

The Enabler, part 5 of BF&M  
March 12, 2017

My wife and I have an Apple iPad, which we use everyday. Every once in a while I swipe the screen wrong and Siri pops up. Some of you know that Siri is a virtual assistant. Virtual assistants like Apple's Siri and Amazon's Alexa are available to give you information without using your keyboard. You just speak and the computer answers. Microsoft and Google have their versions on the market. Even Mattel, the toy company, recently announced a new virtual assistant called Aristotle, geared specifically for children. Such systems not only give you access to the encyclopedic information, but will be able to do much more as they develop further.

There are many things you can now do with your smart phone. You can lock your house turn on or off your house lights, and start a washing machine.

Someday we may have real robot helpers who will put our clothes in the washing machine, and then the dryer, then take them out, fold them, and put them in their proper drawers. They might even have supper cooked when you get home from work or worship. Now wouldn't that be nice?

It is nice to have helpers, whether human or machine. I am speaking today about a helper that every Christian already has. Unlike the ones being invented by humans, this helper thinks for itself. This helper is not just programmed by you to do things for you. This helper initiates actions on his own.

As a Christian, you have a helper. You have someone with you all the time. That person will not do your laundry for you, or lock the front door if you forget to do so. But you have a helper who does do a lot to help you. You have a helper who can interpret God's word to you, remind you of spiritual truth when you need it, warn you of sin, draw you close to Jesus, give you wisdom for making decisions, remind you of things you need to do, and much more.

If you are a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit with you. This series of sermons is based on the Baptist Faith and Message. Today is Article 2, God, part C, the Holy Spirit. It reads like this.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to help His followers.

**John 14:16-17 (NIV)** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-- the Spirit of truth.

This was a symbolic way of speaking of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit was already in the world, doing some things. But now the Spirit would be taking on a new role, a much bigger role, not just in some of God's people, but all of them. This had been foretold by God through the prophet Joel hundreds of years before. That prophecy had its fulfillment on the day of Pentecost, 50 days after Jesus' resurrection. The crowd that gathered that day witnessed the power of the Spirit coming upon all of Jesus' disciples. Then Peter, one of the missionaries told the crowd...

**Acts 2:38-39 (NIV)** "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. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call."

The first missionaries preached that the Spirit was for all believers. That includes every one of us. Some of the helpers I first mentioned, like Siri are affordable to most of us. Others, like robots, will only be available to rich folks. But every Christian is given the Holy Spirit. It is not based on gender, on education, on family, on background, on income, or on anything except being a follower of Jesus Christ. This is the promise of God. If you are a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit with you at all times. Jesus promised this to you.

Here is our key point this morning.

**To have victory over sin, Christians must live by the Spirit.**

Paul reveals this in a letter.

**Galatians 5:16 (NIV)** So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

**The Holy Spirit is working to enable us to eradicate sin in us.** He goes on to list just some of the dangers to our soul.

**Galatians 5:19-21 (NIV)** The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

The Holy Spirit is working in us to guard us from sin, to reveal sin that is in us, to warn of temptation before us, and to enable us to resist sin. The Holy Spirit is enabling you to eradicate sin in you. So let us learn to be led by the Spirit. Let us live by the Spirit. Let us walk in the Spirit. If you want to please God with your life, and I certainly hope you do, then you have to live by the Spirit and gain victory over sin and temptation. You cannot gain victory in your own power. But the Spirit can enable you to put sin to death.

Too many Christians have fallen for the lie that they cannot stop sinning. They don't expect to defeat sin in themselves. So they don't pray for the Spirit to fill them, change them, guide them, enable them.

Listen, don't settle for being a mediocre follower of Jesus. Give yourself fully to Jesus every day in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now, **What does the Spirit do?** Today I want to tell just some of what the Spirit is doing to help you.

The Spirit is involved in your salvation from beginning to completion. The Holy Spirit creates opportunities for Christians to share their faith. When someone told you about salvation in Jesus, the Holy Spirit spoke to your heart.

When we hear the gospel, **The Holy Spirit convicts of truth.** There are three specific truths that the Spirit first convicts us of. They are all listed in the next passage.

**John 16:8-11 (NIV)** When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

The Spirit convicts of sin. This is your sin. The Spirit convicts you of your sin. The Holy Spirit convicts you, in your heart, of the truth that you are a sinner.

Secondly the Spirit convicts of righteousness. Note the reason given. This points to the meaning of this use of righteousness.

**John 16:10 (NIV)** ... in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer...

Jesus is the righteousness spoken of in this passage. The Spirit convicts people, in their hearts, that Jesus is God's Son, and was sent to die for our sins so we might receive His righteousness.

And why do we need His righteousness? We need it because of the coming judgment. The Holy Spirit convicts people, in their hearts, of the truth of the coming judgment. Not only are we sinners. We are sinners that will have to answer to God for our sins. We will be found empty of our own righteousness on that day. All your good grades, good character, good behavior, good accomplishments, good attainments, and good deeds will not be enough to make you righteous before God. You must still answer for your sin. In short, you need a Savior.

The Spirit convicts us that Jesus is the Savior we need. This is a major work of the Holy Spirit today in the world. It takes place as a person hears or reads the good news of salvation through Jesus.

**The Holy Spirit changes your heart (rebirth, regeneration).** Jesus spoke of this to a man named Nicodemus.

**John 3:5 (NIV)** Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

The old you cannot relate correctly to God. The old you is about living for self, living for the flesh, living independent of God. You need a new heart in order to live for God, with God. The Holy Spirit gives you a new heart. He wakes you up spiritually. You are fundamentally changed forever by the Holy Spirit when you receive Jesus.

Then the Holy Spirit starts the process of enabling you to eradicate sin in you and to live in obedience to Jesus.

### **The Holy Spirit gives spiritual understanding to believers.**

**John 16:13 (NIV)** But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.

Most of God wants for you and of you is printed here (the Bible). But it is not all easy to understand. We must depend upon the Holy Spirit to give us understanding. In here is spiritual truth that the Holy Spirit interprets to believers.

**1 Corinthians 2:12-14 (NIV)** We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

How can you spiritually discern spiritual truth? Because the Holy Spirit gave you a new heart. You now have a heart that can receive spiritual truth from the Holy Spirit. When you read the Bible or hear it read or preached, and you do not understand it, this is a reason to pray. Ask the Spirit to give you spiritual understanding of spiritual truth.

### **The Holy Spirit equips you for and directs you to ministry. (service)**

Paul the missionary goes into great detail in one of his letters to the church in the city of Corinth about spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit equips us for ministry by giving us a spiritual gift. There are different gifts the Spirit gives, so we do not all have the same gift. We have different gifts so we can accomplish all that God wants done.

The Spirit also directs us in ministry. Let me give you an example.

One of our members told me last year that something urged her to reach out to another person attending our church. She did not label this urge as the Holy Spirit. I recognized it as such and gave her the label for what she experienced. Now she knows that the Holy Spirit is in her. The Holy Spirit was directing her to ministry. That ministry benefited her, the other person, and our whole church.

A twelve-year-old boy was saved at a revival, a series of special church services. Later, his friends questioned him about it. One asked, "Did you see a vision?" Another asked, "Did you hear God speak?" The boy answered all of these questions with a simple no.

"Well, how did you know you were saved?" they asked. The boy replied, "It's like when you catch a fish, you can't see the fish or hear the fish; you just feel him tugging on your line. I just felt God tugging on my heart."

Many of us had such an experience when we first got saved. We felt the Holy Spirit tugging at our hearts. But the Holy Spirit continues that kind of thing in us to move us into ministry service in the name of Jesus. As you learn to live in the Spirit you will experience this.

Charles Spurgeon presents a good summary of the overall work of the Holy Spirit.  
***"He suggests good thoughts, prompts good actions, reveals good truths, applies good promises, assists in good attainments, and leads to good results...  
"They who yield to His influences become good, they who obey His impulses do good, they who live under His power receive good."*** --Charles Spurgeon

I want to end with some questions this morning.

Are you living by the Spirit?

Are you experiencing victory over temptation?

Do you see sin losing its power over you?

If you cannot answer yes to these questions then maybe you can answer yes to some other questions.

Have you become comfortable with sin in yourself?

Is it true that you do not want to eradicate all sin in you?

Are you okay with some sin in you?

If you answer yes to these questions then you are resisting the work of the Holy Spirit in you. You are resisting the will of God. It may be that you are not truly saved. Remember Paul's warning in Galatians 5:21.

**Galatians 5:21 (NIV)** ... those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Your acceptance of sin is also hurting your church. To the extent that you are okay with sin, you are preventing what God wants to do in and through this church.

Repent today. Repent of your sin. Turn your sinful heart over to Jesus. Give Him full reign to save you, change you, and eradicate sin in you.

What sin is standing in the way of you and Jesus this morning?

In what are you resisting the Holy Spirit?

Give it up. Give it up to Him right now as we each turn to Jesus in prayer.