

Series: **1=3 - The truth about God and His nature – week 9**

CDOBC – beginning on 4/30/17

Today's Title: **“The Holy Spirit's Ministry to Believers”**

*June 25, 2017 - Selected Passages*

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**OBJECTIVE:** To help people know and be empowered by the Holy Spirit's ministry to believers.

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“A strong work ethic” or “A hard worker” is a great compliment...something we yearn to see in our teenagers.

“Self-reliance”

“Independence”

“Practice, practice, practice”

All of these are cherished things by most people.

To be a contributing member of society, you must embrace a great deal of these character traits and habits.

But transferring these traits to your Christian faith...can be disastrous.

The Christian life is not lived by the mere power of your will. We don't succeed at the Christian life by working harder...relying on self...by independence...or by non-stop practicing until we get it right.

How do you succeed at the Christian life?

By relying on the Holy Spirit.

By becoming dependent on God...His Word...His Spirit and His people.

By allowing the Spirit's power to work in our life - take over our life!

**Read:** "God the Spirit" - from The Valley of Vision, p. 52-53  
Today is the 9<sup>th</sup> & final sermon in our series: "1=3 - the truth and nature of God".

Next Sunday we have a special treat for you - Dougg Custer will be speaking. Dougg and his wife, LeAnn began serving with World-Venture (one of the mission agencies we partner with) in 1979 as church planters in Austria.

In 2003, they began to serve with World-Venture as the International Ministries Director for Europe and the Middle East.

Since 2014, Dougg has been the VP of Mobilization Ministries at World-Venture.

I know you will be blessed as he brings his many years of ministry and mission work to the message he will bring next Sunday.

Then, on July 9<sup>th</sup>, I will begin a new series (9 weeks) "Mission Possible" - *God's mission for his people to reach the nations*

That will take through September 3<sup>rd</sup> - and then on September 10<sup>th</sup> I will teach a series (11 weeks) titled: "The Scandal of Grace" - which will take us to Thanksgiving and the Christmas Season...and a move to the new sanctuary, children's and youth spaces.

But today, our focus is on the “Holy Spirit’s Ministry to Believers” - let’s start with *prayer*.

I’ve already talked about “The Divine Nature of the Holy Spirit” - I’ve talked about the “Holy Spirit’s Work in the World” - so we need to understand and apply the “Holy Spirit’s Ministry to Believers” - and the first thing to understand is:

**Believers receive the Holy Spirit at conversion.** Acts 2:37-41

Turn / tap in your Bible to Acts 2:37

You must understand the way in which the Spirit of God works with believers in the Church Age (the ‘age’ we live in) is different from His interaction and work with believers before the Day of Pentecost (the birth of the Church).

“Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

**38** And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**39** For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself.”

**40** And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.”

**41** So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.”

Peter makes it clear that when the people repented and believed in Jesus Christ, their sins would be forgiven and they would receive “the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Notice the Holy Spirit is a “gift” - not something earned through obedience or doing all the right things in the Christian life.

This passage is referring to:

The Holy Spirit’s ministry of indwelling believers

The Spirit’s ministry of indwelling believers is His primary ministry.

When you put your faith in Christ, at that very moment, by God’s grace, you receive eternal forgiveness of your sins, and you receive “the gift of the Holy Spirit” - His indwelling presence in your life.

This indwelling is not dependent on you “working hard” and “towing the line”, maintaining some level of holiness or achieving the Christian version of the National Honor Society.

It’s a gift...given by God...to you...forever.

**Ephesians 1:13**

“In Him 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,

14 Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory.”

The Spirit’s indwelling presence is permanent.

We also see in this passage:

The Holy Spirit’s ministry of sealing believers

13 when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,  
**Ephesians 4:30**

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

**2 Corinthians 1:21-22**

“And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us,

22 and who has also put His seal on us and given us His Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.”

All three of these passages talk about the Holy Spirit’s ministry of sealing each and every believer.

Notice the past tense in each case:

“were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit”

“by whom you were sealed”

“who has also put His seal on us and given us His Spirit”

What is the significance of the Spirit’s ministry of indwelling and sealing each believer at the moment of their conversion?

We’ll see in a few moments, we need the Spirit’s presence in our life so we can live the Christian life.

But the most important reason is for the relationship God desires to have with you.

The primary reason is not performance but relationship. He saves you - not so you can rehab your life...although He does that.

He saves you - not so you can go to heaven...although He does that.

He saves you - to have a deep, intimate and powerful relationship with you...because He loves you!

Perhaps the passage that best speaks to the desire Jesus has that our relationship with Him would be more than a 'salvation contract' - but a deep and intimate relationship is His prayer in John 17.

**John 17:20-23**

"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word,

21 that they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

22 The glory that You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one even as We are one,

23 I in them and You in Me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them even as You loved Me."

We have the Holy Spirit so we can have this amazing relationship with Christ - but also so we can have great love and unity with one another!

We see Paul's teaching about the intimate relationship the Spirit enables us to have with the Father.

**Romans 8:15**

"For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God...”

This is relationship...deep and significant relationship.

But those in Christ have been given even more.

The Spirit not only brings us into deep and significant relationship with God, but:

### **The Holy Spirit is our Helper.**

How does He help believers?

The Holy Spirit helps us in several ways.

Here are three specific ways He helps and ministers to believers.

The Spirit helps us *pray*.

When we don't know what to say in prayer - when our hearts are broken or we're frustrated in our Christian life - the Spirit helps us

**Romans 8:26**

“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groaning's too deep for words.”

The Spirit helps us know the *truth*.

**John 14:26**

“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 16:12-15**

“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

13 When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come.

14 He will glorify Me, for He will take what is mine and declare it to you.

15 All that the Father has is Mine; therefore I said that He will take what is Mine and declare it to you.”

Some of that was unique to the disciples, but the general truth which applies to us is there - and Paul gives more detail in:

**1 Corinthians 2:9-12**

But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him” --

10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

11 For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.”

Theologians refer to this as the “*illuminating work of the Spirit*”. Meaning, when a believer reads and studies the Bible, the Holy Spirit *illuminates* or helps you ascertain the meaning of the spiritual truths, and how it applies in your life.



The Spirit helps us share Christ with the world.

**John 15:26-27**

“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness about Me.

27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”

**Acts 1:8**

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

The ‘success’ of our sharing Christ is through the Holy Spirit’s work in and through us. (Not program or perfect presentation)

We are called to witness on behalf of Jesus - the Spirit helps us / empowers us for this work - and the Spirit works in the heart of the unbeliever (as we saw last week) convicting them of their sin, unrighteousness and God’s future judgment.

**The Holy Spirit makes believers a new creation in Christ.**

What a radical truth about your Christian faith: You are substantially different after conversion, then you were before conversion.

How?

Because of the Holy Spirit’s work and presence in your life.

“Helper” - “Advocate” - “Counselor” - “Comforter” - these are English translations of the Greek word (*parakletos*) used by Jesus and the N.T. writers for the Holy Spirit.

But the primary meaning for *parakletos* is *“one who helps defend - one who gives help - one who encourages and strengthens the weak to enter the battle.”*

The Holy Spirit has come into your life, and He has made you a new creation in Christ.

A new creation with a new purpose.

No longer should you live to simply please your flesh, but you live to bring glory to God - to love God and love others.

This new creation - new life - is in conflict with your old life - your flesh.

The Spirit helps strengthen you for the battle!

**Romans 8:9-11**

“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him.

**10** But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

**11** If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

You are a new creation in Christ - and the Spirit makes this a reality in your life.

But the life of the Spirit in you creates a spiritual battle in your life.

Your new life - the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit battling against your old life - your flesh.

The temporary vs. the eternal.

Mortal vs. immortality.

Selfishness vs. love.

‘Me’ vs. ‘them’.

**Galatians 5:16-17**

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.”

There are times in our Christian life where we reject the new creation we are in Christ - we reject the Spirit’s ministry in our life - and we choose our old life - our flesh.

**Galatians 3:3, 5**

“Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?”

5 Does He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith...”

I’m so thankful the Bible is so honest and reveals not only the highest highs of our faith, but also the daily, difficult struggles we face.

The Galatians were pretty messed up with their beliefs and practices. They were adding to the grace of God, turning into legalists and religionists.

They were trying to live their life by their own power - by religious rules - not by God's grace and the Spirit's power.

But God doesn't tell them they're all failures - take away the Spirit and disown them.

He corrects them - lovingly - directly - so they can repent and choose to live in the power and care of the Spirit.

The church in Corinth also struggled greatly with the flesh - and God tells them:

**1 Corinthians 3:16**

“Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?”

As a new creation - we are called to live as a new creation - not in the ways of our old self.

The presence of the Holy Spirit helps us pray, know the truth, and share Christ with the world, but the Spirit also makes us a new creation, enabling and empowering us to live the Christian life.

We are able - capable of becoming more holy - obeying the commands of Christ - because of the Holy Spirit's ministry and power in our life.

## Apply it...

The Holy Spirit's indwelling presence gives you eternal security in your faith.

The Spirit is a seal until the day of redemption.

The Holy Spirit's indwelling presence heightens our sensitivity to sin.

The indwelling presence of the holy God will respond to your sin.

This often manifests as our 'inner voice' - our conscience. It comes as the Spirit brings Scripture to our mind - reminding us of the truth.

*Paradox of the Christian life: As you mature / grow in your faith, you become aware of more sin in your life.*

The Holy Spirit's indwelling presence gives us confidence and power to live our Christian life.

The power of God which raised Jesus from the dead dwells in us!

**2 Peter 1:3-4**

"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness...so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature..."

You cannot obey the commands of Christ in your own power.

When you put your faith in Christ, you receive “the gift of the Holy Spirit”, and the presence and power of God is with you forever.

**1 John 4:13**

“By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.”

What a wonderful truth - that God has made it possible for us to grow in holiness - because the Holy Spirit - our great helper - dwells within us.

Close in prayer