

The Holy Spirit: Selected Scriptures

Someone has said that man is incurably religious. He was right. If you look at what is going on in our world, you see many, many religions, and most of those religions have sub groups that have split off from the main body. Observing those many religious people, leads us to ask the question, "how is Christianity different than all the others?" We have been answering that question for the last three weeks. To live a distinctively Christian life is to understand that we must be separated from the world's system in which we live by rejecting the evil and living a life of holiness. We saw also that we are to be salt and light to our culture. And last week we saw that we alone I have the privilege of fellowship-spiritual fellowship with God and with each other. Fellowship means God shares His life with you, and you share your life with Him. It is because of that spiritual connection that we have with God that we are able to have a spiritual connection with one another.

Today I want to talk with you about another distinctively Christian privilege. We have the unique privilege of having our God living within us in the person of The Holy Spirit. The Spirit living within us is a mark of God's ownership in our lives. We belong to Him. That means that we don't have to go anywhere to find him because wherever we are he is there with us, and that one fact makes all the difference in the world.

Many people have a hard time understanding the Holy Spirit. We understand the concept of a father, so that makes it easier for us to understand our heavenly Father. And Jesus Christ was in human form like us, so that helps. But how do you understand the Holy Spirit?

1. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE INTIMATE COMPANION YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED

Throughout your life, you have probably had one or more close, intimate friends. That is a special treasure. The Bible describes a true friend this way:

"A real friend is always loving and is like a brother born just for the purpose of helping during difficulties." [Proverbs 17:17]

To put it in more modern terms, we could say that a friend is "someone who walks in when everyone else walks out." Jesus was the closest friend that the disciples had ever had. He was the one who understood all their problems and was always there for them. He was the kind of intimate companion that we all long to have in life but seldom find. On the night before Jesus' death, Jesus had been talking about leaving them and going

where they could not go. They didn't understand, and the fear of being without Him was overwhelming to them. Jesus comforted His disciples by telling them that He would send Someone to be with them that would take his place.

John 14:16-18 “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”

Jesus said He would send “another” Counselor. The word “another” means “another of the same kind.” Picture a very much loved leader telling his followers that he was going away. But, says the leader, I am going to send to you my twin to replace me. Not only does he look like me, he thinks and acts just like me. Whereas no twins are exactly alike, the only difference between the Holy Spirit and Jesus is the fact that Jesus has a physical body. And not having a physical body, the Holy Spirit is able to live within us.

1 Corinthians 6:19, “19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?”

Ephesians 2:22, And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

No matter where you are, if you are a Christian, God is there in you. And He is always ready to help. You never wake Him up. He is never interrupted when you call for assistance. Morning, noon or night He is inside you, available.

2. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE WISE GUIDE YOU HAVE ALWAYS NEEDED

Let's imagine that you were to land today in a remote jungle in Africa. If you were given your choice of three things to help you find your way, which one would you choose—a compass, a map of Africa or a personal guide who knew the terrain very well? If you are smart, you are going to take the guide. In our life everything ahead of us is uncharted territory that you have not explored before. The Holy Spirit living within you is a divine Guide given to lead you.

[John 16:13](#) “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.”

As Isaiah proclaimed, The Lord of hosts...is WONDERFUL in counsel...and EXCELLENT in guidance. (Isaiah 28:29).

You may not know what to do, but there is Someone who does know what you should do. He is excellent in His guidance, and He is always ready to guide you into the truth.

Samuel Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, needed help because he was trying to go where no one had ever gone, but he also knew where to find the answers to his questions. He was once asked if, in the process of researching and experimenting with his invention, he ever came to a place where he didn't have a clue what to do next. "Oh, many times," Morse replied. "Whenever I was baffled and frustrated, I went to my knees and asked God for light and understanding. He showed me the way. I believe God wanted the telegraph to be invented because He knew what it would mean to mankind. After the invention of the telegraph, I received many honors--but I feel undeserving of honors. I have made a valuable application of electricity not because of superior gifts and abilities, but because God was pleased to answer my prayers and reveal to me a few of the wonderful secrets of His universe." It is significant that the first message ever tapped over the telegraph key were the words of Samuel Morse himself: "What hath God wrought!" He believed the telegraph was not so much his invention as it was God's answer to his prayers. You may not be an inventor, but you do need wisdom to live life. The answer to your need and my need is to do what Samuel Morse did. We must go to God and allow Him to give us direction.

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE MORAL COMPASS THAT MAKES US SENSITIVE TO SIN

Being insensitive to that which will hurt you is a very dangerous thing. If you are no longer sensitive to pain, you might cut yourself or burn yourself And not even know it. Dr. Paul Brand, world-renowned leprosy specialist, tells how he discovered that contrary to once popular medical opinion leprosy does not directly cause the deterioration of the flesh of its victims. The disease simply deadens the nerves of the body's extremities. Eventually the leper loses all feeling in his fingers and toes. The afflicted person can burn his hand and never feel the pain. Infection and even gangrene can eat away at his flesh with out ever creating the slightest discomfort.

In fact, in certain villages in Africa and Asia the town leper is given a unique job because of his inability to feel pain, The leper stands by a heavy iron cooking pot watching the potatoes. As they are done, without flinching, he thrusts his arm deep into the boiling water and retrieves the cooked potatoes. Such insensitivity soon destroys the leper's flesh. After years of working with lepers, Dr. Brand learned to rejoice in the sensation of cutting a finger, turning an ankle, or stepping into a too-hot bath. Pain itself, the hurt of pain, is a gift. Being insensitive to pain is bad, but being insensitive to sin is even worse. If you are insensitive to sin, you can destroy your life little by little without even knowing it. In John 16, Jesus was still giving last words of instruction to His disciples before His crucifixion.

John 16:7-8, "But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. 8 When

he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:

The word "convict" can mean "convince" or "reprove." It can also mean to "bring to light." God's Spirit turns the light on our sins sharpens our sensitivity to them. Dr. Brand was thankful for physical pain. How much more should we thank God for the spiritual pain that comes from the Holy Spirit when we're hurting ourselves by sin.

4. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTOR WHO TEACHES US TO PRAY

Prayer is almost a universal experience among people. We would be amazed if we knew how many people that we would not expect to pray. The problem is that not all prayer is the same thing. Much of the prayer that is not in this world is done through of repetition. As one man said, "rote prayer is a sign of hardening of the spiritual arteries." There is no joy in going through some kind of repetitious prayer. There is no more wearisome a task that people do than because think they are supposed to. True prayer is something born in the heart by the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 6:18, "Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit."

Jude 20, "But you, dear friends, must continue to build your lives on the foundation of your holy faith. And continue to pray as you are directed by the Holy Spirit."

The Holy Spirit living within you wants to be active in every part of your life, including your prayer life. He not only counsels you in your daily decisions, He also motivates you to pray for things that are God's will for your life. True prayer is you being so yielded and sensitive to God that He can put His burdens in your heart so that you can offer those burdens back to Him in prayer. Without His help, we really don't know how to pray or what to pray for.

Romans 8:26, "And the Holy Spirit helps us in our distress. For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how we should pray."

Out of the many thousands of things you could pray for, what will you choose to spend your time praying about? It is obvious that you can't pray about it all? And what about the things you should pray for that you don't even know about? Even if you do figure out what you should pray about, what should you ask God to do about that thing? For example, suppose you are praying for an elderly man in his eighties or nineties. The man has been sick for a long time, and now he's in the hospital again and is in great suffering. Do you pray for the Lord to heal him, or do you pray for the Lord to take him home? How would we know such a thing? Dr. Robert G. Lee was one of the great preachers of

the last century. On one occasion when he was old and sick, the church prayed for him and asked that the Lord would take him home. He died that very night. It was no doubt the Holy Spirit who put that request in the hearts of His people to pray. The Holy Spirit is our prayer instructor, and the more you listen to his voice within you, the more powerful your prayers will become.

5. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE POWER WE NEED TO LIVE LIFE

If there is anything we need in life, it is power. Life is hard, and we need the strength to keep on keeping on. The power we need comes from the Spirit of God.

Just before he ascended into heaven, Jesus spoke these words to his disciples in

Luke 24:49, ““And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven.”

Jesus knew the disciples could not do what was before them without supernatural power. Neither can we.

a) WE NEED THE POWER TO SUFFER

Several years ago, the well-known German pastor and theologian Helmut Thielicke was asked during a visit to America what he considered the greatest problem in the US. He said, "The biggest problem," he said "is an inadequate view of suffering." He went on to explain that, in his view, the American dream had led many to believe that any and all problems could be solved with a minimum of effort or discomfort. Unfortunately, this is not the case. There are, and always will be, certain burdens in life that cannot be eliminated. “

He is right. Even among many Christians, it is often thought that if you walk with God, you can avoid most suffering and be healthy and wealthy. That kind of thinking is not found in the scriptures. The Bible tells us that adversity is a tool God sometimes uses to teach us lessons. Adversity is like a cloud. It may block the sunlight for a time, but it also brings the rain. And both sunlight and rain are needed for growth. Phillip Brooks wrote, "Do not pray for easy lives, pray to be stronger men. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers; pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle, but you shall be a miracle.” The Holy Spirit gives us the power to endure suffering well so that God can use it to change our lives through it.

b) WE NEED THE POWER TO LOVE

Our world is in desperate need of real love. It needs people who really care for others. When we allow the Holy Spirit to rule in our lives He loves people through us.

c) *WE NEED THE POWER TO SERVE*

People in our world are generally not into serving. They are into being served. Having people to do what you tell them to do is seen as a mark of success. That is not the way Jesus looked at it. According to Jesus, success is not seen but how many serve you. Success is seeing how many you serve. One of the great word pictures that Jesus gave his disciples is found in John chapter 13.

On his last night with his disciples, Jesus removed his cloak, took up a towel, and washed his followers' feet. To do so was the job of the lowest household slave. Jesus said serving others is real power.

How do you go about getting that kind of power? If you're a Christian, you already have the power living within you. You may remember the story that the about a missionary named Jackson went to the Mission Field. He was assigned a car that would not start without a push. After thinking about his problem, he came up with a plan. He went to the school near his home, got permission to take some children out of class and had them push his car off. As he made his rounds, he would either park on a hill or leave his car running. He did this for two years. After some time, his poor health forced him to leave, and a new missionary came to take his place. When Jackson began to explain the arrangement for getting the car started, the new missionary began looking under the hood. He tightened up a loose cable, turned on the switch, and the engine roared to life. For nearly two years Jackson could have been cranking the car. Power was there; he just did not know how to use it. If you're a believer in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit lives within you, and he is ready to give you the power you need for every need in your life.

ACTION STEPS

1. *TURN FROM SIN*

2. *SURRENDER YOUR WILL*

3. *TRUST GOD TO WORK THROUGH YOU*

The power of the Holy Spirit is released in your life as you draw close to God. It is that simple. The more you learn to yield your life to the Lord, the more you resist sin and seek God, the more freedom the Holy Spirit will have in your life to show Himself to be that God that he is.