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The Indwelt Holy Spirit (I Co 3:16)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning,
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of lessons from 3:16 books that should have an impact on our lives.
 - a. Last week we looked at **Jn 3:16** “The Golden Text.”
 - i. We looked at how this great text showed us...
 1. The Greatest Giver
 2. The Greatest Gift
 3. The Greatest Blessing
 - b. Today we are going to look at a verse that has brought much debate in the church over the years.
 - i. **I Co 3:16** “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?”¹
3. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit debate
 - a. This debate has been fueled by two basic ideas over the years in the church.
 - i. The Representative View
 - ii. The Personal View
4. In today’s lesson we will examine three particular aspects of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. The facts that cannot be denied concerning the indwelling Spirit.
 - b. The false doctrines that have twisted Scripture to perpetuate erroneous ideas.
 - c. The different views concerning the indwelling Spirit.
 - d. The truth concerning this most important topic.
5. Background to our text.
 - a. Paul begins chapter 3 by making an observation about the Corinthians.
 - i. He makes clear he cannot get into the great spiritual matters that need addressing because they are carnal. They were still babes in Christ though they ought to be mature.
 1. **He 5:11-14**
 - ii. **I Co 3:1-3**
 - b. Paul continues his thought by addressing why this is the case.
 - i. They are carnal because they are divided over who baptized them in so much that they were arguing who is greater. “I follow Paul or I follow Apollos.”
 1. Paul then goes on to tell them the problem with their attitudes and conduct and how they are “all” God’s building.
 - ii. **I Co 3:4-9**

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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- c. Paul continues this thought by addressing how they are all God's building.
 - i. Paul states he laid the foundation and others have built upon it.
 - 1. Christ is the foundation Paul laid for them and others are building upon that foundation making each one into a temple of God. On that day it will be discovered if each has built the temple of God or something else.
 - ii. **I Co 3:10-15**
 - d. That brings us to our text.
 - i. **I Co 3:16-17** "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple."
6. Questions
- a. What have people interpreted this to mean?
 - b. How does God's Spirit dwell in us?
 - c. What does Paul mean we are the temple of God?
7. These are some of the question we will look at today and answer biblically.
- a. With that in mind let us now look at our lesson today.

I. The Facts

- A. Christians are the temple of God
 - 1. God's Word clearly indicates that His children, under the Law of Christ, are His temple.
 - i. **II Co 6:16** "What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."
 - ii. **I Co 6:19** "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."
 - 2. God is the builder of this temple.
 - i. **Ep 2:19-22** "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit."
- B. Christians are where God dwells
 - 1. There can be no denying that the Bible clearly speaks of the Godhead indwelling Christians and thus the church.
 - i. **Ro 8:9** "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."
 - ii. **II Ti 1:14** "By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you."

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- iii. **Ja 4:5** “Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”?”
- C. Destroying God’s temple results in destruction of the destroyer
 - 1. Whenever God’s creation is tampered with by man it is man that suffers His wrath for that tampering.
 - i. **Mt 10:28** “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”
 - ii. **He 10:31** “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”
- D. God will never go beyond His Word
 - 1. God has limited Himself in His Word.
 - i. **He 7:14** “For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.”
 - a. Here we find the inspired Hebrew writer pointing out that God’s Word, on the Levites being the sole tribe by which the priests could come from on earth, limited Him and prevented Jesus (God) from being an earthly priest.
- D. Thus...
 - 1. What we can clearly see is that Christians are the temple of God where He dwells and foolishly tampering with that temple will result in punishment from God because His Law on such as been set.

II. The False Doctrines

- A. As usual there are false doctrines that come from verses such as ours today
 - 1. People have a vivid imagination and thus we find the result theologies and doctrines that are contrary to sound Scripture.
- B. The indwelt God leads me through emotions
 - 1. This is as common today as any false doctrine.
 - i. “I’ll never forget that day. It actually was a craft store the Lord put on my heart. I went without knowing why God had sent me there, so I browsed around the isles and waited.” (<http://goo.gl/eV3D78>)
 - ii. “The Holy Spirit led me to leave that Church and to go to this new Church.” (<http://goo.gl/XaLpWC>)
 - 2. The problem with this idea is that it is left up to human emotions.
 - i. Emotions are not the standard by which we can be guided.
 - a. **Pr 14:12** “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”
 - ii. The Word of God is our guide.
 - a. **Ps 119:105** “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”
 - b. **Pr 6:23** “For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life”
 - c. **II Ti 3:16-17** “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

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- C. The indwelt God enlightens me
1. It is suggest that God enlightens the conscience so that it cannot be wrong.
 - i. “Your conscience isn’t always a safe and reliable guide concerning spiritual truth; but when it is illuminated and enlightened by the Holy Spirit, we can safely rest in its accuracy and correctness.”
(<http://goo.gl/844VxR>)
 - ii. “I AM speaking the truth in Christ. I am not lying; my conscience [enlightened and prompted] by the Holy Spirit bearing witness with me” (AMP)
 - a. The amplified version
 2. The Bible speaks nothing of this but rather pointing out that it is through diligent study that one comes to know the Bible.
 - i. **II Ti 2:15** “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”
 - ii. **Ac 17:11** “Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.”
 3. It can be clearly see as well that this is a false doctrine because everyone has the Spirit of God telling them something different.
 - i. One has the indwelt God enlightening them to miraculously heal someone instantly (Pentecostals).
 - a. Others have the indwelt God enlightening them that miraculously healing has stopped (Baptist).
 - ii. One has the indwelt God telling them that everyone (Christian or non-Christian) will go to heaven. (Billy Gram)
 - a. Others have the indwelt God enlightening them that only Christians will go to heaven. (Bill Gram’s Son).
 - iii. Common sense tells us this is crazy and the Scriptures do to.
 - a. **I Co 14:33** “For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.” (NKJV)
- D. Thus...
1. What we find is that there are no shortcomings of false doctrines out there but if we diligently seek truth with an open heart we will know God’s truth concerning such matters.

III. The Different Views

- A. The representative view
1. This view suggests that God dwells inside the Christian through the Word of God only.
 - i. In other words God is represented, through Scripture, but He is not literally inside anyone.
- B. The personal view
1. This view suggest that God dwells inside the Christian in accordance with the knowledge of Scripture.
 - i. In other words God literally dwells within someone.

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- C. The collective view
 - 1. This view suggests that God dwells in the church as a whole or as a collective.
 - i. In other words wherever gathered faithful Christians are found there also is found God.
- D. Thus...
 - 1. The more I look at these differing views the more I tend to lean toward the collective view for this reason...
 - i. The representative view has a glaring problem.
 - a. If God dwells through the Word only then whenever a person reads the Word he/she has God dwelling in them and this is simply unbiblical.
 - ii. The personal view has a glaring problem.
 - a. It holds to the idea that only the Holy Spirit literally dwells inside someone and that the Father and Son only do through representation of the Word.
 - b. Also this view by necessity has to have the Holy Spirit doing “something” so the only two possible responses are either...
 - 1. “I know He is there but I don’t know what He does.”
 - 2. “He enlightens my thoughts on the Scriptures.”
 - c. We can see clearly that this makes no sense.
 - 1. Though there are secret things it makes no sense to say there is nothing we can fully know yet this is the only true possibility.
 - 2. We also know that the Spirit does not enlighten us as already seen in that we are responsible to studying and handling the Word to understand it.
 - iii. The collective view though less commonly discussed has much more appeal.
 - a. It does not have the shortcoming of the representative view.
 - 1. If God indwells the congregation ie Christians meeting than that cannot suggest non-Christians as a viable option.
 - b. It does not have the shortcoming of the personal view.
 - 1. If God indwells the gathered church than this isn’t a limitation on who indwells.
 - 2. If God indwells the question of why is answered and for what reason is clearly seen because that is the house of God and because He is to receive worship.
 - 2. This is not to suggest there are not limitations on the collective view however I have not found any as of yet.

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IV. The Truth

- A. Unity is of utmost importance
 - 1. If Jesus the Christ prayed we are united in all things let not man stand in its way.
 - i. **Jn 17:11** “And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.”
 - 2. I say this because unless one has taken any of these views beyond the Scriptures we ought not call the other heretic.
 - i. These can and have been held by faithful brethren on either side and to suggest that this is a salvation issue is beyond insane.
- B. Thus...
 - 1. Brethren as we look at this most delicate issue let us do so with love and a desire to come to the same mind and same judgment without malice and deceit.

CONCLUSION

- 1. Brethren let it be said today of each of us that whichever view we come down on we do so with an open heart to listen as with all teachings and a willingness to compare it to the Scriptures to see if what is being taught is true.
 - a. Let us be like the Bereans rather than the Thessalonians.
- 2. Question: Are you living in such a way and worshiping in such a way that God is able to dwell in you?
 - a. If so continue therein and grow thereby.
 - b. If not why not?
- 3. Invitation
 - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Have Faith In Jesus **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**