

The Holy Spirit and the Trinity (Part 5)

Christ In Us

John W. Ritenbaugh

Given 29-Aug-98; Tape #356

In the last sermon I began by showing that spirit, heart, mind, and thoughts, though technically not exactly the same, are used commonly in the Bible to amplify each other so as to clarify the intent of a single scripture or content. All of them are used to express the within of a person, the invisible inner drives of a person. This is especially true of heart and spirit. We also saw that heart and spirit affect each other for better or worse depending upon the environment. They can lift through exhilaration and encouragement. They can depress with bad news or a bad attitude. They can pull you down or lift you up.

After that, I began showing you how the Bible uses the word "in" in reference to the Father, the Son, us, and sometimes the Holy Spirit as well, and that is that while "in" in normal usage indicates "inclusion within" a physical location in relation to this subject, though the same element of this, i.e., physical location, is still somewhat true, we must remember that we are dealing with immaterial non-physical things, things of the spirit. Therefore the difference between the material and immaterial must be taken into consideration in the use of this word "in." "In" therefore emphasizes relationship which is the great concern and involvement of our lives, and it is the development of that relationship with God as contrasted with our involvement in the world before conversion that is so important.

We are going to begin this sermon in Romans 8:10-11 where we left off, just briefly go over these verses.

Romans 8:10-11 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken [make alive] your mortal bodies by [My King James says "by," but really the Greek says "because."] his spirit that dwells in you.

Paul uses "Christ in us," "spirit in us," and strongly implies the Father as though they are one and the same thing, and in this context brethren they are. Jesus told the Pharisees and His disciples that "The Father and I are one," meaning two personalities, but one in mind, in heart, in purpose, in perspective, in attitude, and spirit, which is the Holy Spirit.

Father and Son share these things in perfect harmony, and they want to share them with us too so that we can all be in perfect harmony as they are. That does not require them, nor any third person in a supposed trinity to somehow divide themselves up in little pieces and physically inhabit each of us anymore than it requires a father or mother or grandparent or teacher or minister or any other person significant to a growing child's life to literally physically live inside that child in order for characteristics of that significant person to be manifested in the child because their characteristics take up residence in the child. Remember this phrase: "They dwell

there."

Do your parents dwell in you? Yes they do. Do you dwell in your children? Yes you do. Your parents' characteristics are in you, and your characteristics are in your children. This is the same process by which God is in us, or Christ is in us. They are converting us by transferring their characteristics to us as we yield to them.

Now we fully expect that children in a family will look like their parents as to height, maybe body shape, shape of face, color of hair, kind of hair, ears, hands, eyes, shape of eyes, color of eyes, and on and on it goes. The children also show mannerisms of their parents as well, in gestures, facial expressions, the way they walk, the way they talk, inflections in their voice, their perspective on circumstances. Those characteristics happen. They are passed from parent to child virtually automatically, almost it seems by absorption because the children are around their parents so much.

Often though, when children are about eight to ten, and very noticeably when they reach the teen years, they consciously make efforts to adopt characteristics of people outside the family, usually to the parents' consternation. Those people that they try to imitate and pick up their characteristics are usually celebrities in entertainment, in athletics, members of their peer group, because they want to be "in" a group. They want to be seen in a certain way, a certain light.

For us, in reference to God's family, it does require all of us being of the same mind, heart, purpose, perspective, and attitude, and that is what conversion is all about, to bring us to that place where we can dwell in harmony with what the Father and the Son already manifest the same God-family characteristics.

Turn with me to Colossians 3. In our case in relation to the God family, we very definitely have to make conscious and persistent effort to imitate, to yield to, to put on the God family characteristics in order to have what the Bible says is "God or Christ in us."

Colossians 3:8 But now you also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

Are they God family characteristics? They are not. We have to make conscious effort to not do these things.

Colossians 3:9-10 Lie not one to another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

Do you see that? We have to make conscious effort to imitate, to copy God-family characteristics.

Colossians 3:11-12 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.

These are God-family characteristics. We have to make conscious effort to do these things.

Colossians 3:13-17 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do you. [Imitate Him.] And above all these things put on charity [love] which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule [be the umpire] in your hearts, to the which also you are called in one body; and be you thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name [What's the name? God. Do in all within that family name.] of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

The Bible says that the Father and the Son are in us. Are they physically inside us, or is their Spirit (like that of our parents, the essence of what they are) in us? I think you know the answer to that.

Colossians 1:26-27 Even the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

"Christ in you." "Christ in me." "Christ in Paul." "Christ in John." "Christ in Peter." How is that accomplished? Basically brethren, the same way that it is accomplished between physical parent and child. What is it that passes from parent to child, apart from the genes? It is spirit. What is it that represents "Christ in us"? It is His mind, His character, His attitudes, His perspectives, His morals, His love, His faithfulness, His submission to God the Father.

Brethren, without these characteristics we will not be in glory. Conversely, you and I are "in Christ." This word "in" is indicating "union with," "joined with." Christ is joined with us, and we are joined with Him. We are in union in a relationship, a family relationship.

Now consider this. Maybe this is dumb. I do not know. Since you are "in Christ" are you running around inside of Christ observing the workings of the interior parts of His body? Neither is He running around inside of your body. Neither is the Father running around inside of your body. Neither is any Holy Spirit that is conceived to be a trinity running around inside your body, or my body. "In" is used to express closeness of relationship, not physical location.

I am going to give you a physical example. You could be living physically in Australia and still be "in" a family whose every other member is physically in the United States of America. Are you in the family, or are you not? Of course you are in the family! You are in a relationship. It is exactly the same thing with God the Father and God the Son. Father and Son are in heaven. We are physically on earth, but we are in them, and they in us. God is a family. It is a relationship and family characteristics that are important.

Christ is in us to the degree that we are like Christ, to the degree that we reflect Him in our lives. This same principle that I talked about of a third person in a trinity, we do not have him

running around inside of us even if he did exist, anymore than we have Christ in us or the Father in us in the way that people tend to think.

Turn with me to II Corinthians 3. We are going to link two scriptures together. The first begins in II Corinthians 3:13, and the second is going to be in the book of Hebrews 8.

II Corinthians 3:13-14 And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished [or passing away]: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remains the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ.

Those that God has called can see. We can understand. We can grasp, because God has taken away that veil.

II Corinthians 3:15-18 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their [the Jews of Paul's day] heart. Nevertheless when it [anyone] shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all [we Christians] with open face beholding as in a glass [a mirror] the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory [the glory of man to the glory of God] even as by the spirit of the Lord.

Before we leave the thought, remember I said that to the degree that Christ is in us, to the degree that we reflect Him in our life, that is the degree that He is in us. What is in us are the elements or the essence of His mind—His character, the way He thinks, His attitudes, His approach to things, His perspectives, as we grow in the grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The Spirit of the Lord plays a major role in this because it is by the spirit that the mind of God, that the mind of Christ is put into us and converts us. Now go to Hebrews 8:10. We are right in the middle of a quotation from Jeremiah 31. We only need to get one principle out of here.

Hebrews 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.

Reflect back on II Corinthians 8, and especially verse 18, how are we changed from glory to glory? He has already given us, in a sense, a broad answer: by the Spirit of God. That is a broad answer. Verse 10 of Hebrews 8 adds another dimension. God says all you have to do is put the emphasis in the right place. "I will put My laws into their hearts." They are not there by nature. "I will put..." All of history, all of the Old Testament, proves to us that God's law is not in our hearts by nature. He says, "I will write them." This is a supernatural act.

We have two methods of how we are going to be changed from "glory to glory"—two methods worked out simultaneously. Through His Word in us, after our minds are opened to believe it, is one way. The second one is His direct hands-on involvement. It takes creation. Do you get it? We are a product of His creativity. It is an awesome thing that He is working within us. His

direct involvement is expressed, "I will put," and "I will write." That is a pro-active statement of His creativity.

He is the Potter, we are the clay. He puts the pressure on. He twists our arms through the circumstances that He creates. He triggers thoughts. He inspires. He enables and empowers by His Spirit. Brethren, the clay does not form itself. Anybody ought to understand that simple principle. Clay on a wheel does not shape itself into a vase. We have to be created into the image of God—made, shaped, formed into whatever product God in His design, His purpose wants us to be to fit us into a responsibility in His Kingdom. Though there will be similarities for all in His family, we are all also going to be different. We will retain personality.

Remember that Jesus said, "Of My own self I can do nothing. The Father in Me, He does the work." Jesus said to you and me, "Without Me you can do nothing." There is a process here that involves the Word of God, and the word is spirit. But unless God is doing His part, actively creating us in His image, nothing, brethren, would happen. We would never change.

In I Corinthians 2 we will follow this process. This is a scripture that we have been to quite a number of times.

I Corinthians 2:10 But God has revealed them unto us by his spirit: for the spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.

Revelation comes to us as a result of God's activity. When God called us we were not even aware that He was doing it, but He was beginning a direct interface with us for the purpose of preparing us to be in His Kingdom. He did this by His Spirit. Psalm 104: 30 says: "He sends forth His spirit and they are created." He began to project His mind into ours. He sends forth His thoughts in much the same way that we send forth our thoughts to our children.

Now think of this, parents: You are in the house taking care of things there. Your children are outside in the front yard or in the back yard, or whatever it happens to be, but you want to call them to attention. So what do you do? You go outside the house and you yell "Johnny," "Mary," "Phyllis," whatever it happens to be, and if the children are reasonably obedient, they come a running.

Until you called, they weren't even aware that you wanted them, but something happened inside the house, and you thought that you needed to have them there. The thought was invisible. It was merely a thought, but when you sent forth your voice, that thought, that invisible, immaterial thought in your mind came forth from your mouth. Your voice was heard, and a response was made. What began as spirit produced an action in your children that brought your children to you, because it entered into their mind, and they responded.

With God it is much the same. He sent forth His Spirit to gain our cooperation in order to make us more aware of our responsibility to Him, to His Word, and to other people. We have already seen in scriptures like Ezra 1: 1 that God can trigger thoughts. He can manipulate events to bring things to mind as He interfaces with us. God knows how to use the forces of this universe perfectly, and He is able to project His thoughts into our minds in order to give us choices that we never realized that we had before, and to make us feel as though it is imperative that we make those choices.

There was a time brethren that you did not give a hoot about the Sabbath. It was God who made us feel that it was imperative that we keep it, and so we did. You see, that took a bit of education as well. The Word of God had to enter into your mind, and my mind.

Matthew 4:18-22 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he said unto them, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

Here is the apostles' invitation to follow Jesus. Now how was it done? Through words. Words are spirit. Jesus said so. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." I do not know what all preceded this point in time, but they were ready, and it is interesting that they responded immediately.

What was there in the voice that impelled them, compelled them? What was there in terms of circumstances? I can tell you what the answer is. God had put it into their minds already to respond. They were ready because He prepared them to be ready. That is His pattern. He enabled them to be ready. Why did not the other fishermen around respond? They heard the same words. Why was it that 120 was all that Jesus had as fruit of His ministry at His death, crucifixion, and resurrection when thousands upon thousands of others heard the same words, the same messages, sermons, talks, and saw the healings? I can tell you why right out of the scriptures.

Matthew 16:13-17 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? [Notice the confusion.] And they said, Some say that you are John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He said unto them, But whom say you that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed are you Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but my Father which is in heaven.

God enabled them. He prepared their minds to see that Jesus was the Christ.

Matthew 13:10-12 And the disciples came and said unto him, Why speak you unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you [It is given! God put it in their mind.] to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. [That is a wonderful promise in a way.] For whosoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever has not, from him shall be taken away even that he has.

God is preparing a special group, and it is He who has tweaked our minds for the receiving of His Spirit. It is He who is creating. It is He enabling us to do the proper choosing. Before this is

all over brethren, we are going to learn that salvation is by grace, and God gives us everything we need, but most of the world He has given them only their daily bread by comparison. We are a chosen-by-God generation—not merely called, but chosen to understand, to receive His Spirit, to receive the essence of His mind so that we can have His character, His morals, His attitude, His everything, eventually, so that we can be in the spitting image of our Father. That is creation, and you are being created in Christ Jesus.

Turn now to John the 14:17. Here we are three and one-half years after Matthew 4.

John 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive.

Impossible! They cannot receive it because they see it not. They do not grasp it. They do not get it, because God has not empowered them to get it. He has not enabled them to get it.

John 14:17 Neither knows him: but you know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you.

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

He will take up residence. Do you have God the Son and God the Father running around inside of you? No. The mind of God, the Spirit of God, is in you. It is residing in you. It has taken up residence, and therefore the Father is there, and the Son is there.

The apostles were literally seeing the Holy Spirit of God, the essence of God's mind in the action in the life of a fellow human being—Jesus Christ. He was the literal Word of God. He was literally with them, teaching, leading, guiding them into truth. He was truth personified. His word is truth. His word is spirit. They could literally see Him and hear Him—the Son of God directly, and that is why He said the holy spirit was with them. It, the essence of God's mind, was in Him. What they were witnessing with their eyes and ears was being fed directly into their minds and was becoming part of their experience.

The spirit, the essence of the mind of God, was beginning to take up residence in them, but it was not yet firmly lodged in them where it would consistently manifest the characteristics of the God family, and that is why in Luke 24:49 it says, "Tarry in Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high." Power to do what, brethren? To submit to the will of God. God gave them the power to keep the law of God in the spirit, not just its letter. I would guess that any human being can keep the law of God in the letter, but God has empowered us to do that, but not in the spirit. We need more power than what we have humanly to keep it in the spirit. God is looking for people who will worship Him in spirit and in truth, and He has empowered us to do that.

John 17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to you. Holy Father, keep through your own name those whom you have given me, that they may be one as we are.

There are definitely two personalities, but they were one in mind.

John 17:20-21b Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me; through their word; That they all may be one: as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us.

We are in both of them. Now where are we in both of them? In their minds! They are aware of us in a way that they are not aware, if I can put it that way, with the rest of the people in the world. We are "the apple of their eye" and the focus of their attention. And just as assuredly as they are developing—growing, as it were—in us, taking up residence in us, we are also in them. It is an awesome thing to think about.

John 17:21c That the world may believe that you have sent me.

The purpose of Jesus' work with the apostles was to bring them to where they could be one with the Father. We have not been afforded the same privilege of living with Jesus literally as the apostles, but we can still, according to these verses here, be one with the Father and the Son through the word that the apostles passed on to us—the essence of their minds, added to the essence of the prophets' minds, and above all, the essence of the Chief Cornerstone, Jesus Christ's mind. Brethren, we cannot expect to be one with somebody unless we have the same mind on things.

You can take wonderful hope in this that God says, "I will put My laws and write My laws in their heart," and God never fails. What He sets out to do He does! If we do not yield to him, it might get awfully painful for us, but brethren, He has ways of getting us to cooperate for our good, and He will use them. He loves us so much He has already given His Son. Paul has assured us in Romans 8 that He will not withhold anything that it takes to get us into His Kingdom. He will send forth His Spirit and we will be created.

Isaiah 55: 6 has a thought in it that is very important to us.

Isaiah 55:6-8 Seek you the LORD while he may be found, call you upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the LORD.

There in a nutshell is the problem. Verses 9, 10, and 11 are very important in regard to us. Notice this triumphant statement from God.

Isaiah 55:9-11 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and returns not thither, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater. [Think of that ground as being yourself.] So shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

What comfort there is there! God is confident, absolutely certain that He can get us into His

Kingdom. Like I said, the road may be hard, it may be painful, but He will get us there. Did He get the children of Israel into the Promised Land? Did He get them through the Red Sea? Did He get water out of the rock? Did He feed them with manna for forty years? "Is there anything too hard for the Lord?" Jesus Christ said to Sarah when she tee-heed in the tent. Not on your life!

In simple terminology, the problem between God and man is stated. We do not think like God. We have to have His Spirit to think like He does. We followed the course of this world. We submitted to the prince of the power of the air, and we have powerful, unholy, unbalanced attitudes like him. How can we ever be one with God this way? We cannot. But what God has said He will accomplish, He will accomplish.

Turn now to the book of Revelation. He will create us in Christ Jesus, and it will be done by His Spirit. By His Spirit, not a third person in a trinity, but His Spirit.

Revelation 19:10 And I [the apostle John] fell at his [an angel's] feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See you do it not: I am your fellowservant, and of your brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Here we are back to spirit again. Spirit is being used to indicate the vital principle of, the essential nature of, the heart and core of prophecy. The testimony of Jesus is the heart and core of prophecy. Now, do not narrow prophecy into any one area, because prophecy means either inspired speaking or foretelling—forthtelling inspired speaking, or foretelling (predicting). The testimony of Jesus Christ is the heart and core of inspired speaking. This would include inspired writing. This would include predicting, forthtelling.

Jesus' testimony consisted of two things: the example that He set in the way that He lived His life and the things that He did, as well as the words that He gave in terms of His message. His message is the gospel—the good news of the Kingdom of God, the good news of God's purpose, the good news of why we were born, the good news that Christ died for our sins, the good news that God is reproducing Himself, the good news that He is creating us in His image and how He is doing it—and that news is spirit. It is life.

We are bringing the other element into this more clearly now. Jesus' testimony is the spirit. The gospel is the spirit, the heart and core, the essence of the mind of God as it pertains to man. It has many facets to it, but the things that He said are central to everything else that is in the Bible. The other part of it is God's active participation in doing the actual creation, watching over His family, molding and shaping His children into what He wants them to become.

Let us go to Romans 1. We see these two factors taking place both at the same time. One is the education of our minds through the Word of God. The other is the education of our minds through our experiences with God within a relationship—our Father interacting with us on every side.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

The gospel is a means by which God exercises His power to save men. It is a means. It is not the only means, but it is a means by which God exercises His power to save men. It is power, though, only to those who exercise trust in them. The only ones who can really exercise the kind of trust that God wants are those that He has called, opened their minds, and enabled them to do that.

The "good news" is words—words that carry with them the power to move us and our lives in the direction of salvation if we believe them enough to unleash their power by using them. That is not hard to understand. What good would it do us if we went to school and we learned that two plus two is four, that four times two is eight, that eight minus two is six, or six divided by two is three, but we did not trust the teacher? And because we did not trust the teacher, we never used them?

Those mathematical truths are the essence of somebody else's mind up to that point. It does not become part of your mind until you begin to use them and the habits begin to be formed. In order for this to occur, does the teacher have to crawl inside of us in order for this transfer to take place? The principle is exactly the same with God and spiritual knowledge. The only difference is that God's truths are in an overall sense concerned with relationships with Him, His family, with the world, with abundant and everlasting life. What we have in the salvation process is a cooperative effort.

God, by a miracle of His Spirit, enables our minds to believe and to carry out His will. We respond to allow Him to work His creative efforts in us just as we do with a teacher in a classroom, and brethren, we are largely responding to words. Words are spirit, and they impel us in their direction if we choose to submit to them.

We read in Isaiah 55 that God sends forth His Word, and it does not come back to Him empty. Let us look at some other scriptures along this line. Go to Jeremiah 23: 28-29. This actually takes place within a context in which He is comparing the false prophets to Himself and to His Word—His Word to their visions and dreams that they preached to people.

Jeremiah 23:28-29 The prophet that has a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that has my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? Says the LORD. Is not my word like as a fire? Says the LORD; and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?

God compares His Word as being "wheat" as compared to the false prophets' word as being "chaff." Which one is better for you? Which one is going to serve you? Which one is going to strengthen you? Which one is going to help you to be like God? The false prophets' words, or His Words? Will the food, the words, be for spiritual and moral strength? Chaff is not going to give you much. Wheat will. The false prophets' words are useless and powerless, but God's Word is like a fire, penetrating, purifying, consuming evil right out of the heart.

Moreover, He says, "My word is like a hammer." His message does not lull men to sleep in their sins, but it crushes the heart and brings it to repentance. His Word convicts. His Word converts. It does not amuse. It does not entertain. That is not His purpose. He is very serious about what He is doing. There is power in them brethren because of what Isaiah 55 said. It will not return to

Him empty. There is power in His Words because of the authority of Who it is behind them. He makes sure they get carried out, is what He means. He enforces His Word, is another way of putting it.

Go back to the New Testament to Hebrews the 4: 12. Remember, all of this is being expended in His creative effort to bring us into His family, in His image.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick [it is alive], and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Brethren, this only happens in the lives of those that He has called. His Word is not having impact on the world. It is because God is enforcing them in us.

I Corinthians 1:18a For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness....

They do not get it, because God, by His Spirit, has not tweaked their minds to enable them yet. Their time will come later, ..."each in his own order," according to I Corinthians 15.

I Corinthians 1:18b ...But unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

Now the words themselves, brethren, are not magic. They are nothing but symbols. The power lies in their use and the authority of the One whose words they are. He enforces what they symbolize in the hearts of those that He has called. But what if we do not trust them?

Suppose you were given word-for-word directions on how to build a hydrogen bomb, and with those words came all the tools and equipment necessary to accomplish the task. If you did not trust the directions enough to follow them, or if you did not use the tools or equipment, you could never unleash the power contained in those directions. The hydrogen bombs destroy, but God's directions are designed to emancipate us from the greatest of evil to the greatest of good, to emancipate us from poor relationships to the best that there can be. God supplies the directions and all of the tools and the equipment and the power needed to do the job. Our job is to trust and to yield.

Romans 10:15-17 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias says, Lord, who has believed our report? So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

The "beautiful feet" is actually a quotation from Isaiah 52: 7, and it refers originally to those messengers who brought the exhilarating news to the Jews in Babylon that they were to be released in order to return to Jerusalem. But now you have read Nehemiah and Ezra. Not everybody accepted. In fact more people stayed in Babylon than went back to Jerusalem. Verse 17 is a summarizing statement. It means "so therefore," or "consequently."

Faith comes by hearing, but it is the hearing of the Word of God, the Word of Christ, the gospel. But as we are seeing all over the place, that faith only comes to those whose minds God has opened to receive it. Flesh and blood think that it is foolishness, except for what God has done.

Richard used Ephesians 2: 10 in his sermonette here today, where it says, "We are His workmanship, created unto good works." My Bible has a little number 3 beside that word "created," and in the margin it says "prepared." God prepares us to do good works. We would never do them unless He did what He does. Conversion is the process by which we are brought to the image of God, not in the way that we look, but in our attitudes, what we accept, believe, and submit to in conduct, and in the way we think. This is accomplished by means of a transfer, an impregnation and growth of the essence of God's mind into ours.

Nothing actually comes into our mind that has form, weight, or can be measured. Spirit comes in the form of words—knowledge accompanied by God also personally and actively working, creating to enable us to accomplish our part. Our experiences with God in a relationship add to the knowledge that comes in the gospel. Even as the teacher enables us to increase our power if we use the teaching, God is tweaking our minds, bringing things to our attention to lead and guide us more deeply into His way, always working to enhance our relationship with Him and with our brethren, always working to increase His mind in ours.

We can go back to the thought that is given in Exodus 35: 30, but I do not think that I want to do that because that would require a little bit more time than I have right at this moment. I will give that in another sermon, because I still have enough material I believe for yet one more on this. I just keep uncovering more and more in regard to this, but I do want to make a summary to this point.

Spirit is the word that is used to indicate what is invisible, immaterial, internal, and activating when it is unleashed. It is the essence of the mind—God's, man's, or demons'. It can be an attitude, a mood, knowledge, wisdom, character, but always there is power to activate, generate, and impel. Spirit can be communicated from person to person. It can also be resisted if one is not willing to receive it.

In order for one to receive the Holy Spirit, God must work a miracle in our minds to make us willing to receive it and submit to it; otherwise human nature will resist it and reject it. I Corinthians 1: 18 makes that very clear, and a host of other scriptures besides. The Holy Spirit is not a third person of a trinity who somehow divides himself up in order to be in tens of thousands of people at the same time. The Holy Spirit is the essence of God's mind. That spirit is the Holy Spirit because it is of God, and He is holy. It is pure, transcendent, always producing life abundant and everlasting.

It is the essence of God's mind that purifies our thinking. It is the divine nature. It takes up residence in our minds by means of words and experiences in our relationship with God Himself directly working with us, overseeing our creation in His image. It includes concepts, vision, attitudes, perspectives, attributes like love, joy, peace that guide and empower us in order to conduct life like God would and glorify Him. There is no third person in a trinity. The Holy Spirit is the essence of God's mind, or the Father or Son working in our behalf.