

The Helper

John 14:15-18

How consciously aware are you of the work of the Holy Spirit in your past and present life? Would you say that you are keenly aware of His transforming ministry in you? Or would you say that you're not living with an awareness of the Spirit's work in you or with a conscious dependence on the Spirit?

Concerning the ministry of the Spirit, the Apostle Paul wrote: *"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, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."* Ephesians 1:13-14

If you're saved, God's word clearly teaches that you have been sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. This doesn't mean that God stamps a literal insignia on your body that signifies that you passed heavens quality control tests and are thereby fit for heaven. Rather, the palpable work of the Spirit in your heart and life is the guarantee or the down payment of the greater glory to be enjoyed in your resurrected body in the kingdom to come.

To put it another way, although our salvation will not be fully realized until we come into the presence of God, through the Spirit we can experience in this life a taste of the resurrected life to come. And it's this resurrected life—the notable, supernatural difference the Spirit is making in our lives, that is the spiritual seal, the insignia, the mark that we are heaven born and heaven bound.

Although if you're saved, there ought to be a tangible witness of the transforming work of the Spirit in your life, it's possible that you're not presently living a Spirit filled life, which means you're not living in the fullness of your new life in Christ. And one reason that you may not be, is that you're just not sure what it means to be Spirit filled, let alone how to be.

And I want to submit to you that in addition to a lack of personal study, there is also a lack of teaching on the Spirit filled life in the church and frankly a lot of bad teaching as well.

The little or non existent teaching on the Holy Spirit has been noted to be a reaction to the unbiblical teaching and wacky things done in the name of the Spirit. Some Bible teachers and churches don't make much of an emphasis on the Spirit to avoid being associated with the abuses taking place in the name of the Spirit. And while some of the bad teaching and practices can be really out there (i.e. laughing uncontrollably, carrying on as if one were intoxicated), much of the wrong teaching is not as obvious, but still leading even genuine believers astray.

And what makes some of the wrong teaching on the Holy Spirit harder to identify is that Christians are taking a New Covenant promise and viewing it through an Old Covenant lens. The New Covenant promise, for example, is that when a sinner believes on Jesus for Salvation, the Holy Spirit, God's presence, takes up residence in the believer.

Believers, individually and collectively, are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Under the Old Covenant, the presence of God dwelled visibly in a physical temple. His presence also led the Children of Israel in a pillar of a cloud by day and a fire by night. When Moses spoke to God, who appeared to him in a cloud inside a tent, the glory of God shined on his face.

Now God still manifests His presence today and His glory is still shining, but the manifestation and the shining is not from the outside in, but from the inside out. In other words, the light of the glory of God shines not on our face, but in our hearts and His presence is manifested in our bodies through the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 4:6-7

But although this is the New Covenant reality of the promised Holy Spirit, the language you hear in many churches is about "coming into the presence of God" or you may also hear prayers about "welcoming the presence of God."

Under the Old Covenant, the high priest went behind the veil in the temple and came into the presence of God. But under the New Covenant promise, He's already present in the hearts of believers. Under the New Covenant promise, Spirit filled believers bring with them the presence of God when they gather together and they experience His presence as He works in them and through them.

Because words sometimes mean different things to different people, we need to clarify what we mean when we say things like, *Holy Spirit you are welcome here*, which is a lyric in a very well-known worship song. When we sing or pray, you are welcome here, do we mean the Spirit is welcomed in the building? The Spirit didn't come to dwell in a building. Or do we mean, you're welcome in our hearts? If you're saved, He's already in your heart.

Perhaps for some, to welcome God's presence means to "yield to the Spirit" who already lives in them and is at work in them. And that would be correct. But I'm afraid many would not interpret, "Holy Spirit you are welcome here" in that way.

Many Christians today are coming to church looking for an experience that can be manufactured with concert style music, state of the art lighting, smoke machines, and a motivational message. Today, with enough money, you can create a certain kind of atmosphere through these outward mechanisms that can give people an emotional charge. We can manipulate a mood with the right sound and ambiance.

But unlike the Old Covenant, the Holy Spirit doesn't dwell in a building or flood the atmosphere. Rather, He works in and through our hearts so that individually and collectively we can encounter His transforming presence.

In this series that we titled, Inside-Out, we are going to consider some of the dangerous implications of the pseudo spirituality that comes from a distorted view of the Holy Spirit. And more importantly, we are going to discover how the New Covenant promise of the indwelling Spirit changes everything from the inside out.

Main idea: God the Father, through His Son, gives the Spirit to all believers to transform them from the inside out.

In this message, we are going to glean from the teachings of Jesus some key ways that the indwelling Holy Spirit works to transform believers so that they become Christ's representatives in a fallen world.

1. Manifest the love of Christ

To begin with, the Holy Spirit works in the believer to manifest the love of Christ. Apart from the Spirit which Jesus promised to give to those who love Him, we would not know the love of God. And if we don't know the love of God, we will not love God or keep His commandments. Living the Christian life would be impossible if Jesus had not kept His promise.

Now Jesus made this promise to give the Holy Spirit in what is known as the upper room discourse. The promises that He shared, were His final words to His disciples before going to the cross to pay for our sins. Beginning in John 14:15, we read:

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever..."
John 14:15

When Jesus speaks of *another Helper*, we know from verse 17 that He's speaking of the Spirit, which He promised to give to those who love Him and keep His commandments. It's important to note here that the Holy Spirit is given in the context of love. And when Jesus speaks of those who love Him and keep His commandments, He's speaking to His disciples.

This promise of the Holy Spirit was not only for them, but to them. Although not perfectly, Jesus' disciples loved Him and sought to live according to His plan and purpose. It's important also to emphasize that they loved Him because they knew Him. And they knew Him because He took the initiative to call them and reveal Himself to them.

Moreover, although they loved Him and yielded to the call to follow Him, it was not until they received the Holy Spirit after His ascension, that they came into a deeper love relationship with Him and a more radical devotion to fulfilling His redemptive purpose for their lives.

And it's important to see here that what Jesus did with His disciples while they walked with Him, the Holy Spirit would continue to do in them after He departed. What is the greatest thing that Jesus did for them that caused them to love Him and want to live for Him? Above all, He manifested His love for them in His incarnation, in His earthly ministry, and ultimately through His death on the cross. We love Him because He first loved us.

What is the Spirit's primary work in the believer? It's to manifest the love of Christ so that we love Him and keep His commandments and fulfill His purpose. What is the first and second greatest commandment? To love God and to love people. And that is what the Spirit, who Jesus referred to as *another helper*, helps us to do above all.

Now it's important not to miss something very instructive in the meaning behind the words "another helper" which refers to the Holy Spirit. The Greek word translated "another" signifies 'another in addition' of the same kind.

For example, my Samsung Smart TV is malfunctioning. The warranty is expired and my wife blames me for not getting the insurance. But if I had insurance, and I took it to Best Buy, they would either fix it or give me another new TV that is identical to the first.

Similarly, the Holy Spirit is "*another*" *Helper*. That is to say, He is *another Helper* in addition to Jesus and sent in place of Jesus on this earth, who is to us everything that Jesus was to His disciples on earth. At the end of verse 17, Jesus said to His disciples of the Holy Spirit who was one with Him, "*You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.*" John 14:17b

I love the way one bible teacher explains this: “Think of it! Jesus is about to return to the Father. While on this earth, He was everything to His disciples that they ever needed. He taught them all that they needed to know. He protected them. He led them. He provided for them. If they needed to know how to pray, He instructed them. If they were confronted with a difficult situation, He solved it for them. If they were fearful, He comforted them. If they were helpless and weak, He empowered them. He was everything to them.

And now, He is about to leave them. But before He goes, He promises to send *another Helper* in His place who is like Him. And that's what the Holy Spirit is to the followers of Christ on this earth! He is 'our Helper like Jesus'; who leads us where we are to go, teaches us what we need to know, and empowers us for what we need to do.”

Beloved, as Jesus was to His disciples when they were with Him, He promises that His Spirit will be to us who believe. The Spirit wasn't sent by Jesus to dwell in a building or an atmosphere. He was sent to be to us and in us what Jesus was to His disciple on earth.

And let me emphasize again, that above all these things, The Helper, the Holy Spirit helps us to know the manifest love of God in our hearts so that we would love Him above all, love others the way He loves us, and fulfill His redemptive purpose.

I want to submit to you that if a church declares that the power of the Holy Spirit is at work among them, but what you see manifested is not a love for Christ, a love for people and a commitment to do His will, then no matter what the church declares, you are not seeing the Holy Spirit at work there.

This brings us to our second point.

2. Magnify the life of Christ

The Holy Spirit works in the believer to magnify the life of Christ. While He approached the cross and after promising that He will ask the Father to give them *another Helper*, who in essence would be Christ in

them, Jesus clarifies in verse 17: “*even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.*” John 14:17

The Holy Spirit, who Jesus referred to as *another Helper*, is also called, among other names, *the Spirit of truth*. He’s the Spirit of truth because according to John 16:13, one of His main ministries is to guide the believer into all truth. And by doing so Jesus also said, “*He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*” John 16:14

A few verses down from our text, Jesus also said: “*These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you.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 that I have said to you.*” John 14:25-26

Notice that the Holy Spirit is not given to us to help us live out our own plans and purposes or to live out what many in our world would call *my truth*. This idea that fulfillment in life comes from living out *my truth*, is really a self-deceiving way of saying that you are going to be controlled by your own self-centered desires, wants, and feelings.

There is really no such thing as *my truth*. There is only God’s truth. My truth is the broad way that leads to destruction. God’s truth is the narrow way that leads to everlasting life.

Moreover, truth is more than concepts, precepts and principles. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and no man comes to the Father but through Him (John 14:6). If you have believed on Jesus as Lord and Savior, the Spirit of truth lives in you to guide you through the Word into all truth and to empower you to live it out to the glory of Jesus.

The Spirit of truth doesn’t work in us to makes us look impressive, but to magnify the life of Christ as we live out His truth in our lives.

There’s a lot of debate today about how the Spirit works and whether all the gifts of the Spirit are available today. These debates have often

led to division in the church. But one thing that is absolutely clear in the scriptures about the work of the Spirit is that, as Jesus put it: *“He will glorify me”* (John 16:14). If you missed this, you miss everything.

In his insightful book, *Transforming Presence*, Daniel Henderson expounds on this most essential aim of the Holy Spirit in our lives: “One thing consistently undermines the Holy Spirit’s chief purpose in our lives: self-glory. Gordon Fee affirms, “The ultimate criterion for the Spirit’s activity is the exaltation of Jesus as Lord. Whatever takes away from that, even if they be legitimate expressions of the Spirit, begins to move away from Christ to a more pagan fascination with spiritual activity as an end in itself.” Francis Chan concurs: “A sure sign of the Holy Spirit’s working is that Christ is magnified, not people.... The Spirit is here with us to accomplish God’s purposes, not ours.”

This brings us to our final point

3. Minister to the lost for Christ

The Holy Spirit works in us to **minister to the lost for Christ**. Knowing that He would soon depart physically from the earth and how troubled His disciples were by this revelation, Jesus sought to encourage their hearts through the promise of the Holy Spirit. And in addition to encouraging them through His promise that the Spirit would be for them who He was to them while in their midst, He also adds: *“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”* John 14:18

This is such a life changing, hope giving and revolutionizing promise from Jesus. Time will not allow us to fully unpack it. But with the time we have left, it’s important to clarify what Jesus means by, *“I will come to you.”*

He gives them this promise because He is about to depart from this world. And He wants to assure them that through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, He would not leave them as orphans. That is to say, they will not be alone. And more specifically, He will not be absent from their lives.

And if you're a believer, this promise is for you too. Jesus will never be absent from your life. He will not be absent because "the Holy Spirit's ministry in us of serving us in Jesus' bodily absence is so perfect and complete, that it's as if Jesus Himself is with us. He actually mediates the very presence of God." Greg Allen

We can know God's transforming presence not because He is hovering over us when we gather together, but because the Spirit is at work in us to make God's presence known, as we mediate on His word, seek Him in worship filled prayer, and as we yield to His will for our lives.

When Jesus says to His disciples, *I will come to you*, He could also have in mind that after His death and resurrection, He would appear to them for a short time and give them resurrection hope. But there is little doubt that Jesus is also referring to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who He has been speaking of all along and who He promised would be with them forever.

Before His ascension and after commissioning His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, in Matthew 28:20, Jesus again promised His disciples, as He did in His upper room discourse, that they would not be alone in this endeavor—that He will be with them to the end.

The gospel of Luke reveals that before His ascension, He also reminded His disciples of the promise of the Spirit. In Luke 24:49 we read: "*And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.*" In Acts 1:8, Luke also clarifies that the power they would receive, would come from the indwelling Spirit, which would enable them to be Christ's witnesses in the world.

So, the promise that Jesus would not leave them as orphans—that He would be with them in the person and power of the Spirit, is not only a promise that would comfort the disciples in a time when others would forsake them. It is also a promise to encourage them that when they set out to fulfill His plan and purpose to reach others for Christ, to

bring others into the family of God, He would be with them every step of the way.

Beloved, the Spirit is with us to give us more than a chill and a thrill while we listen to our favorite Christian artist or attend a high tech Christian concert. He works in us to minister to the lost for Jesus, to magnify the life of Jesus, and to manifest the love of Jesus in a broken world.

“Ron Owens expresses his concern candidly: ‘Today, especially in the realm of church music, God is often being used to display man’s talent rather than man’s talent being used to display God.’ Owens offers a heart-felt appeal to Christian leaders: Be careful how you play with the emotions of the people God has entrusted to your leadership and care. Be careful that your people do not become so accustomed to getting a “praise high” when they come to church that a service seems empty if they do not experience it. Many today hop from group to group, from church to church, looking for higher highs. The tragedy is that they have been led to believe that what they are experiencing is the Holy Spirit, when it is nothing more than an intense emotional response. It’s been said that what matters is not how high you jump on Sunday but how straight you walk on Monday.” Daniel Henderson

Conclusion

As believers, let us not look for an experience of the presence of God in the atmosphere, which can be manufactured by man. Rather, let us embrace the New Covenant promise of the Spirit, who lives in our hearts, and is manifested through our lives as we seek to prayerfully and intentionally live for Christ to the glory of His name.