

Upper Room Discourse - The Holy Spirit's ministry to Believers - continued
a study for the College and Career Class at Gulf Coast Baptist Church
by Steve Thomas 4/23/23

Introduction

The Holy Spirit was promised by Christ to the disciples. His ministry includes the guidance for the believer, illumination for the believer, and sanctification for the believer. The Holy Spirit is a Teacher who will guide the believer into all truth. The Holy Spirit makes the believer to know the “deep things” of God.

The Spirit does battle with our sin natures. The believer has been delivered from the power of his sin nature, but if he attempts to keep it under law, the sin nature revives. Only when the believer yields to the Spirit can he get victory.

Upon exerting power over the sin nature, the Spirit produces fruit that makes the believer display the character of Christ in any situation. This is only possible through continued yielding. When the believer is yielded and willing to be led, the Spirit will fill the believer and guide him in the way he should walk.

Freed from the Sin (nature)

Christ's death produced a possible life for the believer. In Adam's sin all the human race fell. When Christ paid the price for the sin of the world, He bought the rights to all men (Rom 3:22; 5:18). The price was paid for sin, and victory was made possible for the believer. In order to experience this victory, the believer must see himself the way the Father does, as crucified with Christ (6:4-7). Removing himself to the third heaven as it were, allows the Spirit to accomplish the work that will bring the believer this victory in real time.

Paul discusses this in Ephesians chapter 4. Having just walked the believer through his Position In Christ (chapters 1-3) he lets the believer know that it is possible to grieve the Spirit of God by abiding in the “old man” or the believer's previous position In Adam (4:22-24). The believer is told to “put on Christ”. This is the reflectional thinking that sees himself as the Father does, In the Son.

Galatians 5 walks the the believer through this process. The righteous acts of the believer do not accomplish anything, in fact if they are used to gain acceptance with God, they make the work of Christ to lose its effectiveness (5:4-6). It is the faith of the believer that gives the Spirit access to do the work of sanctification.

The Spirit works against the flesh (5:16-17). In order for the Spirit to win that battle the believer must order his life to give the Spirit control (Walk in the Spirit). This is akin to the yielding that Paul is talking about in Romans 6. When the sin nature is in control, the works are listed for all to see. When the Spirit is in control, the character of Christ is produced (5:22-24).

The Spirit terminates the desires of the sin nature, giving the believer victory over the appetites of the Flesh.

“Walk” vs “Keep in step with”

The Spirit is doing the actual work in this passage, but the believer has a responsibility to give the Spirit continued access. The temptation is for the believer to take credit for what the Spirit is producing. The believer will have the desire to make this about him instead of giving others the opinion of God that is appropriate. This behavior causes envying and incites the other believer to sin. It irritates other believers by “putting forth oneself”.

The believer has the responsibility to order his life in such a way that the Spirit can control his behavior. This takes an awareness of the power of the sin nature if left unchecked. It also takes an awareness of the lack of power that the believer has over his own sin nature. The battle for the believer is a mental one. Pride or any kind of self reliance will give the sin nature the victory, because the sin nature is too strong for the believer. If he attempts to place himself under law, he will fail as well (5:14-15;18, 23). This is the first “walk” in Gal 5:16.

The second use of the English word “walk” in verse 25 is different. This word could be defined as “keeping step with” the Spirit. As the Spirit begins to lead the believer (5:18), the believer is tempted to take over, or become distracted with other things. The believer’s focus should remain on loving the brethren and bearing burdens (6:1-5).

Conclusion

The Galatians were attempting to finish the work of sanctification that the Spirit started at salvation (3:1-3). They thought that they could impress other believers with their righteous acts. This thinking derailed their present-tense salvation, causing them to bite and devour one another. Paul was not impressed with how soon they lost sight of the gospel to give them victory in their present-tense salvation. He scolded them, calling them foolish and pointing them back to the way to achieve victory in the Christian life, by yielding to the Spirit.

Only through consistent yielding and framing of our mind can the believer allow the Spirit to give him victory.