

God In Us

I learned of Jesus as a child and came to Christ at a very young age. Like all new believers, I did not receive all knowledge of the truth right from the start; my life has been a journey of discovery and revelation. The longer I walk with Jesus, the better I come to understand and know Him, the more He reveals Himself to me and the more I come to comprehend spiritual things. One thing I DO know is found in the first chapter of Philippians: "He who began a good work in (me) will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." I am constantly learning as I draw ever closer to the Lord.

But it's strange that as Christians, we all read the same Book, yet few of us can agree on what it says. We separate and divide ourselves up into little groups and then often condemn those outside our own little group as heretics and apostates. I believe this is the sin of pride, as so often, so many boast that only THEY have the truth, and everyone else has it wrong.

Don't misunderstand what I'm saying; there ARE many who claim the name of Christ in vain – there definitely ARE heretics, apostates, false teachers of all kinds, and the Bible warns us to turn away from such ravaging wolves. But today we have no less than 33,000 different fractured factions... 33,000 different "Christian" denominations and there is often great animosity between those of different churches. How can this be when we all claim to follow the same Scriptures? And how can we, as the Body of Christ impact the world if we cannot even speak to one another because of our pride?

Paul spoke of this to the Corinthians, saying, "Brothers, I was not able to speak to you as spiritual people but as people of the flesh, as babies in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, because you were not yet ready for it. In

fact, you are still not ready, because you are still fleshly. For since there is envy and strife among you, are you not fleshly and living like unbelievers? For whenever someone says, 'I follow Paul,' and another, 'I follow Apollos,' are you not unspiritual people? What, then, is Apollos? And what is Paul? They are servants through whom you believed, and each has the role the Lord has given. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth."

What did Paul mean when he said he was not able to speak to the Corinthians as "Spiritual people?" It means they were walking in the flesh, not by the Spirit. It means THE SPIRIT OF GOD WAS NOT ALIVE AND ACTIVE IN THEM! This is what I would like to discuss today, because one area of essential doctrine of our faith that has been very misunderstood and misrepresented is the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. In the denomination I grew up in, the topic of the Holy Spirit was never explained or taught. Yes, we did believe in the Trinity – one God in three Persons... but that third Person of the Trinity was never explained or talked about.

Indeed, many Christians seem to be fearful of this. We hear words like "The Holy Spirit," "The Holy Ghost," and "Spirit-filled," and many of us run for the hills. We don't understand it, and so we shy away from it; but in doing so, we are missing out on the fullness of God and the real blessings of the true Christian life.

I understand why people are afraid of this subject and I grieve when I see some groups make a mockery of the Holy Spirit. To them, the manifestation of the Spirit involves outrageous, dramatic exhibitions of their own professed "holiness" – barking like dogs, "Holy laughter," rolling and flopping on the floor, and losing control of their own bodies. Make no mistake: this is not of God. This is not the true Holy Spirit at work. This is fleshly, prideful man,

seeking his own glory, not God's. But this has nothing to do with the Spirit of God. I find no place in the Bible where the Holy Spirit caused people to put on any chaotic performance for the sake of being seen as "Holy" by others.

But know this: the Holy Spirit absolutely DOES have a place in our Christian lives. In fact, I don't believe you can be a true Christian without the Spirit. You can have RELIGION, but it is vain, powerless, CARNAL religion. On the other hand, if you are truly indwelt by the Holy Spirit, you have the very POWER of GOD living inside you. I don't know how you can truly be a Christian without that.

The Holy Spirit was not some new thing that came about only on the Day of Pentecost. As the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit was present even before the Creation of the universe. Genesis 1, Verse 2 states, "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over face of the deep. And the SPIRIT OF GOD was hovering over the face of the waters." There is no denying it, the Holy Spirit is absolutely real and co-equal with the Father and the Son!

In John, Chapter 14, Jesus explained this to His disciples: "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive Him because it doesn't see Him or know Him. But you DO know Him, because He remains with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you.

"In a little while the world will see Me no longer, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live too. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, you are in Me, and I am in you. The one who has My commands and keeps them is the one who loves Me. And the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father. I also will love him and will reveal Myself to him."

"Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, 'Lord, how is it You're

going to reveal Yourself to us and not to the world?’

“Jesus answered, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. The one who doesn’t love Me will not keep My words. The word that you hear is not Mine but is from the Father who sent Me.

“I have spoken these things to you while I remain with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit – the Father will send Him in My name – will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.”

Wow. There is a lot of information here in this short section. First of all, Jesus told His disciples, (and also US), THREE TIMES in this passage that those who are true followers of Christ are those who keep His commandments. Jesus promised to ask His Father to send “another Counselor” to be with His people, because He knew He would soon be leaving this earth. This “other Counselor” is the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit.

We also learn here that those who are not in Christ cannot receive the Holy Spirit, because they do not follow His commands. But for those who DO love God, Jesus promised this Holy Spirit would be with us and IN us. In other words, JESUS HIMSELF, though He would be leaving this earth soon to return to the Father, would also be IN His followers, in the form of the Holy Spirit. And what would the Spirit do? Jesus said, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and WE will come to him and make OUR home with him.” This Counselor, this Holy Spirit, sent by the Father in Jesus’ name, will “teach you all things and remind you of everything I told you,” Jesus said.

Who receives the Holy Spirit? Those who follow Christ and obey His commands, those that love Jesus. In Acts chapter 2, Peter proclaimed, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in

the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

I believe there are many professing Christians in our churches today who have gone to church all their lives and done many religious activities, but they are without the Holy Spirit in their lives, and do not even realize it. OR, the Spirit may be present, but not ACTIVE in their lives because they have not acknowledged Him or hearkened to His voice. And what a gift they are missing!

After studying this subject, I can now look back over the course of my life and realize that I had the Holy Spirit within me even as a young child, though I did not recognize or realize what it was. The Lord speaks to me spiritually constantly, and now that I understand this is the Holy Spirit inside me, I know this is not just my own carnal “conscience” speaking, but God Himself, guiding me into all truth, ordering my steps. It is this Holy Spirit within me that has taught me the things of God, helped me to understand the great wisdom of the Scriptures, and throughout my life, has reminded me of all Jesus’ words, at times when I needed them the most.

In Galatians 5, Paul admonished us to “walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.” I cannot count the number of times the Holy Spirit has guided me in my decision making. There are so many lost and worldly people today who know nothing of God, and do not have the Holy Spirit inside them. And so it is no wonder they live self-centered lives of carnality and lust. They walk in the flesh and live to gratify the desires of the flesh. But the Spirit-led person has the ability to say no to ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and Godly in this present age.

And though the Christian life is not one of ease and comfort, the Holy Spirit inside us is also called our “COMFORTER,” because of the benefits – or the FRUIT – of the Holy

Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.

Isaiah Chapter 11 talks about Jesus. In verse 2 we read, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord." Friends, the same Holy Spirit that was in Jesus Himself as He walked this earth is the same Holy Spirit that Jesus gave as a precious gift to US, as we become His children. As true Christians, WE, TOO, have that Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord.

It is only with the Holy Spirit inside us that we can be of any use to the Kingdom of God. And it's only with the Holy Spirit inside us that we can have eternal life. As we read Jesus' own words in Acts 1, we learn that we will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon us, so that we can be His witnesses.

What else happens when we receive the Holy Spirit? God promised in Ezekiel 36, "I will give you a new heart and a new Spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes..."

There are many, though, who profess Christ but still try to live with one foot in the world. This does not work. You cannot serve two masters. You cannot profess to be Godly in church but then be worldly when you step out the door. This GRIEVES the Holy Spirit. Luke said in Acts chapter 7, "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so you do."

Sadly, many profess Christ with their lips but their hearts

are far from Him. Thus the Spirit is quenched and grieved, and such a poor soul can only live a carnal existence on this earth. They cannot live in the fullness of Godliness without the POWER, without the COUNSEL and without the BLESSING of the GIFT of the Holy Spirit. Though they may call themselves "believers," they are deceiving themselves; no better off than the unsaved person. These are the spiritually shallow, the ones with itching ears who cannot accept the great and wonderful truths of the FULL COUNSEL of God. The ones who will hear the Savior say, "Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity, for I never knew you." "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are nonsense to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned." (First Corinthians 2:14).

Friends, God has promised us the amazing gift of His very own Spirit. With God Himself living inside us, giving us a new Spirit, a Spirit of life and the wisdom, counsel, guidance and the comfort of Christ, we truly become new creations. We are transformed in the RENEWING of our hearts and minds, no longer seeking after worldly nonsense, but now living new lives as children of God. God's will then becomes OUR will. This is what it MEANS to be "born again." Jesus came to earth to be "God WITH us." Then He promised the Holy Spirit to those who truly love Him so we can have "God IN us." We can't be true Christians without the Holy Spirit. So don't resist the Holy Spirit. Don't quench the Spirit. SEEK the Spirit, and listen to His voice.

Audio CDs and transcripts of this message are available when you call me at Wisconsin Christian News, (715) 486-8066. Or email Rob@WisconsinChristianNews.com and ask for message number 212.

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