

THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Session 2: The Holy Spirit at Work... in Us

November 8, 2015

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. John 14:15-17

“The work of the Holy Spirit is to manifest the active presence of God in the world, and especially in the church.”¹

I. The Spirit's Role in Creation

A. The Spirit was present at Creation.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. (Gen.1.1; cf. Ps. 104.30-31; Job 34:14-15)

B. The Spirit was active in Creation.

“Part of the Spirit's work is to “hover” over creation, keeping things intact. In this regard we see the Spirit as the divine Preserver and the Protector. The Spirit works to maintain what the Father brings into being. Most striking in the Genesis passage is the Spirit's role as Orderer of creation. The Spirit brings order out of disorder. His presence precludes the possibility of chaos...It is because of Him that we have cosmos instead of chaos.”²

- Bringing Form and Order to Creation
- Protecting and Preserving Creation
- Filling What is Empty with Life
- Darkness Yields to Light

¹ Grudem, Wayne. Systematic Theology. Pg. 634.

² Sproul, R.C. The Mystery of the Holy Spirit. (Tyndale House: Wheaton, Ill. 1990) pg. 85.

II. The Spirit's Role in Regeneration (The New Genesis or Birth)

"Regeneration is a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to us."³

A. Prophesied in the OT

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. Ezek. 36:26-27

B. An Essential Work of the Spirit

Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again* he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.* Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind* blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." John 3:3-8

"And you were dead...But God...even when we were dead in our trespasses...made us alive together with Christ." Eph. 2.1, 4-5

"Christians and non-Christians alike share the same sphere of operations. We all live out our lives in this world. The regenerate person's course, however, is guided from above. He has his eye on heaven and his ear attuned to the King of heaven. The unregenerate person is earthbound. His ear is deaf to any word from heaven' his eye is blinded to the glory from on high. He lives as a walking cadaver in a spiritual graveyard."⁴

C. A Trinitarian Act of Redemption

- Conceived of or planned by the Father.
- Accomplished by the Son.
- Applied by the Holy Spirit.

³ Grudem, Wayne. Systematic Theology, p. 699.

⁴ Sproul, R.C. The Mystery of the Holy Spirit. (Wheaton, Ill: Tyndale House: 1990) pg. 97.

III. The Spirit's Role in Enabling and Maintaining Unity

A. In Christ, all have access to God in one Spirit

For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father...In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Eph. 2:18, 22

B. The Church is to work hard to maintain the unity of the Spirit

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call. Eph. 4: 1-4

IV. The Spirit's Role in Assuring Believers

"The benefits of Christ, which the Holy Spirit imparts to them, are all irrevocable (Romans 11:29). Those who are called are also glorified (8:30). Those who are adopted as children are heirs of eternal life (8:17, Gal. 4:7). Those who believe have eternal life already here and now (John 3:16). That life itself, being eternal, cannot be lost."⁵

A. The Spirit Confirms our Adoption or Sonship

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!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. Ro. 8: 15-16; 1 John 4:13; cf. Ro. 8: 11

B. The Spirit Confirms our Eternal Inheritance

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, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. Eph. 1:13-14

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Eph. 4:30

⁵ Bavinck, Herman. Reformed Dogmatics, IV: Holy Spirit, Church & New Creation (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004) p. 270

V. The Spirit's Work in Illuminating Truth

“Holy Spirit enabled understanding of God’s revealed truth. Through the Spirit, Paul noted, ‘we may know the things freely given to us by God’ (1 Cor. 2:12b)” Henry W. Holloman, Kregel Dictionary of the Bible and Theology, p. 225

A. Illumination to the Gospel

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. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. 1 Cor. 2:12-15

B. Illumination to the Treasures of God’s Word

Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. Ps.119:18

VI. The Spirit's Role in our Sanctification

“Sanctification is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives.”⁶

A. The power for transformation into Christlikeness comes from the Spirit

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. 2 Cor. 3: 18; cf. Rom. 12:1-2

But if by the Spirit you put to death...Ro. 8.13

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. Gal. 5:16

B. The fruit of Christ-like transformation is attributed to the Spirit

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Gal. 5:22-23

⁶ Grudem, Wayne. Systematic Theology, p. 746.

VII. The Spirit's Role in Empowering His People

A. The Spirit actively leads his people into gospel-ministry

"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." Acts 1:8

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. Acts 4:31

And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." Acts 8: 29

And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them." Acts 10:19-20

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Acts 13: 2

For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements. Acts 15: 28

B. The Spirit actively strengthens us and fills us

...that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,.. Eph. 3:16

C. The Spirit actively comforts us and assists in prayer

But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith, pray in the Holy Spirit. Jude 20

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 groanings too deep for words. Romans 8: 26

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Eph. 6.18-20

VIII. The Spirit's Role in Imparting Gifts to Edify

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. **1 Corinthians 12: 4-7**