

The Holy Spirit
(Part 15: Restrains Sin)

XV. The Spirit Restrains Sin.

A. Orientation.

1. This evening, we're going to consider one more work of the Spirit: He restrains sin.
2. Scripture.
 - a. "Then the LORD said, 'My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years'" (Gen. 6:3).
 - b. "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did" (Acts 7:51).
 - c. "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please" (Gal. 5:16-17).
2. Let's consider:
 - a. How He restrains sin in the believer.
 - b. How He restrains sin in the unbeliever.

B. The Spirit restrains sin.

1. How He restrains sin in the believer.
 - a. Is it important that our sins be restrained?
 - (i) Of course it is.
 - (ii) Why?
 - (a) It's what God and we want.
 - (b) It's what honors God.
 - (c) It's what causes the kingdom to move forward.
 - b. What does the Spirit do to restrain our sin?
 - (i) Two main ways:
 - (a) By revealing God's love.
 - (b) By instilling fear.
 - (ii) What are some of the ways He reveals this love? How does this restrain our sin?
 - (a) Gives us the sense of His love for us.
 - (1) We don't want to offend those who love us,
 - (2) Especially One who loves us so much.
 - (b) Gives us love for God.
 - (1) We don't want to offend those we love,
 - (2) Especially One who loves us so much.
 - (3) Shows us the cross/love of Christ to melt our hearts.

- (c) Gives us love of His truth and the desire to do it.
 - (1) When we obey Him, we feel His pleasure.
 - (2) When we disobey, we feel guilty.
- (d) Helps us to believe God's gracious promise to reward our labor.
 - (1) If we obey, He will give us a reward.
 - (2) The reward is very precious.
- (iii) How does He instill fear? How does this restrain our sin?
 - (a) Brings His commandments/Law home to our hearts.
 - (1) Commandments require perfection.
 - (2) Threatens judgment for failure.
 - (3) If not for Christ, this is what we deserve.
 - (b) Reminds us of Fatherly discipline.
 - (1) Christians are not condemned.
 - (2) But they are disciplined.
 - (3) Discipline not pleasant.
 - (c) Reminds us of consequences to others, if we don't obey.
 - (1) The lost perish.
 - (2) "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31),
 - (3) Or even to know that someone will.
- (iv) How does He do these things?
 - (a) Directly.
 - (1) Spirit works directly on conscience/heart (Gal. 5:16-17).
 - (2) Making us love/fear.
 - (b) Through means.
 - (1) Through the Word read.
 - (2) Through the Word preached.
 - (3) Through personal admonition.
 - (A) Godly society helps mold us
 - (B) By creating godly peer pressure.
- c. What can we do to make the best use of the above?
 - (i) Spend more time in the Word.
 - (ii) Be faithful in attending worship.
 - (iii) Remain in fellowship.
 - (iv) Pray that the Lord
 - (v) Would make these things more effective
 - (vi) To instill both love and fear
 - (vii) By His Spirit.

2. How does He restrain sin in the unbeliever?
 - a. Is it important that their sins be restrained?
 - (i) Of course.
 - (ii) Why?
 - (a) To protect the church,
 - (b) So the work of kingdom can move forward.
 - (c) Even to show them mercy by lessening their judgment.
 - b. How does the Spirit restrain the sin of unbelievers?
 - (i) Society in general: civil law, peer pressure (Heart of Darkness).
 - (ii) Law of God.
 - (iii) Direct restraint.
 - (a) Abimelech: “Then God said to him in the dream, ‘Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I also kept you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her’” (Gen. 20:6).
 - (b) Pharaoh: God hardened his heart by removing restraint (Rom. 9:17-18).
 - c. What is awakening?
 - (i) Spirit’s working directly and through means
 - (ii) To instill the fear of the Lord
 - (iii) To restrain from sin
 - (iv) And to cause sinners to seek Him.
 - (v) Restraint can be seen as a degree of awakening.
 - d. How can we apply this?
 - (i) Pray that the restraint of the Spirit increase.
 - (ii) By God’s Law being incorporated into civil law.
 - (iii) By outpouring of Spirit, awakening, better peer pressure.
 - (iv) By greater boldness on part of Christians to evangelize.

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