

The Works of the Holy Spirit

Preached by Pastor Russell Roberts at Calvary Baptist Church and Red Springs Baptist Church during the Winter/Spring of 2025.

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Who Is the Holy Spirit?

Originally Preached on 1/12/2025

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. - Genesis 1:1-2

This morning we are beginning a new sermon series titled “The Works of the Holy Spirit”. We are going to spend the next few months discussing the role and various activities of the Holy Spirit according to Scripture. I decided to preach on this topic after attending a conference last fall with my son and hearing Mike Riccardi, a prominent theologian and professor who works with John MacArthur at Grace Community Church in California, speak about it. This is a very timely issue as there is much confusion and misinformation about the Holy Spirit being promoted in the Christian church right now, especially within more pentecostal and charismatic movements. Some of these influences are beginning to infiltrate and affect more conservative traditions, including Southern Baptists. That said, we need to have a solid, informed, and Biblically based understanding of the Holy Spirit and what He does.

Before we delve into the numerous works of the Holy Spirit, let’s start by clearly identifying who He is and what role He plays. This opening message will be the foundation upon which the remainder of the series rests. It is called “Who Is the Holy Spirit?”.

I. THE IDENTITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

There are many flawed and/or erroneous teachings about the identity of the Holy Spirit. I can remember as a child hearing Him called the Holy Ghost regularly by church leaders. Thankfully this misleading term is not as common in Christianity as it used to be. It conjures up the idea that the Holy Spirit is like an apparition of a dead person who appears to be alive. This is ridiculous. Some people mistakenly liken the Holy Spirit to a mystical force. Think about the Star Wars movies and how the Jedis were taught to use and trust “the force”. Friends, the Holy Spirit is not merely an intense feeling, inclination, or impression. Still others believe that the Holy Spirit is more like an impersonal power source which is available for Christians to tap into. Again, the Holy Spirit is much more than this.

The Bible unequivocally teaches that the Holy Spirit is God. In Acts 5:3-4, Peter rebukes Ananias for lying to the Holy Spirit about the price of a piece of property that he sold and concludes that by doing so he has lied to God. Peter’s statement clearly equates the Holy Spirit with God - they are the same.

The Holy Spirit is the 3rd Person of the Godhead or Trinity. The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 describes the doctrine of the Trinity like this: “The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.” Though this explanation defies human understanding, by faith we as

Christians accept and believe that the Holy Spirit is simultaneously unified with, distinct from, and equal to the Father and the Son.

II. THE DIVINITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit possesses all of the divine characteristics of God. He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. These shared characteristics confirm that He is not simply a feeling, phantom, or force, but rather He is God.

By omnipotent, we mean that He is all-powerful. In Luke 1:35, the angel Gabriel tells Mary that “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you” and you will give birth to the Son of God. In this verse and many others like it throughout Scripture, we see that the power of Almighty God is inherent in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is omnipotent.

By omniscient, we mean that God is all-knowing. In 1 Corinthians 2:10-11, Paul writes that “no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.” This verse plainly teaches that the Holy Spirit knows the thoughts of God. Seeing that God knows all things, then the Holy Spirit likewise knows all things. He is omniscient.

By omnipresent, we mean that God is everywhere present. In Psalm 139:7-8, David asks “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.” There is no place to hide from the Holy Spirit, because He is present everywhere. He is omnipresent.

III. THE PERSONHOOD OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Although the Holy Spirit does not have a physical or material body, He is still a divine person. He possesses a mind, emotions, and a will. These are personal traits, like those of human beings. We share these attributes with God because we were created in His image. The proper pronoun for the Holy Spirit is “He”, just like it is for God the Father or God the Son.

The Holy Spirit has a mind. Going back to 1 Corinthians 2:10-11, which we cited earlier in this message, He knows all things and “searches” the depths of God. In other words, the Holy Spirit ponders, reflects upon, examines, and investigates the thoughts of God. These are the mental and intellectual exercises of a mind.

The Holy Spirit has emotions. In Ephesians 4:30, Paul writes that our sinful behaviors “grieve” the Holy Spirit. He is actually saddened by our disobedience. In Romans 8:26-27, we read that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us in accordance to God’s will with “groanings too deep for words”. These are just a couple of examples of the Holy Spirit’s feelings and emotions.

The Holy Spirit has a will. In 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, Paul explains that the Holy Spirit distributes various spiritual gifts to the members of Christ’s body. How does He determine who receives

each particular gift or gifts? Paul concludes this passage by stating that the Holy Spirit apportions them “as He wills.” It is His prerogative to decide.

IV. THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

As stated previously, each Person of the Trinity - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - is fully and equally God. None of them are less or lower than the others in any way. However, each serves a particular role within the Godhead. It is the Holy Spirit's role to carry out or execute the will of the Father within creation (which includes applying the redemptive work of the Son in the lives of believers). In other words, what God the Father decrees and the Son has secured the Holy Spirit accomplishes, both within the hearts of believers and in the natural universe. At the conference I mentioned in the introduction of this morning's message, Mike Riccardi referred to the Holy Spirit as the “Executor of all Divine Operations”.

No analogy is perfect so we should be careful when using them, but they can be helpful. When I think about the manner in which God chooses to work, I like to picture the Father as the brain and the Holy Spirit as the hands and feet. What the brain desires, the hands and feet do. Without the brain, the hands and feet don't function. Without the hands and feet, the brain's desires cannot be realized. They work together to get things done. The power of the Holy Spirit to affect change is governed by the will of the Father.

CONCLUSION

As we conclude, let's quickly review the major points of today's message.

First, the Holy Spirit is God. He is the 3rd Person of the Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Second, the Holy Spirit is divine. He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent.
Third, the Holy Spirit is a person. He possesses a mind, emotions, and will.
Fourth, the Holy Spirit carries out or executes the will of the Father within creation (which includes the redemptive work of the Son within believers).

Now that we have established who the Holy Spirit is, we can begin exploring many of the things that He does. In the coming weeks we will examine several works of the Holy Spirit. I am eagerly looking forward to it and I hope you are too. God bless you.

The Presence of the Holy Spirit

Originally Preached on 1/19/2025

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.” - Luke 4:18-19

Last Sunday we began a new sermon series called “The Works of the Holy Spirit”. We began by identifying who the Holy Spirit is and what role He plays within the Trinity. We looked at several scriptures which clearly and definitively teach that the Holy Spirit is God - He is not a force, feeling, or phantom. He is the 3rd Person of the triune Godhead - Father, Son, and Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a divine person who possesses both the characteristics of God and personal attributes. He carries out or executes the will of the Father within creation (which includes applying the redemptive work of the Son within believers). To use Mike Riccardi’s term, the Holy Spirit is “The Executor of All Divine Operations”.

God’s creative, sustaining, and ongoing work within the natural universe is performed by the Holy Spirit. We see this displayed in several instances throughout scripture. However, the Bible spends much more time discussing the works of the Holy Spirit within the lives of believers than it does within the natural order, not that those aren’t remarkable. God is more concerned about His people than the earth upon which they live. That said, this morning we are going to speak about “The Presence of the Holy Spirit” within Christians.

I. THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

There is a significant difference between the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. During the Old Testament and prior to Pentecost, the Holy Spirit selectively came upon particular people, often temporarily and/or for a specific purpose. If that individual fell out of favor with God or when their special service was complete, the Holy Spirit could depart from them (Psalm 51:11). For example, the Holy Spirit came upon King Saul enabling him to prophesy (1 Samuel 10:10), but then later left him after his sinful disobedience (1 Samuel 16:14). We see this same activity with several other Old Testament characters including various kings and judges, perhaps most notably Samson (Judges 14:6, 16:20).

Near the end of His earthly ministry and time of His departure, Jesus promised the disciples that He would ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit to abide in them “forever” (John 14:16-17). In keeping with this promise, when the Holy Spirit fell upon the apostles at Pentecost the manner of indwelling changed. Since that time, the Spirit permanently indwells all believers who have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Acts 2:38). His inner-presence is not selective, temporary, or task-specific. By permanent, I mean constantly, from the moment of someone’s salvation until their physical death. He does not come and go throughout their lives.

When we present the gospel to children or new believers, we often invite them to “Ask Jesus to come into their heart”. In reality, it is the Spirit of Christ (that is, the Holy Spirit) who comes into

and abides within those who are saved (1 John 3:24). The Spirit of God dwells within all Christians, and His absence indicates that someone is not truly saved (Romans 8:9). In addition, the Bible teaches that the physical bodies of believers are the temple of God, because the Holy Spirit resides within them (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20). For this reason, we should take care of ourselves and practice good health. These and many other similar verses and passages teach that the Holy Spirit permanently indwells Christians today.

II. THE FALLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Although the Holy Spirit was already present and active during the Old Testament, the prophet Joel spoke of a coming day when He would be poured out upon all mankind (Joel 2:28-29). This outpouring or “falling” was a unique, one-time historical event that marked the beginning of the Church Age. The Holy Spirit fell upon believers living at that time who, despite being saved by faith, were not yet “indwelt” by the Holy Spirit. This transformation is documented in the book of Acts and occurred in 3 distinct phases. The Holy Spirit first fell upon the apostles in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost resulting in the salvation of 3,000 Jews (Acts 2:1-4). Next He fell upon Samaritan believers (Acts 8:14-17) and finally upon Gentile believers (Acts 10:44-45). These 3 instances represent the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all people groups - the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Gentiles.

Following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit described above, there are no additional instances in the Bible when the Holy Spirit spontaneously “fell” or was “poured out” upon a believer or group of believers. Such an action would be redundant and unnecessary seeing that there were no longer any believers who were void of the Holy Spirit, nor would there be in the future. Why would the Holy Spirit need to fall upon those who were already indwelt by Him? Are we to believe that the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit becomes stale over time and needs to be refreshed? Certainly not!

For Christians today, it is reasonable to pray for the Holy Spirit to pour Himself out or “fall” upon lost people or heathen nations because He does not yet abide in them. However, this is not a prayer that believers need to pray for themselves or one another. My concern is that many modern church-goers who pray for the Holy Spirit to “fall” upon them or their congregations are more interested in seeing, receiving, and/or performing the miracles that were associated with His initial outpouring than they are in living in faithful obedience to God.

III. THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Being “filled” with the Spirit can have different meanings depending on how it is used. In some instances it refers to indwelling, which we’ve already discussed. When a sinner comes to faith in Christ, they are filled with the Holy Spirit at the moment of their salvation. This filling is the initial arrival of the Holy Spirit within the life of the new believer.

Another meaning of being “filled” with the Holy Spirit applies to those who are already Christians. In fact, the Word of God encourages believers to be continuously filled with the Spirit

(Ephesians 5:18). Now you may ask, if a Christian is permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit from the moment of their salvation, aren't they already filled with the Holy Spirit? Yes, they are filled with His presence, but may not be swayed by His influence. Let me explain...

The Greek word "pneuma" in the New Testament and the Hebrew word "ruach" in the Old Testament are the most commonly used words for spirit found in the Bible. Both of these words can also mean breath or wind. The Holy Spirit is frequently described as breath or wind in the Bible (Job 26:13, John 3:8). That said, when we think about the "filling" of the Holy Spirit within the lives of Christians, we shouldn't imagine a container being filled with wine or grain, but rather a sail being filled with the wind. Figuratively speaking, the wind of the Holy Spirit is always blowing within those who are indwelt by Him, but they must hoist their sails in order to capture it lest they row in their own strength, perhaps even against it.

Paul warns believers not to "quench the Spirit" with sinful behaviors and evil practices (1 Thessalonians 5:19). Such carnality is the opposite of Spirit-filled living. However, when Christians submit to God's will and walk in faithful obedience to His commands, they metaphorically hoist their sails and are filled with His Spirit who then propels them with the LORD's strength in the direction that He desires for them to go.

CONCLUSION

Let's take a moment to go over the major points of today's sermon.

During the Old Testament and prior to Pentecost, the Holy Spirit selectively came upon particular people, often temporarily and/or for a specific purpose. If that individual fell out of favor with God or when their special service was complete, the Holy Spirit could depart from them.

The manner of the Holy Spirit's presence in people's lives changed when He was poured out or "fell" upon the apostles at Pentecost. His outpouring included the Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles - ie, all people. Since then, the Holy Spirit permanently indwells all believers from the moment of their salvation until their physical deaths. He doesn't come and go.

Seeing that Christians today are already indwelt by the fullness of the Holy Spirit, they should understand that being "filled" by the Spirit has to do with being under His control, not being in His presence. When Christians live in submission to God's will and faithful obedience to His commands, they are "filled" with the Holy Spirit who gives them strength and guidance.

Next week we will begin looking at specific works that the Holy Spirit accomplishes within the lives of God's people. Until then, have a blessed week.

The Holy Spirit's Dealings with Sin

Originally Preached on 1/26/2025

“But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Advocate [Holy Spirit] will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.” - John 16:7

The Holy Spirit is fully and completely God, equal with the Father and the Son in all aspects of His deity. Furthermore, He has personal characteristics just as the Father and Son do. He is the 3rd Person of the Trinity and His role is to execute or carry out that which the Father wills and the Son has secured within creation (particularly in the lives of believers).

Throughout the Old Testament era, the Holy Spirit selectively came upon particular people, often temporarily and/or for a specific purpose. The Church Age began when the Spirit fell upon the apostles at Pentecost, and since then He permanently indwells all believers from the moment of their salvation until that of their physical death. Therefore, His presence is full and constant within the lives of those who are saved. Christians should understand that being filled with the Spirit means living under His influence and control.

This morning we will begin discussing several specific works of the Holy Spirit starting with how He deals with sin. We will consider how He reveals to various people the dangerous effects of sin and how He presently prevents sin from overwhelming the world. This message is titled, appropriately enough, “The Holy Spirit’s Dealings with Sin”.

I. CONVICTS THE LOST

Jesus stated that the Holy Spirit convicts “the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment” (John 16:8-11). When the Holy Spirit's conviction comes upon a lost person, He impresses upon them the horror and gravity of their sin which often leads them to experience feelings of guilt and shame. Beyond their need for forgiveness, however, He also reveals their own depraved, carnal nature and desperate need to be made righteous. Finally, He shows them that apart from salvation in Christ Jesus they will face God’s just and deserved judgment and condemnation.

The Bible clearly teaches that no person can come to God on their own prerogative. In ancient cultures, no one was allowed access to or audience with the king without an invitation (Esther 4:11). In the same way, a fallen sinner cannot simply approach the King of kings whenever they choose. Jesus taught that no one could come to Him unless drawn by the Father (John 6:44). This drawing occurs when the Holy Spirit convicts a lost person. Holy Spirit conviction is the invitation that allows access to King Jesus.

There is no salvation apart from Holy Spirit conviction. Thus, the work of the Holy Spirit to convict lost people is absolutely critical in God’s redemptive plan. Many of His other works do not even begin until after a person repents of their sin and accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior. Moments of Holy Spirit conviction come and go in the lives of nonbelievers, and are only afforded as God allows. For this reason, when a lost person comes under Holy Spirit conviction

they should not resist His stirring (Acts 7:51), but should rather seize the opportunity to receive salvation in Christ Jesus while it's being extended to them.

II. CONTINUES TO CONVICT CHRISTIANS

Even after a person accepts Christ, they continue to commit sins. The Apostle Paul spoke about this dilemma at length in his letter to the Romans (Romans 7:14-20). He struggled with doing the things he didn't want to do while not doing those that he wanted to do. Beloved, despite being made right with God, a Christian still has to contend with their fleshly nature. Although they have been made new, that newness is not yet completely realized. As they mature in Christ, grow in His likeness, and increase in their knowledge and understanding of His will and Word, they will sin less, but will never reach perfection or sinlessness in this life.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit continues to convict believers of sin by making them aware of their transgressions and ongoing need to confess them. Scripture states that if Christians will confess their sin, the LORD will forgive them and cleanse them of all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). In the model prayer, Jesus taught believers to regularly pray that their sins would be forgiven (Matthew 6:12), indicating that sin still persists after salvation.

When a Christian confesses sin, their fellowship with or closeness to God is restored. Their witness for God is strengthened and their fruitfulness increases. Unconfessed sin in the life of a believer renders them ineffectual and perhaps even detrimental to the cause of Christ. Thus, the Holy Spirit's conviction of sin in the lives of Christians is extremely important to their own spiritual well-being as well as to the larger congregation.

III. RESTRAINS THE MAN OF SIN

In the days of Noah, evil had grown so great and sin so prevalent on the earth that God decided to bring about widespread judgment upon mankind (Genesis 6:5-8). He sent a flood that wiped out all of sinful humanity, sparing only Noah and his immediate family. They were charged with repopulating the earth and starting over again. This global catastrophe occurred during the Old Testament, when the Holy Spirit was not indwelling believers in the same way that He is now.

The Bible teaches that God intends to judge the earth and its inhabitants again (2 Peter 3:7-10). Leading up to this judgment, the Antichrist will rise to power and establish dominion over the nations and peoples of the earth. He will display all sorts of supernatural abilities and powers, deceiving many into believing that He is the Christ. However, he will turn against God's people and persecute them mercilessly until Jesus returns and the LORD's judgment is poured out.

Although the world today is saturated with sin and iniquity as it was in Noah's day, the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence within believers (ie, the New Testament Church) prevents it from being completely overwhelmed by evil. The Bible refers to the Holy Spirit as the one who restrains the Antichrist, thereby preventing his ascension to power and delaying the judgment that will surely follow. However, when the Restraint is taken out of the way, there will be no one

on earth with the power to prevent sin's dominance or postpone God's judgment (2 Thessalonians 2:6-7). I believe that this will take place at the Rapture, when the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence will depart as Christians are caught up to Heaven, ushering in the 7-year Tribulation and the rise of the Antichrist.

CONCLUSION

The Holy Spirit convicts lost people of their sin, providing them with opportunities to receive salvation. He also convicts believers, prompting them to confess their sins in order to restore and maintain their fellowship with God. Finally, He restrains the rise of the Antichrist and prevents sin from completely engulfing the world. Over the next few weeks we are going to explore more of the Holy Spirit's work as it pertains to salvation.

Before we close today, I want you to consider how amazing these works are. We as sinful people would be eternally lost and completely without hope apart from the access we have to Christ through the Holy Spirit's convicting power. Friends, this is a miraculous work that enables people to find eternal life in and through Jesus. It alone is more remarkable, profound, and eternally significant than any and all physical healings and/or natural miracles. The Holy Spirit's greatest works are not necessarily seen with the eye.

The Work of the Holy Spirit in Salvation

Originally Preached on 2/2/2025

Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.- Matthew 12:31-32

Last Sunday we discussed the Holy's Spirit's dealings with sin. We learned that He convicts the world of "sin, righteousness, and judgment" so that lost souls might come to salvation in Jesus Christ. After a person is redeemed He continues to convict them of unconfessed sin so that they might walk in closer fellowship with God and be more effective in their Christian witness and service. In addition, the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence within believers who make up the New Testament Church restrains or prevents the Antichrist from ascending to power, thereby delaying the events of the end times and God's final judgment upon the earth.

When an unbeliever comes under Holy Spirit conviction and places their faith in Jesus Christ as the Lord of their lives, they are immediately "saved" and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. There are several facets of Biblical salvation and the Holy Spirit is integral to each of them. According to The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 (BFM2000) "salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification." In our message this week, we'll consider how the Holy Spirit works to accomplish all 4 of these components of salvation.

I. EFFECTS REGENERATION

The BFM2000 states "Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus." Regeneration is a supernatural work in which a person who was dead in their trespasses and sins is made spiritually alive or alive to Christ (Ephesians 2:1,5). This rebirth is made possible by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5).

Jesus spoke with a Pharisee named Nicodemus about regeneration (John 3:1-8). He said that in order for a person to see the kingdom of God they must be born again. He explained that this regeneration was not of a physical nature, but rather a spiritual one. In order to be truly saved, a person must be born of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit regenerates a repentant sinner.

Christ abides in believers through the presence of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit indwells a person, their spirit is made alive (regenerated) while their body of flesh remains dead (Romans 8:9-10). The new birth is the beginning of a new life in Jesus Christ.

II. EFFECTS JUSTIFICATION

The BFM2000 states "Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God." Acquittal is a legal term which means to

declare someone innocent or without fault. So when God justifies a new believer, He determines that they are not guilty, because their sin has already been placed upon and paid for by Jesus Christ. Furthermore, they are freed from the punishment associated with that sin.

Justification is effected by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:11). In fact, the Bible teaches that Jesus Himself was vindicated or “justified” by the Spirit (1 Timothy 3:16). The difference between Jesus’ justification and humanity’s is that He was declared “not guilty” of sin because He was actually sinless, whereas we are declared “not guilty” of sin because He became our substitute. When a person is justified, they are made righteous in His sight and their standing before Him is restored (2 Corinthians 5:21).

III. EFFECTS SANCTIFICATION

The BFM2000 states “Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God’s purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person’s life.” Sanctification is a life-long process in which a Christian is increasingly conformed to the image of Christ. This gradual transformation is brought about by the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

In his letter to the church at Rome, Paul urged believers to live by the Spirit rather than according to the flesh. By doing so, the practices of the body (our old, sinful thoughts and behaviors) are put to death or brought into submission (Romans 8:12-13). This is referred to as mortification. As our carnal natures are increasingly subdued, we become further sanctified by the purifying work of the Holy Spirit.

IV. EFFECTS GLORIFICATION

The BFM2000 states “Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.” Whereas regeneration is the beginning of the sanctification process, glorification is the ending of it. Glorification will take place when sin is finally and fully removed from the lives of believers and God’s glory is revealed in them (Romans 8:18).

Glorification will involve putting on a new glorified body that is not tainted by or inclined to sin (1 Corinthians 15:51-53). Our present bodies of flesh will be done away with and replaced with glorious bodies that are fitted for eternity (Philippians 3:20-21). It was the Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead, and He will raise the mortal bodies of believers also that we might dwell with Christ forever (Romans 8:11, 17).

CONCLUSION

The convicting work of the Holy Spirit affords lost people with the opportunity to accept Christ and receive salvation. Beyond this, the Holy Spirit works to effect regeneration, justification,

sanctification, and glorification within the lives of those who are saved. Thus, every facet of salvation is carried out by the Holy Spirit.

When a person places their faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior, they are regenerated or “born again”. They die to sin, are freed from it, and are made spiritually alive to Christ. New believers are also justified. They are forgiven of their sin, acquitted and declared innocent, and pardoned of its penalty. Over the course of their lives, believers are sanctified as they mature in their faith, mortify the deeds of the flesh, and are increasingly transformed into the image of Christ. This process culminates with glorification, which will occur when Jesus returns. At this time all remnants of sin will be purged from the believer’s life and they will be fitted with an incorruptible and imperishable body. With these various aspects of salvation in mind, it is appropriate to say that Christians have been saved, are being saved, and will be saved. And again I emphasize, it is all done by the Holy Spirit. Incredible!

In our next message, we will look at another work of the Holy Spirit that takes place at the moment of salvation. We will discuss what it means to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. I hope you’ll be able to join us again this upcoming Sunday. Until then, have a blessed week.

The Adjoining Work of the Holy Spirit

Originally Preached on 2/9/2025

After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, - Matthew 3:16

Well, hello again and welcome! This morning we will continue our series on “The Works of the Holy Spirit”. Before we begin, let’s look back at some of the works we’ve already covered.

The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment providing lost people with the opportunity to be saved and calling believers to continual confession of unconfessed sin so that their fellowship with God and effectiveness for Him may be unhindered.

The Holy Spirit currently prevents this world from becoming completely overwhelmed and dominated by sin. He restrains the rise of the Antichrist (the Man of Lawlessness) and thereby delays God’s final judgment, and will continue to do so until He is taken away.

The Holy Spirit effects all aspects of salvation. He regenerates the new believer, making them spiritually alive. He justifies the new believer, acquitting them of their sin so that they stand blameless before God. He sanctifies believers, working to put away the deeds of the flesh and increasingly conform them into the image of God as they grow and mature in their faith. When Christ returns, He will glorify all believers by fully and finally removing all remnants of sin from them and will fit them with incorruptible and immortal bodies that are fashioned for eternity.

We are just getting started in our study of the amazing works of the Holy Spirit. In today’s sermon, we will add a few more to our growing list. I have titled this message “The Adjoining Works of the Holy Spirit”. Here we go!

I. BAPTIZED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

Just prior to His ascension into Heaven, Jesus gathered the apostles together and commanded them to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit fell upon them. He said, “John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” (Acts 1:4-5) What did Jesus mean when He said this? What is baptism of the Holy Spirit?

The Bible teaches that all Christians, regardless of their ethnicity or social status, are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-13) . This is something that happens to all believers at the moment of salvation. When a sinner receives Christ, the Holy Spirit instantaneously “baptizes” them into the Church. Christians do not have to initiate this baptism or seek it out. The baptism of the Holy Spirit happens once and only once in the life of all believers.

Scripture also states that when a lost person trusts in Jesus, they are “buried with Him” in baptism (Colossians 2:12). In other words, they are baptized into the likeness of His death. Having become unified with Him, they also share in the likeness of His resurrection so that they might walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-5). When a person is baptized in the Holy Spirit, the redeeming work of Christ that was accomplished and secured through His death, burial, and resurrection is applied to and actualized within the new believer.

This spiritual reality is pictured symbolically in water baptism. Water baptism alone does not lead to salvation, whereas baptism of the Holy Spirit corresponds with it (Acts 19:1-7). John the Baptist was fully aware of the limitations of water baptism for the repentance of sin. While it was an expression of guilt and the desire for forgiveness, it was not a profession of belief in Christ. He spoke of One coming after him, who would be greater than him, who would baptize people with the Holy Spirit, leading not only to forgiveness, but to salvation (Mark 1:7-8).

II. ADOPTED INTO GOD’S FAMILY

The Bible says that everyone who has a saving belief in Jesus Christ is given the right to become a child of God (John 1:12). John marvels in the love of God and celebrates the fact that all Christians are His children (1 John 3:1). The Bible uses this language throughout, describing God as the Father and believers as His sons and daughters.

Jesus came to redeem sinners that they might receive adoption as His sons (Galatians 4:4-7). This miraculous work is carried out by the “Spirit of adoption”, aka the Holy Spirit, who indwells believers (Romans 8:14-17). When a person is saved, they are spiritually adopted into the family of God and, as His children, become heirs of His inheritance.

During the Passover meal, just hours before His arrest and crucifixion, Jesus promised that He would send the Holy Spirit to indwell and empower the apostles after His departure. He assured them that He would not “leave them as orphans” (John 14:18). When the Holy Spirit arrived, they would be adopted into the family of God. So it is with all believers who place their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

III. UNITED WITH BELIEVERS

Through His work of baptism and adoption, the Holy Spirit unites all Christians together in profound ways (Ephesians 4:1-6). There is 1 Holy Spirit who indwells all believers. There is 1 baptism that He executes in the lives of all believers. This baptism joins them to 1 body, making them all members of 1 church. Christians are united as fellow members of the Body of Christ, who are called to work together harmoniously to advance the kingdom of God.

There is only 1 faith in 1 Lord, Jesus Christ, that leads to salvation. When a sinner is saved they are reconciled with the 1 God and adopted by the 1 Spirit into His family. God the Father, who sent His Son Jesus to seek and to save the lost, is the father of all people who have trusted in Him. Christians are united as the children of God; they are spiritual brothers and sisters.

Believers should strive to live in unity with each other understanding that they are siblings in the same family. Paul urges Christians to be humble, gentle, and patient with one another. He implores God's children to bear with one another in love and be diligent to keep the Spirit of unity in the bond of peace. Beloved, the Holy Spirit brings unity to believers in that they are all fellow members of His body (the church) and are all siblings in His family (the children of God).

CONCLUSION

This morning we have discussed the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of adoption, and the importance of Christian unity. We have explored how the Holy Spirit works to join or bind believers together in these ways. Before we close, let's briefly summarize what we've learned.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit brings a new believer into the fellowship of the Church, making them a member of the Body of Christ. It also allows them to participate in and partake of the benefits secured by Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. It is effected by the Holy Spirit in the lives of all new believers at the moment of their salvation.

The Holy Spirit adopts new believers into the family of God. As His adopted sons and daughters, Christians receive all the rights and blessings that are afforded to God's children. They become heirs of the inheritance He has prepared for them.

Believers are brought into unity with each other when they become co-members of Christ's body, the church, and become brothers and sisters in the family of God. They should embrace this unity with one another that is made possible by the Holy Spirit and should strive to walk in it.

Next week we will continue this series on the works of the Holy Spirit with a message about the spiritual gifts. When a person is baptized into the Body of Christ, the Holy Spirit gifts them to serve the body. More about this next Sunday... have a blessed week.

The Holy Spirit Distributes Gifts

Originally Preached on 2/16/2025

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?” - Luke 11:13

A month and a half ago we began our current sermon series which I’ve titled “The Works of the Holy Spirit”. We are naming and discussing several of the major works that are accomplished by the Holy Spirit. We’ve learned that the Holy Spirit is the “executor of all divine works”, both in God’s creation and in its creatures. That said, the Bible places most of its emphasis on the Holy Spirit’s work within believers.

The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, so that the lost might be saved and the saved might walk more closely with the LORD. The Holy Spirit restrains the rise of the Antichrist. The Holy Spirit effects all facets of salvation, including regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. The Holy Spirit unites all believers by adopting them into the family of God. He also baptizes them into the likeness of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection and adds them to the Body of Christ, which is the New Testament Church.

In this morning’s message, we’ll consider what the Holy Spirit does for Christians after baptizing them into the Body of Christ. I am calling this sermon “The Holy Spirit Distributes Gifts”. We will conduct a brief overview of the various spiritual gifts that are listed in the Bible.

I. THE PURPOSE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Scripture teaches that after the Holy Spirit baptizes new believers into the Church, He gives each of them 1 or more gifts. Christians commonly refer to these as “spiritual gifts”. There are a variety of different spiritual gifts, which are to be used in a variety of different ministries to do a variety of different works in the Church. However, all of these gifts come from the same Holy Spirit who distributes them as He wills. These gifts, or manifestations of the Spirit, are to be used by members of the Body for the profit or good of the entire Body (1 Cor. 12:4-7, 11, 27).

A single body has many members, each serving its own distinct function or functions. So also the Church is made up of many members who each possess their own spiritual gift(s). These gifts are to be used harmoniously with one another to accomplish the work of the Church. Therefore, it is imperative for each member to utilize their spiritual gift(s) in order for the Body to operate in a balanced and healthy way (Romans 12:4-6a). Christians are to employ their gifts as “good stewards of the manifold grace of God” so that He might be glorified through Christ in all things (1 Peter 4:10, 11b).

II. A PARTIAL LIST OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

There is no complete listing of the spiritual gifts anywhere in the Bible. However, there are a few passages that provide partial lists. These are often combined and considered together. Scripture

implies that there are even more spiritual gifts and names several other traits and/or abilities that might qualify, though not explicitly included in any of these lists. This ambiguity has led to the creation of a variety of different spiritual gift lists and inventories over the years.

These are the spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28b and Romans 12:6-8:

Word of wisdom - to skillfully apply God's truth to life situations; counsel.

Word of knowledge - to understand with insight the revelatory truths of God.

Faith - to possess a strong, unshakable confidence in God, His Word, and His promises.

Healings - to effect immediate physical healing for a person.

Miracles - to effect other supernatural works besides healings.

Prophecy - to declare the will, purposes, or intentions of God.

Discernment - to determine if a message or spirit is of God or of Satan.

Tongues - to speak in languages unknown to the speaker.

Interpretation - to understand languages unknown to the hearer.

Teaching - to explain the meaning of God's Word and how it is applied; instruct.

Exhortation - to call others to obey God's Word, through encouragement or correction.

Giving - to joyfully share what one has with others.

Leadership - to rule or preside over others within the church.

Administration - to organize, plan, and execute tasks within the church.

Mercy - to show compassion, sympathy, and sensitivity to those who are suffering.

Helps - to aid or render assistance to others within the church.

In his first letter, Peter divides some gifts into 2 broad categories - speaking gifts and serving gifts (1 Peter 4:11a). Some of the speaking gifts are teaching, exhortation, word of wisdom, and word of knowledge. Some of the serving gifts are leadership, administration, mercy, and helps. Other categories have been suggested by various people or groups for the remaining gifts, such as enabling gifts and sign gifts.

Some Christians include apostleship, prophecy, evangelism, shepherding (pastoring), and teaching in the list of spiritual gifts (Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Cor. 12:28a). Others, myself included, view these as offices within the first-century church, not necessarily spiritual gifts. This perspective holds that the New Testament apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers possessed the 1 or more of the aforementioned gifts.

III. THE DEBATE OVER THE SIGN GIFTS

The sign gifts, or miraculous gifts, include healing, miracles, tongues, interpretation, and prophecy (when defined as receiving extra-biblical revelation). There is a debate within Christianity regarding these particular spiritual gifts. Continuationists argue that the Holy Spirit still distributes these spiritual gifts just as He did in the early days of the church. Cessationists hold that the sign gifts have ceased and are no longer distributed to individual believers as they were when the church first began (1 Cor. 13:8). Based upon years of study, the historically held position of Southern Baptists is cessationism.

The majority of Southern Baptists contend that the miraculous gifts were given to the apostles and a handful of their closest associates during the infancy of the Church in order to establish their credibility and the authority of their message. However, once the Church was firmly established and entrenched, the sign gifts ceased. As these individuals died, so also did the office of apostleship. I often compare the sign gifts to booster rockets on a space shuttle. They were needed to get the Christian Church off the ground, but then became unnecessary for and a deterrent to the furtherance of its mission and fell off.

Cessationists are often accused of denying the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit today. Such accusations are blatantly false. Cessationists believe that the Holy Spirit can and regularly pray that He will miraculously heal people and perform other supernatural works, in accordance with God's will, and at His discretion. These miraculous works may even be carried out on occasion through an individual person, but often they are not. What cessationists dispute is that particular Christians today are gifted with the ability to perform these spectacular signs at their own discretion.

CONCLUSION

I know we have chased a few rabbits this morning and I apologize, but spiritual gifts - especially the ongoing distribution and use of the sign gifts - are a hotly contested topic in modern Christianity. Many of the popular Charismatic and Pentecostal churches and movements have become fascinated with these gifts. This has led to rampant abuse and outright deception on the part of some, resulting in the disillusionment and dismay of many of their congregants. It has also drawn attention away from the much more significant, eternal works of the Holy Spirit.

Let's get back to the main point. After baptizing a born again believer into the Body of Christ, the Holy Spirit distributes 1 or more spiritual gifts to them. Although the exact number of spiritual gifts is uncertain and the viability of some is disputed, those that are given are to be used to edify the Church and advance its mission.

In closing, if you are a Christian, you have been given at least 1 spiritual gift. How are you using it to serve the church? If you're not using it, the body is suffering. I'm not trying to guilt anyone, but if the shoe fits... We are not called to be spectators, friends, but rather participants in the LORD's kingdom work.

The Holy Spirit and the Bible

Originally Preached on 2/23/2025

Then He [Jesus] opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem." - Luke 24:45-47

"What are the major activities or works of the Holy Spirit described in the Bible?" This is the question we've been seeking to answer over the last several weeks in our current sermon series. Here is listing of those that we've covered thus far:

The Holy Spirit...

Executes All Divine Operations

Convicts the Lost unto Salvation

Convicts Believers unto Confession

Restraints the Rise of the Antichrist

Effects All Aspects of a Believer's Salvation

Baptizes New Believers Into the Body of Christ

Adopts New Believers Into the Family of God

Gives Spiritual Gifts to All Believers

This morning we will continue our exploration of the works of the Holy Spirit. We will discuss the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Bible. What role did the Holy Spirit play in the development of the Bible and how does He interact with it today? Over the next 40 minutes or so, we'll try to find some answers.

I. THE REVELATION OF GOD

According to my Bible dictionary, the word revelation means "The act of disclosing to others what was previously unknown to them. Specifically, it is God's disclosure or communication of truth to mankind, either personally, or by his authorized agents, the prophets and apostles." Revelation is usually categorized in 2 ways - general revelation and special revelation.

General revelation comes through creation and nature. The natural world itself declares the existence of God (Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 1:20). As such, those who deny that God exists are "without excuse" because He has made Himself evident to all people. While general revelation proves that God is real, it doesn't explain His purposes or intentions for mankind.

Special revelation comes through supernatural means. God has, over the course of time, revealed Himself through personal appearances, dreams, visions, spoken utterances, the Word of God, and ultimately the incarnation of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-3). In these ways, God has provided humanity with specific instructions necessary for salvation and godly living.

Most Southern Baptists, myself included, believe that God's special revelation to mankind was completed with the advent of Jesus Christ and the canonization of the Bible. God's Word is sufficient and contains the full disclosure of His will and His instructions for humanity. Everything man needs to know about God is in the Bible. It was given "once for all", thus no "new revelation" is necessary (Jude 1:3). Any claims of revelation from God outside of the Bible should be met with extreme skepticism.

II. THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE

God's special revelation to mankind has been written and is preserved on the pages of the Bible. This miraculous work was accomplished by the Holy Spirit. He inspired the various human authors of the Bible to write God's message precisely as the LORD desired. As such, God's Word is completely trustworthy. It is inerrant (in its original manuscripts), infallible, and fully authoritative.

The word inspiration means "God breathed" and sets the Bible apart from any other book ever written. God's Word is just that - it is His own words written to men by men under the direction and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Every word of the Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit and it provides everything necessary for the sinner to be saved and the believer to be fully equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:15-17). No other word is needed.

Although each Biblical author had their own unique style and linguistic personality, the Holy Spirit guarded their writing to ensure that it wasn't an expression of their own will but rather an accurate revelation of God's will (2 Peter 1:21). The Bible contains a beautiful collection of history, poetry, prophecy, wisdom literature, epistles (or letters), law, gospel narration, and apocalyptic writings that are attributed to around 40 different authors over a period of almost 1,500 years. Amazingly, all 66 books of the Bible fit seamlessly together and all point to its central theme - Jesus Christ. The continuity and complementary nature of Scripture attest to its divine inspiration.

III. THE ILLUMINATION OF SCRIPTURE

Illumination refers to increasing the light so that things can be seen more easily. When someone turns on the light in a dark room, the furniture and items in the room become visible. Illumination didn't create these things - they were already there, but were hidden by the darkness. The light simply allowed them to be seen.

The same is true in a spiritual sense. The Holy Spirit illuminates the Bible so that Christians can understand the thoughts and words of God (1 Corinthians 2:10-16). His revelations are already present in the scriptures, but they are not always "seen" by individual believers. The Bible is like an inexhaustible mine of limitless treasure just waiting to be discovered. The Holy Spirit shines light on these treasures, allowing Christians to comprehend God's truth in a deeper and more profound way.

Paul prayed that God would enlighten the eyes of the Ephesians' hearts so that they might know the hope of His calling and the riches of His glory. Later, he prayed that they would be enabled by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit to, among other things, comprehend the fullness of God (Ephesians 1:17-18; 3:14-19). Both of these passages refer to illumination - the ability to grasp the wondrous truths of the LORD. The Bible is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path because of the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit (Psalm 119:105).

CONCLUSION

To sum up, revelation is the disclosure of the truth, inspiration is the recording of that truth, and illumination is the personal understanding of that truth. The Holy Spirit inspired the writing of Scripture to ensure that it perfectly and sufficiently communicates God's special revelation to mankind. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit illuminates Scripture so that we can truly understand it when we read it. These are 2 more of the important works of the Holy Spirit.

I trust that in the last days, when we see Jesus face to face, God will reveal Himself in a much greater way. There is more revelation to come, beloved, and it promises to be spectacular. But for now, we should be content with the revelation He has given to us in creation, in Christ, and recorded on the pages of the inspired Word of God. It is enough to meet our every need. We should also be thankful that the Holy Spirit helps us to understand God's Word, and should strive not only to know it, but to obey it!

The Keeping of the Holy Spirit

Originally Preached on 3/2/2025

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish—ever; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. - John 10:27-29

The Holy Spirit executes or applies that which the Father wills and the Son has secured. Before we begin this morning's message, let's briefly go over the works of the Holy Spirit that we've covered thus far. Just for fun, I've made this list into a matching game. See how many you can pair up correctly. The Holy Spirit...

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| _____ 1. Convicts the Lost... | a. to All Believers |
| _____ 2. Convicts Believers... | b. Meaning of Scripture |
| _____ 3. Restrains the Rise... | c. into the Family of God |
| _____ 4. Effects All Aspects... | d. of the Antichrist |
| _____ 5. Baptizes New Believers... | e. Writing of Scripture |
| _____ 6. Adopts New Believers... | f. of a Believer's Salvation |
| _____ 7. Gives Spiritual Gifts... | g. unto Salvation |
| _____ 8. Inspired the... | h. into the Body of Christ |
| _____ 9. Illuminates the... | i. unto Confession |

Were you able to match them all? Great job! This morning we will discuss yet another important work of the Holy Spirit. Today's sermon is titled, "The Keeping of the Holy Spirit".

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A SEAL

In Biblical times, and even today, kings would use a signet ring or something similar to make their personal imprint in a seal, which was usually made of wax. The king's seal could be placed on virtually anything and carried a variety of meanings. Kings regularly used seals to authenticate the source and authority of a written message or decree. Those who received signed and sealed orders from the king were obligated to comply. For example, the Persians fully intended to exterminate the Jews after receiving a signed and sealed order from the king (Esther 3:12, 8:8).

Other times seals were used to guarantee security or indicate possession. Much to his chagrin, King Darius placed his seal on the stone that covered Daniel's lion's den. It was secured by the king and was not to be opened without his consent (Daniel 6:17). The Jewish priests urged Pilate to guard and secure Jesus' tomb, hoping to prevent it from being disturbed. A Roman seal was placed on the stone to scare off anyone who might dare move it (Matthew 27:66).

Royal seals were not to be opened by those who didn't have the proper authority or permission. In John's apocalyptic vision, no one could be found in Heaven, on earth, or in Hades below who

was worthy to open the seals of God's scroll except for the Lamb (Revelation 5:3, 6-9). Not even Satan himself, in all his might, had the standing or ability to break the LORD's seal.

The presence of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life is God's seal upon them (Ephesians 1:13; 2 Corinthians 1:22a). It indicates that they belong to Him. As His possessions, Christians are under God's protection and are sealed and secured until the day of their final redemption and glorification (Ephesians 4:30). The Devil and all his demonic forces are powerless to break or remove God's seal or to steal away those who have been marked with it.

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A DOWN PAYMENT

In Biblical times, and even today, buyers who made large purchases would be required to put down a pledge or down payment to ensure the seller that the remaining portion of the sale price would be paid. This initial payment was sometimes referred to as earnest and it indicated that the buyer was serious about completing the purchase. If they failed to do so, they would lose their down payment as well as the property being purchased.

In like fashion, the Bible states that the Holy Spirit's presence within the believer is God's down payment or pledge to someday provide them with the rest of their inheritance (2 Corinthians 1:22b; 5:5). God's pledge will remain in force until He completes the redemption of His own possession to His praise and glory (Ephesians 1:14). The Holy Spirit is God's earnest who guarantees that He will make good of the promises and blessings that He's made to His people.

The Greek word used in Scripture to describe the Holy Spirit as a pledge or earnest is "arrhabon". By simply adding an "a" to the end of it, the word changes to "arrhabona" which means engagement ring. The Holy Spirit's indwelling presence of a Christian indicates that they are betrothed to Christ and awaiting the coming marriage of the Lamb and His Bride (Revelation 19:7).

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT PROVIDES ASSURANCE

Have you ever doubted God? Have you ever wondered if you were truly saved? Truth be told, probably all of us have from time to time. The Devil loves to stir seeds of doubt into the hearts and minds of Christians. If he can make them doubt or question the LORD and/or His motives, he can more easily tempt them into sin and/or hinder them from living in victory. Fortunately, the Holy Spirit helps believers to live with the assurance of their salvation and with the certainty of God's promises to them.

The Holy Spirit testifies to the Christian's human spirit assuring him or her that they are a child of God (Romans 8:16). We talked about adoption earlier in this series - God is our Father. That said, even children can sometimes feel unloved and forgotten by their parents. The Holy Spirit constantly reminds believers that God loves them and will never forsake them.

John wrote that, although no Christian has ever personally seen God, they can “know” that they are His because of the Holy Spirit’s presence within them (1 John 4:12-13). Notice that he didn’t say that it’s most likely or probable... He stated that believers can know for certain that they are saved. This steadfast assurance derives from the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION

Baptists ascribe to a belief known by theologians as “The Eternal Security of the Believer”. This doctrine is commonly described among normal folks like myself as “Once saved, always saved”. We hold to the Biblical teaching that once a person comes to Christ, they can never fall from grace or lose their salvation. If someone professes to be a believer, but later turns from the faith and doesn’t return, then they were never truly saved to begin with. There are many verses and passages in the Bible that support this doctrine.

Eternal security is also evident in the keeping work of the Holy Spirit. The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 (our denominational statement of faith) states... “He [the Holy Spirit] 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.” Could there be any greater assurance than this?

If you have never repented of your sins and trusted in Jesus Christ for forgiveness and salvation, then you’re not sealed. The Holy Spirit doesn’t abide in you, no down payment has been made to you, and you have no assurance of eternal life. But that could all change in an instant. Would you, in broken sincerity, give your life to Jesus today?

The Comfort and Guidance of the Holy Spirit

Originally Preached on 3/9/2025

Now Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was being led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. - Luke 4:1-2a

I hope you are enjoying our current sermon series on “The Works of the Holy Spirit”. For the past 2 months, we have been identifying and discussing several major activities of the Holy Spirit that are emphasized in Scripture. As with any topic, it is important that we use the Bible to guide and inform our understanding of the Holy Spirit. Today’s message is the 9th in this study, and it is called “The Comfort and Guidance of the Holy Spirit”.

I. COMFORTS AND HELPS THE BELIEVER

The apostle John refers to the Holy Spirit as the believer’s “Paraclete” 4 times in his gospel (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). The Greek word *parakletos* means “one who is called alongside”. It is commonly rendered as “Comforter”, “Helper”, or “Advocate” in the major English translations of the New Testament. Let’s briefly explore each of these to get a well rounded meaning of the word.

The King James Bible (KJV) uses the name Comforter to describe the Holy Spirit. This description emphasizes His role in relieving the distress, dismay, and anguish of a believer. Again and again Scripture states that the followers of Christ will suffer persecution, grief, and hardship. There are numerous examples of this throughout the Bible. God’s children are repeatedly urged to take refuge in Him and to comfort one another. The LORD’s comfort comes to believers through work of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31).

The English Standard Bible (ESV) uses the name Helper to describe the Holy Spirit. This description is much broader and can be applied to a number of things. For example, the Holy Spirit helps believers recognize unconfessed sin through conviction. He helps believers understand the Bible through illumination. He helps believers contribute to the Church through the bestowal of spiritual gifts. These are a few of the ways He helps that we’ve already discussed, and there are many more. Of course, He also helps by comforting Christians who are hurting.

The New International Bible (NIV) uses the name Advocate to describe the Holy Spirit. This description emphasizes His role as defender who pleads another’s cause. He comes alongside to support or defend the believer who is being maligned and mistreated. This is also a form of help and a source of comfort to the person being accused and oppressed.

So, however it’s translated, the Holy Spirit provides comfort to believers. He assures them that their salvation is securely sealed in Him and that they are the adopted children of God who are awaiting the inheritance that has been pledged to them. This assurance, which we discussed

last Sunday, is also comforting. His encouragement gives Christians the strength to endure and press on for the cause of Christ.

II. GUIDES AND LEADS THE BELIEVER

A guide is someone who advises or shows the way to others. The Bible says that the Holy Spirit guides believers in the truth (John 16:13). The truth is God's will, way, and word. Thus, the Holy Spirit shows Christians how to apply God's instruction in order to rightly follow His direction. This is a different work than illumination, which we discussed a few weeks ago, in which the Holy Spirit helps believers understand the meaning of God's word. His guidance goes a step further, helping them use it to make personal decisions specific to their lives which are in tune with God's will.

It is imperative for the children of God to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. Those who do so show themselves to be true Christians (Romans 8:14). They not only know what the Bible says, but they actually obey it. The Holy Spirit leads believers to apply the truths of Scripture to their own individual circumstances, so that they can make decisions that will honor God and best serve His kingdom work.

Those who walk by the Holy Spirit and are led by Him will not practice the deeds of the flesh. These carnal acts are condemned by the Law as sin. The Spirit led man or woman will shun these old ways and aspire to follow the Spirit in faithful obedience to God (Galatians 5:16-18). The Holy Spirit leads believers to live in the marvelous light of God's grace as they choose to honor Him in all of their life's decisions.

III. TIPS FOR FOLLOWING THE HOLY SPIRIT

How does a person correctly discern the voice of the Holy Spirit? How can they differentiate between their own thoughts and the Holy Spirit's direction? How do they detect and disregard the deceptive leading of Satan and his demonic forces? First, while Christians should be sensitive to the spiritual nudgings and promptings of their conscience, always listening carefully for the LORD's voice, they must recognize that not every inclination comes from God. As my momma used to say, "Don't believe everything you hear." Blindly following any impulse or feeling as though it has come from God, even a sincere and/or intense one, is naive, foolish, and can become a recipe for trouble.

The Bible urges believers to "test the spirits" in order to determine whether or not they come from God (1 John 4:1-3). This testing is a rational, intentional act of the mind. The Holy Spirit will never deny the truths of Scripture (such as the fact that Jesus is the Son of God who came to earth in the flesh) nor will He lead someone to do anything contrary to Scripture. God's word is perfect, unchanging, and timeless, and the LORD does not contradict Himself. Therefore, Christians should be familiar with the Bible and use it as the standard by which all spiritual thoughts and nudgings are measured.

While many of life's questions have a definite right or wrong answer, others present a series of viable options. In these cases, a person might have to choose what is best for them and/or their family considering their own unique circumstances. It is important for Christians to pray about these decisions, to talk with other believers who can provide wise counsel, and to study the relevant verses and passages of the Bible. By following these strategies a person is more apt to rightly discern and follow the Holy Spirit's leading. The more often a Christian seeks the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the more familiar it will become.

CONCLUSION

In today's message, we have added 2 more important works of the Holy Spirit to our list:

The Holy Spirit comforts believers in their distress. Jesus told His followers to expect suffering, persecution, and sorrow in this life. There is no escaping it. While some will experience more than others, no one is exempt. The Holy Spirit consoles the Christian's pain and encourages them to persevere.

The Holy Spirit guides believers in the truth. Like a counselor or advisor, He helps Christians to make personal decisions that are consistent with God's will and aligned with His Word. By following the Holy Spirit's leading, believers honor God and become more effective laborers in His kingdom.

The Holy Spirit Cultivates Christian Character

Originally Preached on 3/16/2025

Therefore, brothers, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this need. - Acts 6:3

The Holy Spirit cultivates Christian character. That is, He produces spiritual fruit in the lives of believers. This “fruit” indicates that they are a “good tree” (Matthew 7:16-20) and provides evidence of their salvation. As Christians grow and mature in their faith, the presence and practice of these godly virtues should develop and become increasingly evident. The Fruit of the Spirit includes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control (Galatians 5:22-23).

We conducted a 10-week study specifically on “The Fruit of the Spirit” back in early 2022. In that series we dedicated a full sermon to each of these 9 characteristics. This allowed us to dig a bit deeper into each of these traits. If you are interested in reviewing those messages, they are available online at our church website and on our YouTube channel. This morning, however, we are just going to briefly touch on each of them as we consider how the Holy Spirit works to cultivate Christian character.

I. LOVE, JOY, PEACE

The first and greatest commandment for Christians is to love the LORD with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength. The second is like it - to love their neighbor as themselves. Jesus taught that these 2 commands encompass all of the Law and the prophets (Matthew 22:37-40). Jesus raised the standard when He told His disciples that they were to love one another as He loved them and further said that they’d be known by the love that they had for one other (John 13:34-35). Love is the highest virtue. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to die for lost sinners (John 3:16). His love is so great that, even while we were yet sinners, Jesus died for us (Romans 5:8). The Holy Spirit works to produce this type of godly love within Christians, that they might love Him and each other as He does.

The Bible teaches that Christians are to be joyful at all times and in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5:16-28). Such joy cannot be found in the things of this world, but must be rooted in the certain promises and abiding presence of God. Nehemiah proclaimed to his people that the joy of the LORD was his strength (Nehemiah 8:10). Those without joy are often desperate and weak, and Satan takes full advantage of their despair. Thus, we should be joyful even in our trials and sufferings, realizing that such things produce perseverance (James 1:2-3). The Holy Spirit works to produce this type of unquenchable joy within believers, that they might overcome the storms of this life.

My Bible dictionary defines peace as “a state of tranquility, harmony, and the absence of conflict, encompassing both spiritual peace with God and relational peace with others.” Lost sinners are at enmity with God, but through Christ can find peace and reconciliation with Him (Romans 5:1).

Paul urges Christians to live at peace with other people, to the fullest extent possible (Romans 12:18). They are to have the peace of God in their hearts and minds (Philippians 4:7) so as not to live in constant turmoil. The Holy Spirit works to provide believers with an overwhelming sense of peace both inwardly and outwardly.

II. PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS

The LORD is patient and longsuffering toward sinners, not desiring that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9). There are many examples of God's patience found throughout the Bible. In the same way, God's children should be patient with one another. Solomon advised people to be patient and to wait for the ending of matters (Ecclesiastes 7:8). The Psalms urge believers to patiently wait for the LORD (Psalm 27:14, 37:7). Christians are to bear with others patiently (Ephesians 4:2). The Holy Spirit helps believers display enduring patience in all walks of life.

Kindness is "a compassionate and generous disposition that reflects God's own nature of love, mercy, and grace." Kindness typically involves some tangible act of care and/or sincere consideration. The Bible instructs Christians to be kind to one another, just as God has been kind to them (Ephesians 4:32). A kind person is not only a blessing to others, but also to themselves (Proverbs 11:17). Kindness is an expression of love, and the Holy Spirit fosters kindness within the hearts of believers.

God is good (Psalm 100:5, 107:1, 136:1, 145:9). His goodness is declared again and again throughout the Bible. Even Jesus stated that God is good (Mark 10:18). God desires good things for His people (Matthew 7:11). He wants to show them His favor, generosity, and blessings. Following God's example, believers should want what is best for others. They should not grow weary in doing good and should express goodness to everyone (Galatians 6:9-10). The Holy Spirit promotes goodness as a guiding virtue in all Christians.

III. FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, SELF-CONTROL

Faithfulness is "a quality of both God and humans that means being reliable, steadfast, and trustworthy." God is faithful to His people in every way, as illustrated in numerous stories throughout the Bible (2 Thessalonians 3:3). In fact, God remains faithfully committed to His people even when they are unfaithful to Him (2 Timothy 2:13). Christians are to practice godly faithfulness in their relationships, in their dealings, and in all aspects of life (1 Corinthians 4:2). The Holy Spirit works to provide Christians with an unwavering level of faithfulness.

Jesus described Himself as gentle and humble in heart (Matthew 11:29). He is not harsh, bitter, or overbearing. Rather He is warm, welcoming, and pleasant. This is the type of demeanor that Christians are to exhibit (Colossians 3:12). They should be ready at all times to give a defense of their faith with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15). They should not slander others, but treat everyone with gentleness (Titus 3:2). This is a rough and tumble world, and gentleness is often hard to come by. The Holy Spirit assists believers in showing gentleness to those they encounter around them.

Self-control is often referred to as temperance or the ability to control one's temper. Christians must be able to regulate their own emotions and behaviors so as not to act out impulsively or foolishly. They must exercise self-control in all things, like an athlete running a race (1 Corinthians 9:25). This requires self-discipline in order to overcome the passions and lusts of the flesh (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4). Furthermore, God's people should be able to control what they say (Proverbs 13:3). The Holy Spirit assists believers in controlling and taming their feelings, thoughts, speech, and actions.

CONCLUSION

In this morning's message, we've briefly summarized the 9 different virtues included in "The Fruit of the Spirit". Christians who exhibit these qualities in their lives present a more accurate image of Jesus. They are regarded by others as being more genuine in their faith and, therefore, have a more effective witness for the Lord. Actions speak louder than words, so it is important for believers to have a godly attitude accompanied by godly conduct. This can be difficult for us as fallen human beings, even after we've accepted Christ, but the Holy Spirit works to cultivate Christian character within us so that we can practice what we preach.

The Work of the Holy Spirit in Prayer

Originally Preached on 3/23/2025

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. - Philippians 4:6

Who is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is God. He is the 3rd member of the Trinity. He fully possesses all of the divine attributes of God. He is a Person, just like the Father and the Son, with His own personal characteristics. He executes or carries out that which the Father wills and the Son secures.

What does the Holy Spirit do? Well, there are an innumerable number of ways that the Holy Spirit works, but these are the major ones we've discussed thus far in this series:

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|---|--|
| 1. Convicts the Lost unto Salvation | 8. Inspired the Writing of the Bible |
| 2. Convicts Believers unto Confession | 9. Illuminates the Meaning of the Bible to Believers |
| 3. Restrains the Rise of the Antichrist | 10. Seals Believers Until the Day of Redemption |
| 4. Effects All Aspects of a Believer's Salvation | 11. Comforts Believers in Their Distress |
| 5. Baptizes New Believers Into the Body of Christ | 12. Guides Believers in the Truth |
| 6. Adopts New Believers Into the Family of God | 13. Cultivates Christian Character (Produces Fruit) |
| 7. Gives Spiritual Gifts to All Believers | |

In today's sermon we will add 2 more works of the Holy Spirit as we discuss the topic of prayer.

I. PRAY ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL

Prayer is fundamental to the Christian life. It is the means by which believers speak to God. It doesn't have to be formal or lofty, but rather should be personal and sincere. Through prayer, a person exalts God, offering Him adoration and praise. Through prayer, a person expresses their thanksgiving and gratitude to God. Through prayer, a person confesses their sin and seeks His forgiveness. Through prayer, a person offers their petitions and supplications to God.

The Bible has a lot to say about prayer, including the importance of praying according to God's will. Jesus modeled this when He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before His crucifixion. In His humanity, He didn't want to face the suffering to come, but He surrendered His will to that of the Father and obediently endured the cross (Matthew 26:39; Luke 22:42).

The reason many Christians never seem to receive the things they ask for when they pray is because they are asking for the wrong reasons (James 4:3). In order to have an effective prayer life that gets results, it is important for believers to pray according to God's will. Scripture says that if someone prays in accordance with His will, God will hear them and give them what they've asked for (1 John 5:14-15). But how can we know the will of God?

Of course, reading the Bible is the primary method of learning God's will. As we have discussed previously in this study, the Holy Spirit helps Christians understand God's Word through illumination and guides them in the truth as they apply it to their personal lives and decision making. The Holy Spirit, who knows the mind of God, also assists believers in praying within His will. In fact, the Holy Spirit is even called "the Spirit of supplication" (Zechariah 12:10).

II. HE HELPS US PRAY

Jude urged Christians to pray "in the Spirit" (Jude 20). In the original Greek, this phrase means to pray with the help of the Holy Spirit. In other words, a person should be sensitive to and pray following the Holy Spirit's direction. They should pray for the things that He leads them to pray for. Such prayer is aligned with the will of God.

Some have sought to equate praying in the Spirit with praying in tongues. However, Scripture instructs believers to pray for specific things while they are praying in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18-20). Elsewhere it clearly states that a person speaking in tongues is not mindful of what they are saying (1 Corinthians 14:14). How can someone intentionally pray for specific things when they do not understand or perhaps even have control over what they're saying? Friends, praying in the Spirit has nothing to do with tongues. Again, it means to pray with the help of, by the leading of, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Isn't it wonderful to know that the Holy Spirit helps us when we pray? He helps us to discern the Lord's will and to pray accordingly. If we pray "in the Spirit", we'll ask for the things that God knows are best for us and that He already wants to give us!

III. HE INTERCEDES FOR US

The Spirit of God's Son, yet another of the many Biblical names of the Holy Spirit, lives in the hearts of all of God's children. From there, He cries out "Abba! Father!" (Galatians 4:6). The Holy Spirit is crying out to God on behalf of a believer regardless of whether they are actually praying or not. Amazing!

Paul taught that the Holy Spirit intercedes for believers even when, in their weakness, they don't know how to pray as they should. Perhaps, out of their ignorance and/or unawareness of their need, they are either praying amiss or not at all. Even in their silence or when their discernment is lacking, the Holy Spirit prays for the saints according to God's will. His prayers are fervent, sincere, and inexpressible in human words (Romans 8:26-27).

While this series is about the works of the Holy Spirit, it is worth mentioning that Jesus also prays on behalf of Christians. That's right. The risen and ascended Jesus, who currently sits in Heaven at the right hand of God the Father, also intercedes for those whom He has saved (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25). Think of it! Both the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ are praying to the Father on behalf of believers. That's a pretty good duo to have in your corner!

CONCLUSION

To be honest, I have never been very good about praying with other people. I feel much more comfortable praying by myself. I guess I am a private person. As such, over the years I've not prayed together with my wife and children nearly as often as I should have. I am not proud of this, but it's the truth. But, even when I am praying by myself, I'm not alone. The Holy Spirit is praying with me, leading me to seek and follow the will of God. He helps Christians to pray more effectively.

I consider myself to be very fortunate because over the course of my life there have been several people who've prayed for me regularly. While they were living, my grandparents prayed for me every day. My mom still does. I have several friends and colleagues who pray for me also, and I for them. And many of you, my beloved congregation, pray for me, too. I am so thankful for your prayers! But even if there is no other person in your life praying for you, if you're a Christian the Holy Spirit is. He intercedes on behalf of believers.

Let me wrap it up with a simple statement. The Holy Spirit prays with you and for you. Hallelujah! Aren't you glad He does?

The Holy Spirit Exalts Jesus Christ

Originally Preached on 3/30/2025

Therefore, God also highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. - Philippians 2:9-11

Good morning. I hope that you've all had a good week. Did you get a chance to share Jesus with anyone since we last met? Did you spend quality time with Him every day, in prayer and in His Word? Did your words and behaviors honor Christ each day and bear a good witness for His Name? Have you sought the Lord's forgiveness for any unconfessed sin and come to His house today cleansed and eager to worship in spirit and truth?

This morning's message is the 12th in our current sermon series on "The Works of the Holy Spirit". We are nearing the end of this study - just 2 messages left after today. I've titled this sermon "The Holy Spirit Exalts Jesus Christ".

I. PROCLAIMS JESUS' IDENTITY

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to the apostles at Pentecost marking the beginning of the Church Age. The Holy Spirit, also called the Spirit of God, came from the Father to dwell within believers. He came to bear witness about Jesus (John 15:26). He did not come to promote Himself or launch His own ministry, but rather to confirm the identity of Christ and proclaim Him as the Son of God.

The Holy Spirit enables people to recognize who Jesus truly is. The enlightenment He provides allows believers to declare, "Jesus is Lord!" (1 Corinthians 12:3). Apart from the Holy Spirit's work, no one would recognize Jesus as the Christ. The Holy Spirit's mission is to make the name of Jesus known far and wide.

Even in the Old Testament, centuries before He was poured out at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was already announcing the identity of Christ. King David envisioned the Father telling His Son Jesus to sit at His right hand until His enemies were put under His feet (Psalm 110:1). David referred to Jesus as "my Lord", even though He'd not yet come to the earth. It was the Holy Spirit who enabled David to recognize and profess Jesus as Lord (Matthew 22:43-44). This is true for all of the Old Testament saints.

The Holy Spirit works constantly to advertise, announce, publicize, and promote Jesus. He is always pointing people to Jesus. He does not demand, seek, or desire attention for Himself. Instead, the Holy Spirit aspires to make Jesus famous.

II. ECHOS JESUS' WORDS

Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would teach them all things and bring to their remembrance all that He had said to them (John 14:26). Over the course of His 3 1/2 year earthly ministry, Jesus had taught the disciples many lessons. He had given them countless instructions, commands, and directions. At the time, they did not understand some of the things He said, and wouldn't until after He'd risen and ascended. They had probably forgotten a lot of His sayings, too. The Holy Spirit would teach them to grasp the things Jesus had spoken and would remind them of the truths that they didn't remember.

Jesus also told the disciples that the Holy Spirit would guide them in the truth. We spoke about His guiding work in a sermon a few weeks ago. Then He added that the Holy Spirit would not speak from Himself, but rather would disclose to them only what He hears. Jesus explained that the Holy Spirit would speak the truths He heard from Christ, which include all things from the Father as well. In other words, the Holy Spirit does not introduce new ideas or teachings, but rather echoes and repeats those of Jesus Christ (John 16:13-15).

III. DECLARES JESUS' GLORY

Not only does the Holy Spirit bear witness of the identity of Christ and echo His teachings, but He also glorifies Jesus (John 16:14a). My Bible dictionary defines glorify as to "honor, praise, magnify, and acknowledge the greatness and splendor of". In other words, the Holy Spirit doesn't simply tell people who Jesus is, but also ascribes adoration and reverence to Him.

We've already discussed the fact that the Holy Spirit is God. He possesses all of the Divine attributes As God. As such, He is worthy of our worship and praise - just like the Father and the Son. However, the Holy Spirit does not seek our worship and praise. Instead, He chooses to glorify Jesus and directs Christians to do likewise. Jesus is the object of our worship, whereas the Holy Spirit is the agent of our worship (Philippians 3:3).

There are many churches within Christianity that seem more enamored with the Holy Spirit than they do with Jesus. They are constantly speaking about the power of the Spirit and seeking to see Him move in some supernatural way, yet mentions of Jesus and His gospel are often few and far between. Don't get me wrong, the work of the Holy Spirit is important and worth discussing - we have dedicated an entire sermon series to it! But if you are attending a church that spends more time talking about the Holy Spirit than it does about Jesus, you have reason to be concerned. Not even the Holy Spirit would approve of such a practice.

CONCLUSION

Jesus came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). He was on a mission to redeem humanity from the grip of sin. Jesus accomplished His goal, forever defeated sin and the grave, and now sits victorious at the right hand of the Father in Heaven. He achieved all that was required for repentant sinners to receive forgiveness and salvation.

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to bear witness of His identity and to declare His triumph over Satan, to teach and re-teach His truths to those who would listen, and to glorify His wonderful name. It is the mission of the Holy Spirit to exalt Jesus. Let's think about this in light of the works we've already discussed.

The Holy Spirit convicts people of sin. Why? So they will turn to Jesus for forgiveness.

The Holy Spirit delays God's final judgment. Why? To give sinners more time to turn to Jesus.

The Holy Spirit effects salvation. Why? To apply the saving work of Jesus to those who believe.

The Holy Spirit adds believers to the church? Why? To advance the message of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit adopts believers into God's family. Why? To make them co-heirs with Jesus.

The Holy Spirit gifts believers to serve. Why? To equip them to continue the work of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit inspired and illuminates Scripture. Why? So that people can know Jesus.

The Holy Spirit seals believers. Why? So that they can serve Jesus with bold confidence.

The Holy Spirit comforts believers. Why? To help them overcome their sufferings for Jesus.

The Holy Spirit guides believers. Why? So that they can walk in God's will as Jesus did.

The Holy Spirit cultivates character. Why? To help Christians live and speak more like Jesus.

The Holy Spirit prays with and for believers. Why? So they can pray more like Jesus did.

The Holy Spirit's primary purpose is to point people to, help people be more like, and advance the cause and work of Jesus Christ.

The Empowering Work of the Holy Spirit

Originally Preached on 4/6/2025

On the other hand I am filled with power— with the Spirit of the Lord— and with justice and courage to make known to Jacob his rebellious act, even to Israel his sin. - Micah 3:8

Today's message is titled, "The Empowering Work of the Holy Spirit". Some of you might be thinking, "Well, it's about time pastor! We've listened to your preaching for the past 3 months just waiting to hear about the amazing power available to believers through the Holy Spirit." Well, beloved, I intentionally placed this message near the end of this series because I wanted to lay some groundwork and provide some perspective. This sermon may not be what you're expecting. It is certainly different from what is taught by many of the popular preachers on TV.

I. EMPOWERED TO SERVE

Most of the works of the Holy Spirit that we've already covered in this series are, in fact, acts of empowerment. The Holy Spirit empowers sinners to become convicted of their sin and realize their desperate need for forgiveness. He empowers convicted sinners to recognize Jesus as the Savior. He miraculously raises repentant sinners who were dead in their transgressions and sins to new life in Christ through the miracle of regeneration.

After baptizing them into the Church, the Holy Spirit empowers believers to serve by giving them particular spiritual gifts. He empowers them to understand God's Word through illumination and leads them in their Christian walk as they apply His truth. He empowers them to persevere by giving them the assurance of His sealing and comforting them when they are distressed and downtrodden. The Holy Spirit empowers believers to more closely portray the image of Christ by cultivating the fruit of the Spirit in their lives.

In all of these ways, and in many others, the Holy Spirit empowers Christians to live for and serve the LORD. He empowers them to obey God and to overcome the damaging effects of sin. The Bible says that if a person walks by the Spirit, they will not carry out the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). The victorious Christian life is only possible because of the empowering work of the Holy Spirit.

II. EMPOWERED TO EVANGELIZE

The Holy Spirit empowers believers to share the gospel effectively. Prior to His ascension, Jesus instructed His apostles to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit arrived and empowered them to be His witnesses (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8). Jesus knew that apart from the Spirit's influence, their preaching would be largely unproductive. Sure enough, when the Holy Spirit fell upon them on the day of Pentecost, Peter began boldly proclaiming the gospel and some 3,000 people were saved (Acts 2:14, 41).

After he and John had been arrested a few days later for healing and preaching at the temple, Peter was again filled with the Holy Spirit and boldly proclaimed Christ to the elders, rulers, and scribes who were questioning them (Acts 4:8). During His earthly ministry, Jesus had told the apostles that the Holy Spirit would teach them what to say in such situations (Luke 12:11-12). Following Peter and John's release, they went and prayed with the other disciples, and all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began proclaiming the gospel with great confidence (Acts 4:31).

Again and again throughout the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit empowered the apostles, missionaries, and disciples to boldly preach and teach the message of Christ. As a result, the New Testament church grew far beyond the boundaries of Jerusalem and was firmly established throughout the world. While the book is traditionally called "The Acts of the Apostles", some have suggested a better name would be "The Acts of the Holy Spirit". It was, and still is today, the empowering work of the Holy Spirit that made/makes evangelism successful.

Even the Apostle Paul, often regarded as the greatest missionary of all-time, described his own preaching as average at best. In a letter to the church at Corinth, he wrote that it lacked eloquence and persuasion. Still, because of the empowering of the Holy Spirit, his simple proclamation of the gospel led many people to Christ (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

III. EMPOWERED TO PERFORM MIRACLES?

But what about miracles? The apostles performed miracles. So did some of their closest colleagues, including Stephen, Philip, and Barnabas. Does the Holy Spirit empower believers today to perform overt, physical miracles such as healings, exorcisms, and prophecy?

First, let's recall what we discussed earlier in this series regarding spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit bestows 1 or more gifts to each believer as He wills. These gifts are to be used for the edification of the church. The historic view of the Southern Baptist denomination is that certain spiritual gifts - namely the supernatural gifts which include healings, miracles, prophecy, and tongues - that were distributed to a select few (mainly the apostles) during the first century for the express purpose of establishing the church have since ceased.

Spiritual giftedness aside, there are some charismatic churches that teach that every Christian should be performing healings, miracles, and exorcisms. They claim that all believers are capable of speaking prophetic utterances and communicating in angelic tongues. Some even go so far to say that if a person isn't doing these things, they aren't truly saved.

These false teachers love to quote Matthew 10:8 in which Jesus tells His followers, "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons." They suggest that these are directives for all Christians to follow. However, when read in context, Jesus was clearly addressing the 12 apostles and preparing them for a specific, limited ministry task. This was not a general command to all believers in all generations and circumstances. If it were, too bad for the Gentiles and Samaritans... only Jews were to be healed.

So, does the Holy Spirit have the power to perform physical miracles today? Absolutely yes, and He does so from time to time in accordance with God's will! Sometimes He even uses a person as the agent through whom He performs the miracle. But this is not a routine, common occurrence, nor should it be the center of our worship. Paul prayed that believers would be strengthened by the Holy Spirit in their "inner man" (Ephesians 3:16). The greatest and most desirable power of the Holy Spirit occurs internally, within the life of a Christian.

CONCLUSION

People have always sought power as a means of fulfilling their psychological needs for security, self-esteem, and validation. Power can provide a sense of control over one's environment and circumstances, reducing feelings of vulnerability. Unfortunately, the accumulation of power often leads to sinful behaviors. Furthermore, people who perceive themselves to be in control of their own life are less willing to acknowledge their need for a Savior.

The Holy Spirit empowers believers to serve God and proclaim the gospel with confidence. He does not empower them to perform miraculous works or healings that would undermine their dependence on and/or faith in God. He doesn't empower us so that we may rid ourselves of suffering or hardship, but rather so that we may endure it and live victoriously in the midst of it!

Some Final Words About the Holy Spirit

Originally Preached on 4/13/2025

For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. - Romans 8:5

This morning we will complete our series on “The Works of the Holy Spirit”. I hope that you’ve enjoyed these messages. There is a lot of bad theology about the Holy Spirit being circulated within Christianity today, so it is imperative that we have a Biblically sound understanding of who He is and what He does. My prayer is that this study has helped all of us, myself included, to gain greater insight into the true nature and work of the Holy Spirit. This concluding sermon is titled “Some Final Words About the Holy Spirit”.

I. EMPOWERS WORSHIP

In last week’s message, we discussed the empowering work of the Holy Spirit and concluded that He empowers Christians to evangelize boldly and serve the Lord fruitfully. This morning, let’s add another activity that the Holy Spirit empowers believers to do. Remember the sermon from 2 weeks ago when we learned that the Holy Spirit exalts Christ? He encourages believers to do likewise. In other words, the Holy Spirit empowers Christian worship (Philippians 3:3).

In Biblical times, certain heathen people worshiped their false gods while in a drunken state. Paul urged Christians not to get drunk with wine, but rather to be filled by the Holy Spirit when they worshiped. They were not to be inebriated, but rather to be sober and willfully submitted to the influence of the Holy Spirit. A Spirit-filled worshiper will sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with a sincere heart. They will offer sincere praise, adoration, and thanksgiving to God (Ephesians 5:18-20).

The Bible states that God is spirit, and that those who worship Him must do so in spirit and truth (John 4:24). This verse is not talking about the Holy Spirit, but rather explaining that people are to worship God with their hearts, souls, and minds. Emotion is an important part of worship, but it must be based upon truth. The Holy Spirit stirs the believer’s human spirit, prompting them to offer genuine, authentic worship that is founded upon God’s unchanging Word.

II. CORPORATE MOVEMENT

In this series, we’ve focused primarily on the work of the Holy Spirit within the life of an individual believer. There are times when the Holy Spirit moves corporately within the lives of several believers in the same place at the same time. As more and more people submit to the Holy Spirit’s leading, a spiritual momentum builds. The movement may begin within the heart of a single person, or perhaps a small group, but then spreads to the entire congregation, campus, city, nation, or so on. Depending on the scale of the movement, it may be referred to as revival or spiritual awakening.

During a genuine move of the Holy Spirit, Jesus will be magnified. Sinners will come under conviction and be saved. Believers will confess unconfessed sins and seek forgiveness. There will be a sense of unity and fellowship among the group along with expressions of joyful praise and thanksgiving. People will be motivated to serve and contribute to the LORD's kingdom work. They will boldly and unashamedly share the gospel. Finally, they will seek personal holiness through obedience to the Word and will of God.

III. REVIEW OF WORKS

The Holy Spirit is the executor of all divine operations. Everything that the Father wills, plans, or devises to do, and everything that the Son has secured through His redemptive work, is executed or applied in creation by the Holy Spirit. Before bringing this series to a close, let's review the major works of the Holy Spirit that we've discussed over the past 3 months.

1. Convicts the Lost unto Salvation - The Holy Spirit enables unsaved sinners to realize their guilt, depravity, and need for forgiveness through Jesus Christ.
2. Convicts Believers unto Confession - The Holy Spirit brings unconfessed sin to a believers attention they may seek forgiveness and walk in closer fellowship with God.
3. Restrains the Rise of the Antichrist - The Holy Spirit's presence on earth within the lives of Christians prevents the rise of the Antichrist thereby delaying God's final judgment.
4. Effects All Aspects of a Believer's Salvation - The Holy Spirit is responsible for a repentant sinner's regeneration, justification, sanctification, and eventual glorification.
5. Baptizes New Believers Into the Body of Christ - The Holy Spirit adds new believers to the Body of Christ, identifying them with Jesus and making them members of His church.
6. Adopts New Believers Into the Family of God - The Holy Spirit incorporates new believers into the family of God making them siblings with one another and heirs of His inheritance.
7. Gives Spiritual Gifts to All Believers - The Holy Spirit bestows 1 or more spiritual gifts to each Christian to be used for the edification of the church.
8. Inspired the Writing of the Bible - The Holy Spirit guided the writing of the Bible to ensure that it was a perfect, accurate, and sufficient record of God's revelation to mankind.
9. Illuminates the Meaning of the Bible to Believers - The Holy Spirit enlightens the minds of Christians to understand the Bible.
10. Seals Believers Until the Day of Redemption - The Holy Spirit marks a believer as God's own possession and guarantees their salvation.
11. Comforts Believers in Their Distress - The Holy Spirit helps and consoles Christians in the sufferings, grief, and anxiety.
12. Guides Believers in their Christian Walk - The Holy Spirit advises and counsels believers in the truth so that they can discern the will of God and walk in it.
13. Cultivates Christian Character (Produces Fruit) - The Holy Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
14. Leads Believers to Pray in God's Will - The Holy Spirit communicates God's will to believers that they might pray more effectively.
15. Intercedes on Behalf of Believers - The Holy Spirit prays for Christians in their weakness when they do not know how to pray for themselves.

16. Exalts and Echoes Jesus Christ - The Holy Spirit does not seek His own attention or speak from Himself, but rather glorifies Christ and calls attention to His words.

17. Empowers Believers to Worship, Evangelize, and Serve - The Holy Spirit strengthens believers to do those things which God has called them to do.

CONCLUSION

I want to conclude our study by reading a paragraph from The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 that summarizes our denominational beliefs about the Holy Spirit. As I read it, try to identify the various works of the Holy Spirit that we've covered during the past weeks.

“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 Saviour, 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.”

May each of us hoist the sails of our hearts in faithful obedience to God, that He would fill us with the mighty wind of the Holy Spirit and propel us by His strength in the direction He wants us to go!