

Week Three: Activity of the Spirit versus the Works of the Flesh

The work of the Spirit is demonstrated as programmatic and decisive in this account of the gospel. God is sending the disciples into the world.

Luke 4: 16 – 30.

1. What is being associated with Jesus in verses 18-19 and 21?
2. What was the point Jesus was making by using verses 26-27?

The Acts of the Early Witnesses

There is a thoughtful interpretation of the times in relation of the decisive activity of the Spirit. Acts 2:4, 11, 14-40.

There is a relation with “filled with the Spirit” and speaking in “tongues” in this passage. This relationship of Spirit and speech is for sharing the way of God. (See Acts 2 with 1 Corinthians 12 -14).

2. Spirit not only empowers speech but also facilitates action.
 - a. Holy Spirit “fills” the believer with resources for prophetic eloquence – Acts 2:4; 4:31.
 - b. Holy Spirit is given to humanity as a gift. – Acts 10:45; Acts 15:8.
 - c. Holy Spirit confronts opposition - Acts 5: 3,9.

Spirit as Mission Director

3. Story of Saul’s total turn- around in Acts 9. Read role of Anania in Acts 9:15-18. What is the significance of the transformation of Saul?

Paul the great teaching Apostle, understood that the Spirit was God availability to all of life (Ethnos).

- a. Story of Paul’s conversion(?) and the welcoming of gentiles (Acts 10:1-48).
- b. Mission priority focused beyond cultural lines (Acts 16: 1-10).
- c. Unity of the Spirit across class, social, and ethnic divides (Ephesians 4:1-6; Colossians 3:10-11)). What does it mean to be conformed into Christ’s image today in our congregations?
- d. Spirit is a seal of for “the day of redemption” Ephesians 4:30.
- e. Filled by the Spirit towards mutual sacrificial love (Ephesians 5:18-21)
- f. Spirit fire is purveyor of love set in sincere service to the Lord - (Romans 12:8-11)
- g. New life of freedom in the Spirit released from the Law - Romans 8. Why is the Spirit of bondage/slavery as compared to the Spirit of adoption important today as it was in Paul’s time? (Romans 8:14-17)

As living and prophetic witness of Christ, the unity of the Spirit should be maintained. There are disruptions from the focus of the Spirit when focus becomes self-centered and narrow outside of the intent of the Spirit for personal and community unity of life in Christ.

Christian story and vitality drifts away from God when there is no awareness of sin or becoming ritually compliant in gratefulness in overcoming sin. Wesleyan teaching is that sin has no control over us when the spiritual senses are really awake. Focus on the grace of God can balance the sleepiness to sin and the fearful preoccupation between God's will and the state of our souls.

Life immersed in the Spirit that is in God's very life, is about the gifting of the Holy Spirit inviting all into new life due to God's love. This is God's love that is not gratuitous, but more grace filled. The Spirit, which is from God in Christ, releases from captivity to sin that allows for flourishing. Paul appeal was daring: "renew the thinking in your mind by the Spirit...clothed yourself with the new person created according to God's image in justice and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24).

Life immersed in the Spirit that is in God's gives freedom to live. When Love of God in the heart of people is absent, selfishness leads to self-serving rather serving others through love. Spirit guided is not under any impulse of fear, legalism, or determinism of human desires under the disguise of faith, politics, history or distinctions of privilege.

Life that refuses to love God and the neighbor and guided by selfish desires produces destructive and dangerous pathways to community and self. Galatians 5: 19-21 describe some works or produce of the flesh (or selfish desires). Sexual immorality, moral corruption, doing whatever feels good, idolatry, drug use and casting spells, hate, fighting, obsession, losing your temper, competitive opposition, conflict, selfishness, group rivalry, jealousy, drunkenness, partying, and other things like that.

See Ephesians 4:25 to 4:31 and 5:3 to 5:5 and make comparison.

Can you name among the list any area that challenges you as a Christian to abide by? Why?

Wesley Hymn on the Holy Spirit –

My God! I know, I feel thee mine,

Song of Songs 2:16, 6:3

And will not quit my claim,
Till all I have is lost in thine,
And all renewed I am.

Song of Songs 3:4
Philippians 3:7-8
Ephesians 4:23, Col 3:10

When shall I see the welcome hour,
That plants my God in me!
Spirit of health, and life, and power,
And perfect liberty!

Heb. 3:13
Col. 2:7, Jas. 1:21
2 Tim. 1:7
2 Cor. 3:17

O that in me the sacred fire
Might now begin to glow
Burn up the dross of base desire
And make the mountains flow!

Lev. 1:17; Isa. 6:6-7
Matt. 3:11, Luk. 12:49
Isa. 1:25, Mal. 3:2-3
Isa. 64:1-3