plan – Jesus (God) would have have to submit to a crazy plan that began with Him coming to earth as a man. May viewing this – move us off our throne – and may it joyfully and willingly move us to begin kneeling at his daily.

- Christ lived a sinless life, in joyful obedience to God – **by the Spirit's power.**

LUKE 4:18 (ESV) "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor."

Jesus lived by the Spirit's power. He was all God, but he was also all man and he desperately depended on the Spirit to live the perfect life of obedience he lived.

If we are to live in joyful obedience – we too desperately need the Spirit.

- Christ died a sin bearing death in our place – **by the Spirit's power.**

HEBREWS 9:14 (NLT) For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. *Jesus' sinless life – allowed him to die in your place. If he was not sinless – he could not have taken your guilt. But as he went to offer his life for you and I so we could be reunited with God – his humanity asked for another way. Father if there is another way to do this – to accomplish your purpose – to enact your grand plan – please! But by the Spirit's power – he said – your will, you rule – empower me to die. We have a purpose on this earth as well – to live with God and allow Him to live through us so others can be reunited to God – and so others in Christ can remember their purpose and live out their purpose with God.*

In order to live in our purpose – as Jesus did – we must die to our self – and live by God's rule and power. Know – it is normal to say – God please, is there another way. But by the Spirit – we can say – your rule, your power!

- Christ was raised from His death for sin - **by the Spirit's power.**

ROMANS 1:4 (NLT) and he was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit.

On the cross, perfect sinless Jesus – became guilty on my behalf. He took my crimes, my record and broke down the barrier that keeps me from God – my guilt before holy God.

Rising from the dead – He proved he is God and through His work God can live with you and through you!

But it was the Spirit of God who raised Him to life.

By faith in Jesus work – I am declared right before God – because I am given Jesus perfect record. This is huge because I am seen as holy and perfect so now I am a perfect temple or vessel for perfect holy God to be with me – in me. Stunning!

What Is Jesus' Role In God Living Through You?

- 1) **We need Jesus to give us God's Spirit – to bring us to God.**

Without Jesus' work – I cannot be with God and God cannot live in me and through me.

My sin and my guilt before holy God is a barrier – that keeps me from God.

JESUS destroyed this barrier – with his life.

Have you trusted your soul to the work of Jesus to make you right with God and to bring you into the presence of God? If you say – I have never known God's presence – this may be why.

Let me explain -

We often look at Jesus life or his role in God living through us in this way:

- * **He is my example – so now be like Jesus and God will live through me.**

*Many think being a Christian is following the ways of Jesus as best you can. Do you believe this? Do you believe you can follow His example well enough – that God says, “Well done, I want to be with you and live through you.” You know you. Have your good efforts ever removed the guilt and shame you have felt in this life or the hurt you have silently struggled with that others have caused. No amount of our effort can erase our shame and make us believe God would be with us or erase the hurt enough to believe it would matter if God was with us. Jesus did not live in perfect obedience and die a loving sacrificial death - just to give us as an example of how to live. He lived in perfect obedience and died carrying my guilt – **to bring you and I to God.***

- 2) **In Christ – if God is to live through us – we desperately and daily need to submit to the Spirit.**

(Jesus did – we absolutely do. Question is – will join God in His plan?)

Christ follower – will you begin to live the daily practice of submitting to the Spirit of God?

It is how you will experience God's presence. / It is how you will see God at work through you.

It is how you will see God at work in you. / It is the only way you and I can join God his life living through us.

Believer – this is what you were made for.

Gaylor Mustin – Grew up in church – but lived another life and woke up one day under the rule of alcohol.

- He ran back to the church, and began to work real hard at serving, learning, doing – to erase the guilt and the hurt he had caused and others had caused him. But no amount of his efforts could erase the guilt and shame. Relapsed!

- One day – a man was preaching and Jesus said – “you can’t save yourself.” Only I can remove the guilt and shame. Only I can give you life. He fell on his knees and trusted Jesus to take his guilt and shame and even more he confessed he had been trying to make it go away and this was wrong – a sin because he was taking Jesus place as savior. Today – He know what it is like to be a person in church who has missed God. He knows what it is like to feel like used goods. But God has convinced Him – I want to live my life through you. The last 15 years. Serving in a mission down town and teaching in the suburbs. God wants to live through you. Believer – this is what you were made for.