

ANOTHER COMFORTER

John 14:16, 17

Intro: In Acts 19 we have an account of a visit which the Apostle Paul made to the believers in Ephesus, and one of the first things that he did was to question them about their relationship with the Holy Spirit. He asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit since they believed? Their response was that they had not even heard of the Holy Spirit. Without going into a lot of detail about the reception of the Spirit, let me say that conditions existed in the early days of the Church which did not continue. As the Gospel spread from place to place and from one group to another, the Holy Spirit was given in a special way. In Acts 19 it was to a very small group of Jewish believers, twelve men in all, who had been disciples of John the Baptist. Paul laid hands on them, they received the Holy Spirit, spoke in tongues, and prophesied. Perhaps we can take up the special details of that time in a future message. My reason for mentioning it tonight is because of the statement of those believers that they had "not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit" (Acts 19:2).

In many respects our generation is very similar. In some places there is a strong, unscriptural emphasis upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit, while in others practically nothing is being said about the Holy Spirit. In either case it can be said that they have not really heard the truth about the Holy Spirit. We are so taken up with various methodologies that many do not realize how much they need the Holy Spirit. The Lord's people have been led to believe that if they follow certain procedures, success in the Lord's work will follow. Various methods of witnessing are promoted, each of which promises that people will surely respond to the Gospel. Christian workers often deal with the problems that Christians have in the same way that secular counselors deal with them, for example, the problems of rebellious teenagers, or of married couples who are headed for divorce, just to name a couple of problems that are very prominent even among believers today. Even the language of the world has been picked up by professing Christians, and so we think that we can make things happen. But as far as trusting God, praying, waiting upon Him for His blessing in changing lives, that is too slow for many of today's professing Christians. They want to see things happen, and happen now.

We would all like to see greater blessing in the Church, and a greater ministry in the world. We would like to see more holy living among believers, and more people in the world who are coming to Christ to be saved. But the question is, How do the Lord's people become more holy in their lives,

genuinely holy? And a similar question is, How are we to win people to Christ?

The answer to both of these questions is that we must learn to do the work of the Lord in the Lord's way, not in ways which men have devised to accomplish what they want to do. One of the most important requests which we find in the Psalms, and which is found many times, is the request given in Psalms 25:4, 5,

Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths.
Lead me in thy truth, and teach me:
for thou art the God of my salvation;
on thee do I wait all the day (Psa. 25:4, 5).

David prayed that way because he knew the truth which Isaiah would declare a few hundred years later when he wrote,

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways,
and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isa. 55:8, 9).

Where do we find the ways of the Lord? We find them in the Word of God. And how are we able to understand the Word of God? It is only by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. So if we are looking for things in the world which "work," we are not only going to ignore our need for the Holy Spirit, but we are going to be guilty of grieving the Holy Spirit—a sin which has to be one of the most prevalent, and one of the most serious, of all of the sins of our generation. And it is a sin which most certainly leads to other sins.

And so I want to spend several Sunday nights dealing with the ministry of the Holy Spirit. I am asking the Lord to make the teaching of Scripture about the Holy Spirit more of a reality in my own life and ministry as well as in yours.

In thinking about this glorious theme of Scripture, I wondered how I could introduce this subject. I would hope that we here at Trinity are more aware of our need for the Holy Spirit and His ministry than many believers are today, but we need to know more about Him. And we certainly need to trust Him more than we do. So, in order that we may all start on the right foundation, where should we begin.

As I prayed and thought about this, I believe that the Holy Spirit Himself led me to those words of our Lord Jesus Christ which our found in my text for tonight: John 14, verses 16 and 17. These verses contain the first of four specific references which our Lord made to the Holy Spirit during the last hours of our Lord's life here on earth before He went to

the Cross. The place that they had in our Lord's ministry with regard to the time in which He spoke of the Spirit, ought to show us how very important they are. The Lord was going to die, be raised from the dead, and, shortly after, return to the Father in heaven. The words of our text for tonight were spoken in that context. How did the Lord introduce this great subject to His disciples? I hope you have your Bibles open, and that you will follow me as I read John 14:16, 17. (Read.)

Notice what the Lord called the Holy Spirit. He gave Him two names in this passage. Our Lord called Him "another Comforter," and "the Spirit of truth."

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT'S TITLES.

He has other titles in other passages of Scripture, but let us examine these to learn what we can about the Holy Spirit.

A. "Another Comforter."

Why didn't the Lord simply say a Comforter? Instead, He said, "Another Comforter." The word "another" has to mean that they had a Comforter, but when the Lord left they would get "another Comforter."

This is a title which can actually be transliterated into English as Paraclete. Lit. it speaks of one who is called to the side of someone to give them help, or aid.

In 1 John 2:2 our Lord is called a Paraclete. There the word is translated "Advocate," which is from the Latin. A Paraclete is one whose responsibility it is to help us in any and every way that we need help in our lives and in the work that the Lord has given us to do.

But there is another interesting thing about this title, "Another Comforter." That has to do with the word "another."

There are two ways the Lord could have said this. If He had used a different word from the one which he used, He would have meant another of a different kind. But He did not use that word. Instead, He used the Greek word which means another of the same kind.

Therefore, this title is one which we must include when we speak of the character of the Holy Spirit. It means that He is like the Lord Jesus. It means that He is a divine Person. He is not simply an influence or power, but He is a Person. The Lord Jesus is a Person; so is the Holy Spirit a Person. The Lord Jesus is God; the Holy Spirit is God. He is the

Holy Spirit. As the Lord Jesus came to help us in our relationship with God, so the Holy Spirit comes to continue to give us the help that we need. All that the Lord Jesus had been to His disciples while He was on earth, the Holy Spirit would continue to be. The Holy Spirit does not have a human body like the Lord did, but in His Deity He is just like our Lord. Remember that He is the Holy Spirit. He possesses every divine characteristic which the Father has, and which the Lord Jesus Christ has.

And notice from our Lord's words here how certain it was that the Holy Spirit would come to them, AND HOW IMPORTANT! The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit Himself were all involved in this most amazing coming of the Holy Spirit. Our Lord said, "And I will pray ~~the Father~~, and ~~he~~ shall give you ~~another Comforter...~~" The Lord would request that the Holy Spirit be sent, the Father would send Him, and the Holy Spirit, like our Lord, would willingly come.

What the Members of the Godhead do, they do together. There is never any disagreement between them. They were agreed that every believer needs the Holy Spirit, and that the Holy Spirit was the One to meet that need.

But now let us notice the other title which our Lord gave to the Holy Spirit in this passage. He is:

B. "The Spirit of truth."

"Truth" can sometimes in Scripture mean faithfulness. And that would be appropriate here. The Holy Spirit, like the Father and the Son, will always be faithful to us. However, in view of the fact that the Lord also said in John 16:13 that the Holy Spirit "will guide you into all truth," I take the expression, "the Spirit of truth, to mean that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is always connected with the Word of God--always, with never an exception!

He is the Author of Scripture. He is the Teacher of Scripture. He always helps us by bringing us to the Word of God not only to show us what it means, but to enable us to believe it, and to live it! Beware of the people who try to get you to believe that you can have dealings with the Holy Spirit which do not include the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit never works independently of Scripture. That is the reason that we need to be very careful that what we are doing has its authority in the Word of God.

But now I have one other point to make from this passage:

II. WHERE IS THE HOLY SPIRIT NOW?

Everywhere! The Spirit is omnipresent just like the Father and the Son are omnipresent. David recognized this when he wrote Psalm 139. He asked,

Whither can I go from thy spirit [or, Spirit]?
or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:
if I make my bed in hell [sheol],
behold, thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning,
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
even there shall thy hand lead me,
and thy right hand shall hold me (Psa. 139:7-10).

But the Lord had another answer to the question, Where is the Holy Spirit?

There are mysteries about the Members of the Godhead which we can know, but which we cannot explain. How would we explain the fact that the Lord Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father, and yet He promises to be with His people always? If we are in one place, it is impossible for us to be in another place at the same time. But not so with the Father, or with the Son, or with the Holy Spirit.

The Lord Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would come in answer to His prayer, to abide with them forever. And He clarified it even more when He said concerning the Holy Spirit, "For he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." And this was to become a distinguishing mark of a believer. The world cannot receive Him. That is, the Holy Spirit indwells only the people of God, and He will never under any circumstances leave a single one of us.

Concl: Why is He in us?

- 1) He is there to teach us (John 14:26), to teach us the truth of the Word of God.
- 2) He is in us to teach us of Christ, and to incline us and to empower us to witness for Christ (John 15:26).

These two points are repeated and emphasized John 16:12-15.

We must be careful not to grieve Him (Eph. 4:30), nor to quench Him (1 Thess. 5:19). We will learn more about these truths in later messages.

As I close, let me call your attention to two things in these verses which our Lord said. One has to do with the world; the other has to do with the disciples.

The Lord Jesus said that the world does not see the Holy Spirit, nor does the world know the Holy Spirit. And because

the world is without Christ, the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit. Not only are unbelievers without God, and without Christ, but they are without the Holy Spirit. And not only that, but the people of the world often scorn any talk about the Holy Spirit. How tragic for anyone to be without the Godhead. Their scorn and their lack of interest is evidence of their blindness and their ignorance. So we must always remember that this is one great deficiency of the people of the world which cannot be made up in any way. Think of what it would mean to us to be without the Holy Spirit!

This brings me to my last point.

The Lord must have been looking at His disciples when He said all that we find in this chapter, watching their reaction, seeing if they really were taking in what He was telling them. To them He said, "But ye know him," speaking of their relationship with the Spirit. "But ye know him."

Would the Lord say that to us? I think that He would. But the question facing us is, How well do we know the Holy Spirit? Do we recognize His presence with us each day? Do we confess to the Father our dependence upon the Holy Spirit? Do we trust Him to guide us in the decisions of our lives? Do we seek His blessing when we minister to others--to our spouses, to our children and grandchildren, to our friends, to classes that we teach? How well do you know the Holy Spirit? It is my prayer that as we spend the coming Sunday nights speaking about Him, that our acquaintance with Him will deepen, and that there will be greater evidence in our lives that we are people who have the Spirit of God living in our hearts. We don't understand how that can be, but we are not asked to explain it before we can enjoy Him. We only need to believe it, and then act upon it, trusting the Spirit Himself to show us that He is really with us all of the time.

BORN OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

John 3:3, 5

Intro: If you have ever asked people to tell you what a Christian is, or what makes a person a Christian, you get a variety of answers. Some will describe a Christian as a person who is religious. Some will say that a Christian is a person who lives the right way, or one who treats others the way he would like to be treated. A Christian may be defined as a person who reads the Bible and goes to church. Others will say that it is a person who has been baptized into the fellowship of a church. Some churches describe a Christian as one who has taken confirmation classes. Often people will define a Christian without any reference to Christ. This is a good way to open up a conversation with a person who is not a Christian, and the answer you get will help you to see where that person is in his or her understanding of this most important question. But there seems to be one thing in common to most answers which are not correct answers. It is this: People will tell you what a Christian does, not what a Christian is. And added to the question, "What is a Christian?", we need to ask, "How does one become a Christian?"

The story which the Apostle John told in John 3 is a very interesting story. Nicodemus, who came to the Lord at night—why he chose to come at night, we do not know, was not a man ignorant of Scripture. He was a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews. This meant that he was a teacher of the Law. He knew a great deal about Scripture. But he had been attracted to the Lord by the miracles which the Lord had performed. He knew that the miracles were genuine, not fake. He knew that seriously ill people had been instantly healed—that people who could not walk were now walking, that people who could not see were now seeing, etc. Nicodemus had taken the time to investigate what was going on, and he could not, like his fellow-Pharisees, say that the Lord was casting out demons by the prince of the demons. And so he came to the Lord for further light. It is very clear that he was not satisfied with his Jewish teaching with all of their ceremonies; he felt that there must be more than he had. And so he came to the Lord. The evidence was clear that God was at work in his heart. He seemed to be interested in what the Lord was teaching.

The Lord knew his heart, and knew his need, and so He immediately began to speak of a doctrine which Nicodemus had overlooked completely, and yet a doctrine which our Lord indicated that he should have known: the doctrine of the new birth.

We are indebted to the Apostle John, more than anyone else among the NT writers, for his teaching on this subject. James mentioned it, and Peter mentioned it also, and it is certainly implied in the teaching of the Apostle Paul, but no one is so clear on this subject as the Apostle John. And John was simply relating to his readers the clear teaching of our Lord.

I. THE LORD'S TEACHING ABOUT THE NEW BIRTH.

Look at verse 3. (Read.)

In our Tuesday Bible Class when we were studying the Gospel of John, we learned that when the Lord said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee," He was indicating that He was about to say:

- 1) Something that was very important.
- 2) Something that was absolutely true.
- 3) Something which He was saying with His full authority as the Son of God. "I say unto you" is the equivalent of the OT expression, "Thus saith the Lord."

We have that expression three times in the report which John has given us in this chapter of the words which the Lord said to Nicodemus. See verses 3, 5, and 11.

What was the Lord saying to Nicodemus?

He was telling him that until he was born again, he would not "see," or understand, what it means, as we would say today, to be a Christian. The Lord was using the term, "the kingdom of God," in a spiritual sense. To "see the kingdom of God" is to be saved. Being born again means that we need to receive a life which we have never had before, a life which is completely different from our physical life.

Nicodemus knew that the way he had gotten physical life was through all that had been involved in his physical birth. Now he was hearing the Lord say that he needed to be born again, a second time.

Nicodemus was obviously confused, and so he asked the question recorded for us in verse 4. (Read.) He was smart enough that as a man he could not enter again into his mother's womb to be born again, but he could not figure out what the Lord meant.

One thing Nicodemus missed was the full meaning of the word "again" which the Lord used. It is true that it means "again." But it also means from above. This was the first indication that the Lord gave to Nicodemus that he needed a life which came from a higher source than he was capable of

providing. It was a birth that was above a human birth. As we shall see, this is a birth which is brought about by God.

The reader of John's Gospel would have come across this teaching in the very first chapter when John was describing how a person becomes a child of God. (Read John 1:11-13.) It is really more accurate to talk about becoming a child of God than to talk of becoming a Christian. The latter is Biblical, but not as prominent in Scripture as speaking of becoming a child of God. To become a child of God requires being born--"not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, **but of God.**"

It is very important that we understand the meaning of the little preposition "of" because it is used frequently in the NT where the subject of spiritual birth is being discussed.

"Of" points to the source of this birth, its place of origin, its primary cause. If it is "of God," then we know that this birth is a work of God. He is the primary cause. Being born again is not something that we do for ourselves; it is a work which God does for us. That is clearly the meaning of John 1:12, 13. And this is what it means as the Lord described this to Nicodemus in John 3.

So this new birth, being born again, being born from above, means that becoming a child of God is not something that we do for ourselves, but it is a work which God does in giving us this new life through spiritual birth.

After Nicodemus asked his question, the Lord went on to explain His answer in greater detail. He then spoke of being born "of water and of the Spirit." Translating it very literally, the Lord said that people who are born from above and born of water and Spirit. So He was speaking of one new birth which is brought about by God through "water and Spirit." What did He mean?

Some say that this "water" refers to our physical birth, that we have to be born physically and then spiritually. But that would be obvious, and I think it is very doubtful that the Lord would say such a thing to Nicodemus. When the Lord said what He did in verse 6 it seems that He was saying that becoming a child of God is not a transformation of our old nature, our physical life, but it is something entirely new which God does for us.

Others think that this "water" is a reference to baptism. But that would make spiritual birth in part dependent upon whether or not we are baptized. And that would not harmonize with what John said in John 1:13 that our birth into God's

family is God's work, not ours.

I believe that the reference to water is a reference to the Word of God. And I would cite two passages to prove that it is the Word of God. The first is Eph. 5:25, 26:

Husbands, love your wives,
even as Christ also loved the church,
and gave himself for it;
That he might sanctify and cleanse it
with the washing of water by the word.

So the water represents the Word of God.

The second passage, while it does not mention water, confirms that the Word of God is an essential tool, used by the Holy Spirit, in the new birth. The reference is 1 Pet. 1:23:

Being born again,
not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible,
by the word of God,
which liveth and abideth for ever.

And so, as our Lord indicated, the Word of God and the Spirit of God are always active when any person is born again, or born from above. This is the reason that it is so important to give people the Word of God. The Word of God, used by the Spirit of God, can break down the hardest heart, and draw sinners to faith in Christ. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

There is no doubt but that the Holy Spirit was working in the heart of Nicodemus. This is the real reason that he came to the Lord, risking his own reputation with the Pharisees.

And then the Lord made it clear that the new birth is not a reformation of the flesh, the old nature. The flesh is what it is, and it will never be changed. This is why it is necessary for the Spirit of God to do an entirely new work in any person's heart, and this new work is brought about by the new birth. Cf. 2 Cor. 5:17. The word "new" there means something which did not exist in that person before, and is far different from what he was before. It is a new creation, and only God can create.

And then the Lord said to Nicodemus, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, **Ye must be born again.**"

This means that Nicodemus did not bring to the Lord the things which were necessary for him to become a child of God. He had to be born again. But we also see in this that

Nicodemus was one of the elect. Nicodemus did not know this, and we would not have known it if we have been there (although we might have suspected such by the very fact that Nicodemus sought out the Lord. And so the Lord did not say, "Nicodemus, you must be born again if you want to be saved and become a child of God." He simply indicated that it was a part of God's plan for Nicodemus that he would be saved. In other words, Nicodemus was one of the elect.

The final verse that I want to touch on is verse 8.

In our day we have many people with various plans on how to win the lost to Christ. But the Lord tells us here that the work of the Spirit is just as unknown and unpredictable as the blowing of the wind. The wind blows where it wills to blow. Man does not determine the wind. "So is every one that is born of the Spirit." The Greek word for "wind" is the same as the Greek word for "Spirit."

We do not determine where the Spirit is going to work; the Spirit does, God does. We did not determine our own salvation; God does that, and He works through the Holy Spirit. To be "born of the Spirit" means that the Spirit is the Author, the Cause, the Source of the new birth. We work with Him, and He works with us as long as we are submissive to His leading.

II. OUR PART IN THE SPIRIT'S WORK.

Since our Lord indicated that the new birth comes about from the Holy Spirit as the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God, our job is to give people the Word. It is up to the Holy Spirit to use the Word as He pleases. And He is going to do that which is the will of God.

We have confirmation of this in Jas. 1:18,

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth,
that we should be a kind of firstfruits
of his creatures.

We give the Word; the Holy Spirit uses the Word according to the sovereign will of God. That is what happened when you and I were saved. And this is the reason that I say that no one is ever saved apart from the Word of God. We give the Word; the Spirit of God uses the Word, and people are saved.

Remember our verses in Isa. 55:8-11.

Now let us finish the story of Nicodemus. Was the Lord's ministry with Nicodemus effective, or not?

III. THE SEQUEL REGARDING NICODEMUS.

Nicodemus is only mentioned in three chapters in the Bible, and they are all in John: chapters 3, 7, and 19.

We have been considering what happened to him when he came to see the Lord. That is in John 3. The account concludes without telling us anything about the reaction of Nicodemus. Did he believe at that time, or not? We do not know. Did the Lord pressure him to "make a decision"? No.

Let us see what we have in John 7. Read verses 40 through to the end of the chapter. We only have a brief statement from Nicodemus, and it is found in verse 51. He spoke in the Lord's behalf, but that is all that we can say.

The last mention of Nicodemus is in John 19. See verses 38 through to the end of that chapter. It records nothing that Nicodemus said, only what he did!

We must assume that Nicodemus was like Joseph of Arimathea, a secret disciple. This was the first time that Nicodemus actually did anything to show his devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We never hear of him again in Scripture. But, if you were to ask me, do you expect to see Nicodemus in heaven, I would answer immediately with a resounding, "YES!" When was he saved? When was he born again? I do not know, and neither does anyone else except the Lord and possibly Nicodemus. But there is no doubt but that he became a child of God.

Concl: Every person who expects to be an effective witness of the Gospel needs to understand the story of Nicodemus. It is a story of the work of the Spirit, reaching into the very heart of Judaism, drawing that Pharisee to Christ, where he heard the Word directly from the Lord, and in God's time was born from above. There is not another story like it in the Bible. God works in different ways through different people, but it is the Spirit Who always does the work, and the Spirit's greatest weapon is the Word of God.

Without the Word, and without the Spirit, no one would ever be saved. Let us remember this, and go with the Word of God to reach people for Christ, remembering that we don't save anyone; the Spirit does.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE WORD
1 Peter 1:19-21

Intro: Just recently I read an article having to do with revival in the northwest. As far as I am concerned, the article was just as significant for what it did not say as what it said. As I remember there was no mention of the Holy Spirit, nor any mention of the Word of God. There were many references to God, but only two references to "the Lord" by which the writer may have been referring to Christ, but that was not at all clear. Instead, there was an appeal for churches to send the names of men and women who would form some kind of core group to pray and work toward revival. These men and women were called "elders," which was clearly a departure from the use of that term in Scripture. There will undoubtedly be a great response to the writer's attempt to bring about a revival, but the question which the article raised in my mind was this: Is this the way we are to expect a revival?

And we could go on to ask many other questions. Is it possible to have a true spiritual awakening where little or no emphasis is placed upon the teaching of Scripture? Can there be any true work of the Lord without the Holy Spirit? Is the important thing for us to lay aside our doctrinal differences to organize ourselves into some large group, or do we need to be thinking in terms of what is going to be pleasing to God? Can we organize a revival, or are revivals sent from God above?

The article represented what is taking place today in evangelical circles. There is a kind of evangelical ecumenical movement afoot where we are following the ideas of men about getting together rather than the teaching of the Word of God. We are encouraged to hold hands with people who do not hold to the fundamental truths of Scripture, setting those aside, thinking that we will see a revival by ignoring the truth. At the same time the author of the article was glorying in the tons of food that were recently provided for the needy by evangelical Christians, or those who professed to be evangelical. Unless I am sadly mistaken, evangelical churches today are being drawn into the same trap which caused men in the major denominations of our country fifty to hundred years ago to begin preaching a social gospel, which is not the Gospel.

We hear very little today about the Holy Spirit. Much that we do hear has more emotionalism in it than Scripture, and so it is not based upon the Word of God. Expository preaching is disappearing from our churches, and so people, not knowing the Word, fall in quickly with anything that seems like it is

going to "work." I think that every true Christian realizes that if we do not see a mighty work of God in our day, our country is doomed for greater judgment than we are already seeing. Whether or not God will give us an awakening, no one knows. But neither political action, nor massive organizations, nor popular entertainment, nor compromise with the world, is going to bring revival. Revival, if it comes, will only come on God's terms. Therefore, instead of turning away from Scripture, we need to be searching its pages more than we ever have before. This is one reason I am bringing this present series on the Holy Spirit.

Tonight I want to speak on the subject, THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE WORD OF GOD. It would be interesting for you to ask your Christian friends what the connection is between the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. And it would be equally interesting to see how many can give Scriptural evidence for what they say they believe.

I could use as my text the last two verses of 2 Timothy 3, but in those verses Paul spoke of the Scriptures as God-breathed. He did not mention the Holy Spirit although we know from other passages that it was through the Holy Spirit that the Scriptures were "given by inspiration of God." However, the passage which makes it absolutely clear as to how we got our Bible, not the OT only, but the NT also, is 2 Peter 1:19-21.

Peter was obviously concerned in this epistle about what was going to happen to the people of God and to the work of the Lord after he was gone. And so we see from the earlier part of this chapter that in his later years he had spent a lot of time repeating himself, seeking to drive the truth of God deeper and deeper into the hearts of the Lord's people. And he spoke of the time which you may have read about in your Bible reading this morning, when he and James and John saw the Lord glorified on the mount of transfiguration. I doubt if there have been many Christians who have not said as they read of that event, "I wish I could have been with the Lord and with Peter and James and John when they saw the Lord in His glory. And that truly would have been an unforgettable experience. But notice what Peter wrote immediately after that account, in verses 19-21. (Read.)

Notice, first, the expression:

I. "A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY" (2 Pet. 1:19a).

Probably many have missed the full impact of what Peter was saying here because of his use of the word prophecy. We think of prophecy as having to do with the prediction of the

future. But Peter was not using exclusively in that way. Prophecy to him was a revelation from God. He was using this term to describe the Scriptures. And he was saying that we have an even more authentic and reliable source of truth in the Word of God, or he could have meant that his experience on the Mount of Transfiguration was confirmed beyond any question by the fact that we read about it in the Word of God. He meant that we are to bring all that we hear to the Scriptures for final confirmation. If we hear something that cannot be confirmed by the Word of God, then we must not have anything to do with it. I am talking about things that have to do with God and His will for us.

We have no higher authority in all of the earth than our Bibles. To turn from the Word of God to the ideas of men can only lead to confusion and error. Don't let anyone tell you that the Bible is outdated. The Bible is timeless, and it is just as reliable tonight as it was when the ink finally dried on the last word of the last book that was written.

This morning I spoke to you about the word "sure" in Romans 4:16. We have the same word here in 2 Pet. 1:19. It is a word which places God's stamp of approval, His guarantee, that everything which you find in this Book, the Bible, is the Word of God. People are always coming up with new ideas. But we don't need new ideas when we are considering the work of the Lord. The Lord has been working the same way from the beginning of time, and He will continue to work that same way to the end of time.

Let me illustrate a new idea that was given to me before I was married, when I was just starting out in my ministry.

I was attending Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and I was only 19 years old, but I had two half-time churches where I was preaching on weekends. I spoke the first and third Sunday at one church; the second and fourth Sundays at the other.

The man who had been the pastor of one of these churches came out from a nearby town where he was pastor to hear me during a summer "revival" meeting as it was called. I did not know much about the Scriptures, but the Lord had put in my heart a desire to teach the Word of God. And even then I believed that the Lord worked through His Word. And so I was spending the two weeks teaching the book of Ephesians.

After hearing me at one service, this former pastor came up to me and said, "Dwight, don't you know that you will never have a revival by teaching the Word?" And then he added, "You have to get people stirred up first about reaching the

lost, and then give them the Word. But if you just give them the Word, you will never see the church revived."

He was very gracious about what he said, and at the time he was a seminary graduate, but I remember how grieved I was to think that he felt that something else had to prepare the way for the Word of God. His advice to me did not sound like Paul's advice to Timothy when he told him to "preach the Word." I preferred the advice of the Apostle Paul then, and I still do!

Let us now look at:

II. THE APOSTLE PETER'S ADVICE (2 Pet. 1:19b).

In the latter part of this verse Peter said that you and I can do no better for the development of our spiritual lives than to "take heed" to the Word of God. To "take heed" to it means that we are to come to it, to give our full consent to what we find there, and to live our lives accordingly.

Why?

Because God has given us His Word as an infallible guide, as "a light that shineth in a dark place." What a description of this world? People are groping about. Our politicians are trying to find their way, but they can't see where they are going because darkness within and darkness without has blinded their eyes and their minds. The only true light we have is the Word of God, and Peter said long ago that the best thing that we can do is to bring our lives into entire conformity with the Scriptures.

How long did Peter feel that the Word of God would be effective?

"Until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." How long is that? Until the Lord comes, and we are conformed to His image.

Did Peter know when that would be? No! Would it have made any difference to him if he had known that the Lord would not come back for at least 2,000 years. No! Regardless of how long time would last, Peter would say the same thing to every generation: "You can do no better than to follow the teaching of Scripture, and it is the only way you can be sure that you will not go wrong."

Now these are tremendous claims to make for the Scriptures, aren't they? Some would dismiss them as the ravings of one who was an ignorant fisherman and a devoted follower of Jesus

of Nazareth. But did Peter have a good reason for saying what he did? It is important for us to know in these days why he would be so enthusiastic about the Scriptures? Let us go on to see what he wrote.

III. THE REASONS FOR PETER'S ENTHUSIASM FOR THE SCRIPTURES
(2 Pet. 1:20, 21).

The first was because no part of the Bible was of human origin. The second was that the men who wrote the Scriptures were "moved by the Holy Spirit."

Verse 20 has been explained in different ways, but linking it with verse 21, as Peter did, I don't think that there is any question but that Peter was saying that the Bible is NOT a man-made book. It was written by human beings, but it did not originate with them. The Bible was written under conditions entirely different from any other book that has ever been written.

How was it written?

It was not written because Peter, or Paul, or Moses, or Isaiah decided that they wanted to write a book. They, and all of the other writers of Scripture, wrote because they were "moved by the Holy Spirit."

Many have pointed out that the word "moved" which Peter used here is the same word which Luke used in Acts 27:17 to describe how helpless the men were on the ship taking Paul to Rome when they encountered that terrible storm. They were "driven" by the wind and the waves, and there was nothing that they could do to help themselves.

Peter used this word to picture the work of the Holy Spirit, taking control of the writer's of Scripture, using their own gifts and experiences, and yet expressing infallibly through them the truth of God. No one can adequately explain how the Spirit worked; we only know that He did. And He worked in such a way as to keep the writers of Scripture from recording anything wrong. They became the instruments of God for giving us the Scriptures.

Is it any wonder that Peter was so attached to the Scriptures? He was not speaking about an ordinary book; he was speaking of the Word of God--and he was one of the instruments which God used.

But someone might say, "Peter was only speaking about the OT because the NT was not yet written." That is a good point, but let me show you how the Holy Spirit even anticipated that

some would make a suggestion like this. Please turn to the third chapter of this same epistle, and let me read to you verses 15 and 16. (Read.)

What was Peter saying?

He was saying that Paul's writings were to be placed in the same category as the OT Scriptures, and we know now that the same thing applied to the writings of the other men whose books have been recognized as the Word of God. The Scriptures include not only the OT books, but the NT books as well.

Concl: I haven't said all that I want to say about THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE WORD OF GOD, but I trust that the Lord Himself will have shown you the truthfulness and the importance of what we have seen tonight. The Bible is not an ordinary book. It is not a book of human authors. The Holy Spirit is the Author. He used people to write the Word, but He did it in such a sovereign way that He kept them in the truth. Therefore, we have a most reliable record, and we can do no better than to see to it that our lives are brought into accord with this Word. The Bible never needs to be changed because it tells us of an unchanging God Who sent His Son to meet the needs of the same kind of sinners throughout the history of the world. The Word is light. Anything that does not agree with Scripture is darkness, and will only lead us farther and farther away from God. May the Lord bring us to His Word, not to pass judgment upon what we find there, but to let the Word pass judgment upon us so that we can see the glory of the One Who died to meet our needs, ultimately making us like Himself.

LED BY THE SPIRIT

Romans 8:14

Intro: (Read the text.)

This verse is found in the section of Romans which deals with sanctification. And, of course, it is impossible to deal with the subject of sanctification without dealing with the Holy Spirit. Our sanctification was guaranteed at the Cross, and was a part of the work of Christ for us, but it is the Holy Spirit Who performs, directs, and perfects the work of sanctification in our hearts. Sanctification has to do with our perfection in holiness.

Now notice carefully what Paul said here about the Holy Spirit. He did not say that if you are a son of God, you can be "led by the Spirit." That would be perfectly true. But he did not say that here. He was pointing out one of the ways we can identify a son of God, or the sons of God. And so he said in so many words, "Whenever you meet with someone who is "led by the Spirit," you know you are in the presence of a son of God."

The big question arising out of this, and one that we all should be interested in, is this: How do you identify a person who is "led of the Spirit"? Leading to us may suggest guidance, and it surely does in this case, but not the kind of guidance that we normally think of in connection with guidance. I might be a young person looking to the Lord for guidance as to where I should go to school, or as to the person I should marry, or as to the work I should spend my life doing. Now those are all important, as are the many other decisions that we make every day, and the Holy Spirit does help us in them, but the fact that a person seeks the Lord's will in those matters does not necessarily prove that he or she is a son or daughter of God. Paul was talking about the kind of leading which gives positive identification that we are the sons of God. We have learned that, if a person is really saved, the Holy Spirit indwells him, or her --indwells that person permanently. What changes does the Holy Spirit make to show that He is in a person's life?

Therefore, when Paul was speaking about leading, he was speaking of the influence of the Spirit of God in a person's life which makes you know that the Holy Spirit is leading that person in an entirely different direction.

There are many more things to be said than I am going to take time to say tonight, but I hope that I can say enough to get you thinking along this line. Paul told the Corinthians in 2 Cor. 5:21,

Therefore if any man be in Christ,
he is a new creature:
[or, it is a new creation:]
old things are passed away;
behold, all things are become new.

And yet so often it is the case that we look in vain to see even the slightest evidence that a person has the Holy Spirit in him. He is supposed to have passed from death to life. And certain unmistakable evidences should be there that his life has taken on a new character and is following a wholly different course.

What shows this new leading of the Spirit?

I want to point out two important things in Romans 8, and then I want to take you to John 16 for two more evidences of the special leading of the Spirit. These four things you will never see genuinely in a non-Christian. Sometimes the Devil may try to imitate them, but only the Holy Spirit can produce them in a way that causes them to remain.

The first two I want to point out are in Romans 8:15. And the first of the two is this:

I. THE SPIRIT OF GOD WILL LEAD US TO RECOGNIZE THAT GOD IS OUR FATHER (Rom. 8:15).

The Spirit of God leads us to recognize that we are in the family of God, that God is our Father and that all other believers are our brothers and sisters in the family of God.

Do you remember what the Apostle John had to say about this in his first epistle. We had his words not too long ago in our Tuesday Class. I am referring to 1 John 3:1-3.

The Spirit of God had led the Apostle John to understand this. And he said that it not only transformed his relationship with God, but it also transformed his relationship with the world. One reason that so many professing Christians feel comfortable with the world is because they are only professing Christians. They do not have the Holy Spirit Who has led them to see this great truth. And the reason He hasn't is because He is not in them, and therefore He is not leading them to know this. It is not true for them.

But what a wonderful day it is the Holy Spirit shows a new Christian this truth. "I am in God's family. I am His child, His son. I can call Him, "Father." At first it may come out just as "Abba"—the first title of recognition a

little child may say before he has any teeth--but what joy that brings to our Father.

That is the first thing that Paul mentioned here which the Holy Spirit leads us in the family of God to understand.

But let us go on. The second is intimately tied in with the first. When a child of God says "Abba" for the first time to the God of heaven and earth, what is the Holy Spirit starting?

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL LEAD US TO PRAY AND TO BEGIN A LIFE OF FELLOWSHIP WITH OUR HEAVENLY FATHER (Rom. 8:15).

What is it for a child to say "Abba" to his earthly father but the beginning of fellowship between the two. And soon other words follow. Often it is a request of some kind, but it delights any father's heart when his child, son or daughter, uses this word which really belongs to no one else on the face of the earth: "Abba." This is an Aramaic word. Our children say "Papa" and "Mama," and parents are usually in a contest to see which word the child is going to say first.

You may not remember the first time you prayed and actually called God your Father, but I can guarantee you that the Holy Spirit knows when it was, and where you were, and what you said, because it was He Who led you to say it and to begin a life of fellowship with your heavenly Father.

Do you remember what the Lord told Ananias as to how he could identify Saul of Tarsus after Saul had been struck down on the road to Damascus? The Lord said this,

Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: **for, behold, he prayeth** (Acts 9:11).

Why was he praying? Because that is what the Holy Spirit Who had just come to live in his heart had "led" him to do. And you can be sure that Saul had never prayed before in his life. He had said many prayers, but never prayed.

So, the first time you prayed, and every time since that you have been moved to pray, it has been because the Holy Spirit has been leading you to pray, and to keep up your fellowship with your heavenly Father.

But now let us turn to John 16 for two other ways the Holy Spirit will lead us. And I would like for you to look with me first at verse 13--John 16:13.

Here we learn a third way the Spirit leads us:

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL LEAD US TO THE BIBLE (John 16:13).

Notice the statement: "He will guide you into all truth."

One thing that ought to alarm us about the Lord's work today is that there is so little attention being given to the Bible as the Word of God. There is relatively little Bible teaching. Even Bible churches no longer focus upon the exposition of the Word of God. We think that we have to attract people some other way, with our programs, or with entertainment of some kind, and there is no question but that these things bring the people, but there is little attention given to the Word of God.

I spoke in a large church years ago when I was teaching at Multnomah, a church here in Portland. Before I spoke I was sitting on the platform and I had a chance to scan the audience, and I could not see that a single person was carrying a Bible. Neither were Bibles supplied in the pews. It made me wonder why they had come. If they did not carry their Bibles to church, did they read them at home? I don't know.

If the Holy Spirit is in you, and He is if you are truly a child of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are going to love the Bible. You are going to want to read the Bible. You are going to want to learn as much about the Bible as you can. The Bible is the Holy Spirit's Book. He is the Author. And He delights to take you from page to page, and from book to book, and from truth to truth. That is the way He leads the sons and daughters of God.

If that isn't the case with you, if you can take your Bible home and forget about it until Wednesday, or next Sunday, something is very wrong. If your conscience bothers you for your neglect of the Word of God, that is good. But do something about it. The Psalmist was telling us that he was a child of God when he wrote those words which many of us have been memorizing, words found in Psalms 119:97,

O how love I thy law!

it is my meditation all the day.

How little is the place that the Word of God has in the lives of many of us who profess to know the Lord. Let us apply the test to our lives on this point, too.

But notice my fourth point in verse 14. This is the verse:
He [the Holy Spirit] shall glorify me [the Lord Jesus]:
for he [the Holy Spirit] shall receive of mine ["],
and shew it unto you.

This is the point:

IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADS US IN THE BIBLE TO CHRIST (John 16:14).

It is wonderful to learn about Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Ruth, and Mary the mother of our Lord, and John, and Peter, and Paul, but there is nothing that the Holy Spirit delights more to do than to bring us, to lead us, in the Word, to CHRIST! Dr. John told us again this morning in our SS lesson that the Bible was written to tell us about Christ --and I agree 100%!

The Holy Spirit leads us in the Word to Christ, and He keeps us looking until we find Him. There is nothing that the Holy Spirit delights to do more than to show us the things of Christ. Do you want to know if the Holy Spirit is living and leading in your life, then determine how much Christ means to you. If learning of Christ bores you, it is a warning sign. If you can turn people off when they are talking about the Lord Jesus Christ, there is something terribly wrong. Put your own heart to the test. If you don't love Christ, the Holy Spirit is probably not in you, and if He is not in you, you are not saved.

Concl: Paul said, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." I have tried to show you four directions in which the Spirit will lead you, and lead me--not just once in a while, but all of the time. So apply the leading to your own life. Have I been talking about the way the Holy Spirit has been leading in your life? Then rejoice! The evidence is there that you know the Lord. If not, ask the Lord to search your heart and to show you where you are in your relationship with the Savior. The Holy Spirit produces changes in our lives that mark us out as new creatures, and we must not be satisfied with anything less than what we have seen in the Word tonight concerning the way He leads in the lives of all who truly know the Lord.

WALK IN THE SPIRIT
Galatians 5:16

Intro: One of the first evidences that a person has been saved is that he, or she, becomes concerned about sin. He doesn't want to continue in sin. He yearns for a change in lifestyle. He knows the truth which we have been learning in our Tuesday Class study of 1 John, that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." We have learned that the Apostle John was not saying that it is impossible for a Christian to sin, but he was saying that a true child of God will no longer live in sin. He will not be comfortable with sin. He will almost realize without being told that when the Lord Jesus Christ died to save us from our sins, He died not only to save us from sin's penalty, which is death, but He died also to save us from sin's power. He died to deliver us from the bondage of sin. In other words, He died to save us from sinning!

However, he needs the Word to teach him how he can live in victory over the sin which is so much a part of his being. In fact, a new Christian will often feel the power of temptation more after he is saved than he did before, and he doesn't understand why this is. His first thought is that it may mean that he is not saved after all. But just the opposite is the case: the power of temptation indicates that there are forces at work in his heart to keep him from doing what he had done before. The real change is that now he doesn't want to sin, but he realizes that he still can.

So what does he do?

He does what some of the believers in the churches of Galatia were doing because there were false teachers who had come in with what they said was the solution. They were teaching that they needed the Law, the Mosaic Law. It seems that most of the believers in the province of Galatia were Gentiles, but the teachers they were listening to were Jews. Some of those teachers may have been saved, but they certainly did not know how it is that believers can live in victory over sins which once held them in bondage.

This is what the Lord's people will often do, put themselves under rules of some kind to get free from their sins. In the case of the Galatians, it was the Mosaic Law. Some who definitely were false teachers were making obedience to the Law the condition for salvation. And so it was easy for them to carry the Law over into the lives of the Lord's people to show them how they could be free from sin.

However, some very significant things happened.

They soon departed from a life of faith in God. They lost sight of the meaning of grace. They did not talk about the Lord Jesus Christ the way they did at the first, and, what was especially significant, they had practically nothing to say about the Holy Spirit. They became occupied with what they were doing, not with the provision that God had made for them in Christ. Joy departed from their lives, and they found that they were not being delivered from their sins after all.

Paul was greatly concerned about them. In his epistle to the Galatians he completely omitted his usual thanksgiving for the people of God. Instead, he accused them of turning to another gospel, which really was not another because there is only one Gospel. In many respects he wrote to them like he would write later to the church at Rome, but the tone of his letter to the Galatians was altogether different from his letter to the church at Rome. In the Galatian epistle, his attitude is one of alarm. His language is strong. His approach was to teach the Gospel all over again, and to show them that the same principles upon which they were saved were the principles under which they were to continue on in their faith. They had been saved by faith; they were to continue on living their lives by faith. And the Person of the Godhead upon which Paul placed special emphasis in dealing with their problem of sin was the Holy Spirit.

We all should know that telling people not to steal does not keep them from stealing. They already know that they should not steal. Telling a person that it is wrong to murder does not keep people from murdering other people. Telling a person that it is wrong to commit adultery doesn't keep them from committing adultery. So we can set up any rules that we want to, the Law of Moses, or any lesser law, and we will find that all that the Law can do is to make us more aware than ever that we are sinners. The Scriptures make it very clear that the Law never saved anyone, nor has the Law ever sanctified anyone. What then is the answer to the problem which every Christian has with sin? We don't like it. We don't want to commit sin. And yet, unless we have God's answer, we are going to continue to be defeated. Any supposed solution which makes it dependent upon us, is bound to fail. And Paul made it very clear in his letter to the Galatian believers that putting ourselves under the Law not only fails to meet our needs, but it causes terrible troubles among believers. In Galatians 5:15 Paul described the relationship between believers under the Law like a battle between wild animals.

But then notice what he said in verse 16, Gal. 5:16. (Read.)

Notice first about this verse:

I. THE APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY.

Whenever you are exposed to advice regarding your life as a Christian, make sure that you are listening to the right voice. Radio and television have done a great deal of good in the spread of the truth, but they have also caused many problems because you do not always hear the truth from men or women who claim to proclaim the truth.

Paul said here, "But **I** say."

Now it is easy for anyone to say that: "But **I** say." However, this is when we need to ask the question, "Who is saying what?"

This was the Apostle Paul writing, the **Apostle** Paul. Look back to the beginning of this epistle and remind yourself how he started. Cf. Gal. 1:1. And then as you read through this epistle you will see that Paul kept emphasizing that he was speaking, he an apostle, one who had his appointment from "Jesus Christ, and God the Father."

Note also what he said in Gal. 4:1 and 5:2. We are reading what an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ has written. We are reading the truth of God. We are dealing with the highest human authority. The authority of the NT rests upon the authority of the Apostles. This is not just another preacher who has written a letter; this was written by the Apostle. And therefore we must look upon it as the last word, the ultimate truth, in everything that he declared as an Apostle.

If we train ourselves to think of the Bible in this way, we are not going to go astray. People say that So-and-So says Such-and-Such. But who is So-and-So? Does his teaching stand the test of the writers of Scripture? If it does, you can feel safe in accepting it; if it doesn't, don't give it another thought. This is one reason why we all need to be reading and re-reading our Bibles. If we know what the Bible says, then we are not going to be deceived by people who try to tell us something that is different from the Scriptures.

So note the authority here.

Secondly, note:

II. THE COMMAND.

It would be most helpful for all of us if we received the Word of God the way it has been written. This is not

something for us to pray about as to whether or not we should accept what Paul said. This is not just a suggestion that he made. This is a command which is binding upon every child of God. This is not just what Paul wanted the Galatians to do; this is what God wants all of us to do. We are to "walk in the Spirit."

Now let's look at the word "walk." What did Paul mean by this?

Well, as most of you know, this is a Hebraism, a Hebrew term which speaks of the way we live. Our walk is our way of life; it is our lifestyle, if you please. And Paul was not just speaking of what we are to do when we face some temptation, but this is what we are to do day after day. We are to "walk in the Spirit." We are to start walking in the Spirit as soon as we are saved, and we are never to walk in any other way.

The Spirit, of course, is the Holy Spirit. We have learned that He comes to indwell us from the moment we are first saved. So He is with us all of the time. And He, because He is God, can give us His undivided attention, just like He would if He had nothing else to do.

But what does it mean to "walk in the Spirit"?

It means to walk in dependence upon Him. It means to walk in submission to Him. It means that we are to walk looking to Him for our strength and guidance.

But this raises another question, a most important question: How can we know that we are walking in dependence upon Him, and in submission to Him, trusting Him to guide us and to deliver us from our sinning.

There is one way we can be sure. The Holy Spirit always leads us by the Word of God. The Bible is His Book. He is its Author. And He will never lead us contrary to the Word of God. He has given us everything that we will ever need in order to live lives that are pleasing to God. Before we were saved, we sought to do what would give us pleasure. After we are saved, pleasing ourselves can no longer have the priority. Now we are to please God, but the amazing thing is that when we follow the Spirit's leading by obeying the Word of God we have greater joy and greater pleasure than we ever had when we were engaged in sin of any kind.

The Psalmist was speaking of this kind of a life when he wrote Psalms 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp..." And remember, too, what he wrote in Psalms 119:130, "The entrance of thy

word..." The Holy Spirit shows us in the Word how we are to live, but what is equally wonderful, He enables us to do what God wants us to do. This is where our victory over sin is won.

Let me cite one example of guidance from Scripture. Cf. 2 Tim. 2:22. (Read.)

If you haven't been living this way, you need to start. It is the only way for us to get victory over the sins that we are tempted to commit.

But let me point out a last point as we consider this verse. It is:

III. THE PROMISE.

To be sure it was Paul's promise to us, but remember that he was writing as an apostle, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and so in reality this is the promise of God.

Those of you who have listened to me very often know that I have spoken about double negatives in the Greek text. A double negative in English makes a statement a positive statement. If I say, "I will not say that I am not coming," that means that as things stand now, I am coming. But the Greeks were different. A double negative in Greek is an intensive negative. It means that there is absolutely no possibility that the thing under discussion will take place.

This is what Paul said here. Let me enlarge upon the translation. He said, "Walk, and keep walking, in dependence and in submission to the Holy Spirit, and there is no possibility that you will fulfill the lusts of your flesh which will lead you to sin." What a promise! Paul was not saying that we will be sinless; he was saying that the Holy Spirit will keep us from sinning, and, as the passage goes on, instead of sin we will begin to see the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

This promise has never been revoked. It still stands, and it will always stand as a promise for the people of God. Our hope of deliverance from sin is not in ourselves, but in submitting ourselves to the instruction and guidance of the Spirit, and that guidance we find in the Word of God.

Concl: Sometimes we may ask the question, "Why didn't the Lord make it impossible for us to sin when He saved us? Couldn't He have done that?" Of course He could! But when I hear questions like that I think of what Dr. Charles Feinberg told us once in class in Seminary which has always

helped me with questions like that. He said, "I have enough trouble trying to understand fully what God has done without trying to figure out why He didn't do something else." That is a good answer to such questions.

I do know at least one reason why He has done what He has done with regard to our sins. This is one way He has of keeping us reminded of our need of Him, of the Holy Spirit, of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Word of God.

What did the Psalmist say about this? Cf. Psalms 119:11, "Thy word have I hid..."

Sin will keep us from this Book, or this Book will keep us from sin. (Mr. Hemminger's imprint on his son's Bible.)

Much more could be said on this subject, but let us be sure that we have heard the message of this verse, and who has given it to us, and then, with the Spirit's help, may we act upon it and learn increasingly day by day that God has given us here an unbroken and an unbreakable promise.

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

THE FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT

Ephesians 5:18

Intro: Most Christians have been exposed to the words, Spirit-filled, or filled with the Spirit, and maybe even the words of my text for tonight, "Be filled with the Spirit." In some circles it has come to mean a special work of the Spirit subsequent to salvation which is accompanied with speaking in tongues, and perhaps, in some cases, the ability to perform miracles. It is usually referred to as a special anointing. However, it is easy to see that out of the many who are interested in this teaching, very few have taken the time to examine this doctrine in Scripture.

It would come as a surprise to many to learn that this is not an exclusively NT doctrine. In fact, the first to be mentioned as being filled with the Spirit were Bezaleel and Aholiab who were responsible for the building of the tabernacle in the days of Moses. Cf. Ex. 31:1-6; 35:30-35. The first of these two passages seems to indicate that this filling was not limited to those two men, but included all who assisted them in building the tabernacle. However, some important things to note is that (1) none of those people spoke in tongues, and (2) we have the words "wisdom, and... understanding, and...knowledge, and...all manner of workmanship." It is clear that for them the filling of the Spirit was the gift of God upon them to do the work that He had appointed them to do.

The story of Samson in the book of Judges (13:25; 14:6; 15:14) tells of the Spirit's work with Samson, empowering him to do special feats of strength. The filling of the Spirit is not stated as such, but it seems that was what was happening to Samson. We know that the Spirit of God came upon Saul, and then departed from him, and that the Spirit came upon David afterwards.

In Isaiah 11 where we have a prophecy of the coming Messiah we are told that "the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him" (Isa. 11:2), and again we have words similar to those used in connection with Bezaleel and Aholiab's filling of the Spirit --words such as "wisdom and understanding, ...counsel and might, ...knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Isa. 11:2). After this the prophet went on to speak of the Messiah's ability to judge, and to reprove, and that He would exercise righteousness and faithfulness in his work.

In the NT Luke tells us that when the Lord was baptized that "the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon the Lord" (Luke 3:22). And then we read that when the Lord

returned from the Jordan River where He was baptized, He entered His time of temptation "full of the Holy Spirit" (Luke 4:1), and afterwards He "returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee" (Luke 4:14). It would appear that our Lord was filled with the Holy Spirit all through the days of His public ministry.

John the Baptist was "filled with the Holy Spirit" from before the time that he was born. Cf. Luke 1:15. His father was also filled with the Holy Spirit after his son John was born, and just before the prophecy which he uttered, recorded for us in the latter part of Luke 1 (vv. 67-79).

Most of us are familiar with the instances in the book of Acts where the early believers were filled with the Holy Spirit. And it is true that it was accompanied by speaking in tongues in the early days of the early church—which means that they were enabled to speak other languages to hasten the spread of the Gospel in those days following the ascension of our Lord.

Unless we take Samson prayer for strength just before he died, a prayer for the filling of the Holy Spirit, there is only one time when we have a request given as a prayer answered with the people being filled with the Holy Spirit. It is recorded for us in Acts 4:29-31. The result was that they spoke the Word of God confidently and fearlessly—"with boldness."

Our text in Eph. 5:18 is the only place in the NT where believers are commanded to be "filled with the Spirit." It would seem that the same results could be seen in believer's lives although the cause of the results might be expressed in a slightly different way.

It is of importance that in the passage in Colossians which speaks of the same things taking place as we have in Eph. 5:19-21, the people in Colosse were not told to be "filled with the Spirit," but to "let the word of Christ dwell in" them "richly." Therefore, by comparing these two passages of Scripture, we must conclude that the filling of the Spirit is vitally and inseparably connected with "the word of Christ," which is, of course, the Word of God.

So it is clear that when we take the OT and the NT we do not always see the same results when people were filled with the Spirit. Obviously this doctrine has to do with believers only. And it cannot have to do with the reception of the Spirit, especially in NT times, because we are told that all believers are indwelt by the Spirit, and are sealed with the Spirit, but the command in our text would indicate that all

believers are not filled with the Spirit. But they should be! It is not a special act to be sought, but a relationship to be established and maintained since a literal rendering of our text would be, "Keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit." So Paul was not speaking of a super Christian, but to use Watchman Nee's expression, he was speaking of the normal Christian.

Now let us look more closely at our text. Paul stated at one and the same time,

I. A CONTRAST AND A COMPARISON.

He said, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."

He had to be likening drunkenness with the filling of the Spirit in some way, and yet he was contrasting them, too. He was saying, "Don't do the one, but do the other."

Let me read to you what John Eadie had to say in his commentary about drunkenness:

There is in the vice of intemperance that kind of dissoluteness which brooks no restraint, which defies all efforts to reform it, and which sinks lower and lower into hopeless and helpless ruin... This tremendous sin of intemperance is all the more to be shunned as its hold is so great on its victims, for with periodical remorse there is periodical inebriety; the fatal cup is again coveted and drained; while character, fortune, and life are risked and lost in the gratification of an appetite of all others the most brutal in form and brutifying in result.

Perhaps I should say that these words were written before our present plague with drugs, but what Mr. Eadie said about drunkenness still holds true. I continue:

There are few vices out of which there is less hope of recovery--its haunts are so numerous and its hold is so tremendous (Ephesians, pp. 396, 397).

And then Mr. Eadie went on to tell what a plague drunkenness was in Ephesus, a commercial city on the sea. Drunkenness had reached epidemic proportions. To cite another example, Alexander the Great once offered a prize to the man who could drink that most wine, and thirty men died from the effects of the wine, trying to win the prize. Many of the Ephesian believers probably had this problem before they were saved, and there was always the temptation to go back to it.

And so Paul was talking about two of the greatest powers that are exercised over men: drinking, and the transforming, liberating power of the Holy Spirit.

In warning them about "excess," he was using a word which we might describe as a hopeless case, one who has put himself under a power from which he can never really escape. And this is true apart from the grace of God. It causes men to neglect their families, ruin their jobs, engage in other sins which lead them down and down and down! The Ephesians knew what Paul was talking about. There were examples all over the city, and so there was no point in trying to give them examples.

It is interesting that the people in Jerusalem who saw the believers who were filled with the Holy Spirit, thought that they were drunk, and they used the expression, "full of new wine" (Acts 2:13).

Now let us turn from that for a moment, and think of the word "filled." "Be filled with the Spirit."

II. "BE FILLED."

Peter used this word when he was questioning Ananias about what he had done. Cf. Acts 5:3.

Do you remember Dorcas in Acts 9:36 who was described as being "full of good works and alms deeds which she did"?

And in Acts 13 we have an interesting scene where Paul who was filled with the Holy Spirit accused Elymas the sorcerer of being "full of all subtilty and all mischief." Cf. vv. 9, 10.

I could cite other examples, but as you think about these illustrations, what do they seem to suggest to you? What does the expression "be filled" mean, whether we are thinking about something good or bad?

It means two things:

- A. That those who were filled were under the control of that which filled them. That is true of being filled with wine; that is true of being filled with the Holy Spirit. If a man is full of anger, he is controlled by his anger.

The second thing it means is this:

- B. The person who is "filled" with anything, has

deliberately put himself under the influence of that which controls him—whether it be wine, or anger, or good works, **or of the Holy Spirit!**

And it seems that even for us as Christians we can go either way. Is this not what Paul was talking about when he wrote Romans 6, and said,

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body,
that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.
Neither yield ye your members as instruments
of unrighteousness unto sin:
but yield yourselves unto God,
as those that are alive from the dead,
and your members as instruments
of righteousness unto God (Rom. 6:12, 13).

A man who becomes a drunkard has voluntarily put himself under the control of the bottle, and his behavior, his life, shows what he has done. That is true not only of drinking, but of drugs, and adultery, and every other sin.

Likewise, the person who is going to be filled with the Holy Spirit is making a continual choice. He chooses to place himself under the authority of the Holy Spirit, and he lives in submission to the Holy Spirit.

I am not saying that this is something that we do in our own strength. The Spirit of God enables us to do this. All of us are reluctant to put ourselves completely in the hands of the Lord, but that is what it takes. We surrender ourselves to God, and the Holy Spirit will take control of our lives as long as we are submissive.

But that raises the question:

III. HOW CAN I KEEP ON BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT?

This is where our Colossians passage provides us with the answer which I have suggested to you before. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to put our lives under the authority of the Word of God. It means that we are to live in obedience to the Word of God of which the Holy Spirit is the Author.

I believe fully, as most of you do, in the sovereignty of God. I have no question about that. But I also believe that the Lord has made us responsible to do His will. We are just as helpless to throw off the bondage of sin as anyone else is, saved or unsaved. But we have One Who will work in us "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). The Holy Spirit works in us, making us willing, filling us with a

desire to be obedient to the Lord in all things. And as long as the Holy Spirit is filling me, or you, you and I are going to delight in doing the will of God. It will not be drudgery to us; it will be our greatest joy.

Concl: And so the Word of God to us is not to be drunk with wine, but to keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit.

I am going to take at least one more Sunday night on this, but let me conclude tonight by encouraging you to spend more time in the Word. Remember those OT words what are used in connection with the filling of the Spirit--wisdom, knowledge, understanding, the fear of the Lord. We get all of this from the Word of God.

I hope it can be said of all of us that we are reading the Word every day. If it is, then we need to follow up our reading with meditation on what we read. Think about what you are reading, and then continue to think about it after you have finished your reading. And I wish it could be said of more of us that we are memorizing the Word.

If it should be that you have gotten spasmodic about your reading, or maybe have stopped reading altogether, then get started again tonight.

But after reading and meditating and memorizing and perhaps teaching others, the big questions are, "Am I obeying it? Am I doing what the Lord wants me to do? Am I living the way He wants me to live?"

The Spirit-filled life is a life filled with the Word of God, a life of obedience to the Word of God. And it is the Holy Spirit, and only the Holy Spirit, Who enables us to do and be and even to think according to the will of God. The Spirit-filled life is a life growing in holiness, and increasing in likeness to Christ.

This morning we were exhorted in our lesson to "go on unto perfection." That is just another way of saying that we need the power and blessing and authority of the Holy Spirit in our lives to make us the people God wants us to be. May we all make greater strides in holy living in the days to come.

THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE
Ephesians 5:18-21

Intro: Two Sunday nights ago I spoke to you on Eph. 5:18. I spoke about the contrast which Paul made in this verse between drunkenness and the fullness of the Spirit. And, in another sense, it was a comparison. A person who is drunk has put himself under the influence of some intoxicating drink. In fact, that is the way we describe a drunk person: he is "under the influence." In a good sense, a person who is filled with the Spirit is under the influence of the Spirit. We are filled with the Spirit when the Spirit is controlling our lives. This requires surrender on our part, a willingness to be what the Spirit wants us to be, and to do what the Spirit wants us to do. This is not just something that we do on our own. It is the Holy Spirit Who brings us to this place in our lives. I feel certain myself that there are many believers who are "filled with the Spirit" who do not know that they are. And I am equally sure that there are many people who claim to be filled with the Spirit who are not!

This is what I want us to think about tonight: How can we identify a Spirit-filled person who is living a Spirit-filled life?

In spiritual matters there is always much room for deception. When I speak of people who think that they are filled with the Spirit, but are not, I do not mean that they are trying to deceive others. They have sought what they have been told to seek. They have had some kind of an experience. But the trouble is that they have never brought their experience to Scripture to check it by the Word of God. Most of them do not know that Paul refers to the same thing in Colossians, but he does not call it being filled with the Spirit. He calls it letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly. Cf. Col. 3:16. In fact, from the emphasis that some groups put on it, you would think that every page of the Bible speaks about being filled with the Spirit when, in fact, they do not. This kind of a life is describe in many different ways. I think, for example, that when Paul told the Galatian churches to "walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16), he was speaking of the same thing as being filled with the Spirit. A person who is filled with the Spirit is one who is walking in the Spirit. And I just pointed out to you how Paul spoke of this very thing in the Colossian epistle. The Spirit-filled life is a life of dependence upon and submission to the Holy Spirit. In turn, this will be a life of obedience to the Word of God.

So we must always be on the lookout for counterfeit experi-

ences. There are many people who think they are Christians, but when you look into their lives, you do not find the evidences that they are saved. The same is true of the Spirit-filled life. You will sometimes find people who claim to be filled with the Spirit who do not make any profession of being a Christian. So we need to get our thinking straight on this very important subject. As I tried to bring out in speaking on this before, we are not talking about some super-Christian when we talk of being Spirit-filled. We are talking about a genuine Christian who is depending upon the Holy Spirit to make him (or her) the kind of a person he (or she) should be, and to enable that same person to live the way he or she should live. This exhortation is intended to be a reminder to all of us that we cannot be obedient to the Word of God without the power and blessing of the Spirit of God. We receive the Holy Spirit when we are saved; what the Lord wants us to do is to depend upon Him in our daily living.

But, you might ask, can we be more specific about the Spirit-filled life as to what it is? And that is a good question. The answer is yes, and the proof is in our text. Let me read Eph. 5:18-21. (Read.)

Paul mentioned three evidences of the Spirit-filled life in these verses.

It seems to me that in verse 19 Paul was speaking of:

I. JOY (Eph. 5:19).

A person who enjoys music and sings is usually a happy person. This is not always the case, but music was meant to express joy.

One of our memory verses this year is Zeph. 3:17. It links together joy and singing. However, the unusual thing about this verse is that it speaks of the Lord's joy and the Lord's singing. Listen to what it says in case you don't know the verse:

The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is might;
he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy;
he will rest in his love,
he will joy over thee with singing.

The Lord our God expresses the joy He has over us with singing. Don't you wish you could hear that? We will some day.

But let me link joy with the fullness of the Spirit in another passage. In Acts 13 we read about Paul and Barnabas on Paul's first missionary journey in Antioch of Pisidia. They saw real blessing, but they also had so much trouble

that they eventually had to leave the city. But, in spite of this, the chapter ends in these words,

And the disciples were filled **with joy,**
and the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:52).

In Romans we will come to this verse in chapter 14, verse 17:

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink;
but righteousness, and peace,
and joy in the Holy Spirit.

And then we are told in Gal. 5:22 that one part of "the fruit of the Spirit" is "**joy.**"

So I believe we are on safe ground in saying that Paul was indicating in Eph. 5:19 that joy in singing is evidence of the fullness of the Spirit.

But it makes a difference as to what we sing. There are many, many songs in the world, and this is true of every generation. But when you look at the list here, you see that Paul had reference to singing "psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs."

One big mistake the church has made, probably in every generation has been to take the world's music, and bring it into the church. Lucille and I were talking at lunch today about some of our teachers in the past, and I told her, and she agreed, that some of our teachers would be horrified to attend some church services today. The world had its music in Paul's day, but he was not talking about the world's music. He was talking about the kind of music the world is not interested in: "psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs." The true Church has always sung the Psalms. We have many of them in our hymnal. A hymn is a song which is directed to God, and about God. And spiritual songs are songs, according to this passage, which have to do with the work of the Spirit in our hearts. They are not carnal; they are spiritual.

And when we sing, we sing for two reasons. We sing (1) to minister to each other, and (2) we sing to worship the Lord. We don't just sing to have fun. We enjoy our singing, but we are not the center of it, others are, especially believers, and the Lord is!

A Spirit-filled Christian is going to experience an interest in music, but in a different kind of music from what they have in the world, and the singing, as we have seen, will be for a different reason. People often mention our singing here at Trinity. Some like it; some don't like it. But that is not how we are to decide upon our music. We want to sing songs that please the Holy Spirit, and that please and glori-

fy God. It is hard for me to see how music patterned after the world can be pleasing to God, the Holy Spirit.

Let us look at the second evidence of a Spirit-filled life.

II. THANKSGIVING (Eph. 5:20).

You and I will never do what this verse says except by the working of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. This is a big order!

I have been impressed again this year in reading through the books of Moses, especially after the children of Israel left Egypt, that they were a nation of gripers. God was continually leading them, providing for them, protecting them, but they always found something to be unhappy about. We all by nature are grippers, aren't we? And it seems like the more we have, the more we want, and the more we gripe if we don't get what we want. We are like the Israelites.

But when we are filled with the Spirit, a new attitude takes over in our lives. We start to be thankful. We begin to see something in everything for which to be thankful. We look for opportunities, not to gripe, but to be thankful. And we address our thanksgiving to God. We recognize His goodness and His blessing and His presence in our lives. And we know that we would not have the blessings that we have if it were not for our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you have experienced a change in your own heart along this line so that you are more inclined to praise than to complain, then give the glory to the Holy Spirit. Grippers don't glorify God, thank-ers do! The longest book of the Bible is a book of prayers, songs, and praises. That by itself speaks more than most of us have ever taken in.

So, what are we to do if we are still griping? We are to seek the help of the Holy Spirit to make us different. Don't expect perfection, but we all ought to be moving in that direction. There will be no griping in heaven, and so it is best for you and for me to stop doing it now. Besides, it can bring the judgment of God if we persist. The Holy Spirit makes us thankful, and He puts in our hearts a desire to be thankful, thankful to God.

By the way, be sure to notice that these first two evidences of a Spirit-filled life, have to do with our hearts and our tongues.

But there is a third evidence:

III. SUBMISSION (Eph. 5:21).

This is another characteristic which is not natural for us. We see a lack of submission in ourselves, and we see it in our children. In fact, you and I would probably have to admit that the biggest problem we had in growing up was a lack of submission. We didn't like for our parents or anyone else to tell us what to do, or not to do, unless we agreed with them. This was Israel's problem in their desert wanderings, and this is our problem. Listen to the rebellion and insubordination that we see and hear about on radio and TV, and you will see how lacking human nature is in this.

After we are saved, we know that we need to be submissive to the Lord, but that is always a struggle. However, when someone like Paul comes along, and talks about being submissive to each other, that is too much.

But this is an evidence of a Spirit-filled Christian. And yet how can we always be submitting ourselves to each other. It seems that if this were the case, we would never get anything done. Sometimes I go to lunch with someone, and if I have gone to get them, I say, "Where shall we eat lunch?" And many times the person will throw the decision back to me by saying, "Oh, anyplace is fine with me; you decide." Well, we could throw the ball back and forth, and not reach a decision by dinner time. Somebody has to decide.

Was Paul pointing out a characteristic of the Spirit-filled life that would make life more difficult than ever so that no one would lead, no one would make a decision? The Bible certainly does not sound like that. In fact, the passage which follows, seems to be Paul's application of this very truth as he went on to speak of wives, husbands, children, fathers, servants, and masters.

No, he was not indicating that there is no authority, that there are no leaders. Our problem is that we have overlooked the last part of this verse. Paul said, "Submitting yourselves one to another **in the fear of God.**" What difference does this make?

It means that in our relationships to each other we are to submit to one another by doing what God wants us to do. A wife submits herself to her husband by following his leadership in the family. But a husband is submitting himself to his wife by loving her as Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it. The same thing can be said about children and fathers, and by servants and masters. I am submitting myself to you when I treat you the way the Lord wants me to treat you. It doesn't mean that I have to do what you want

me to do unless what you want me to do is the will of God revealed in Scripture. A home is chaotic if the husband does not lead. Children will go wild if they are not under the discipline of their parents. And a business will fold if the boss has to see what his employees want before he can go ahead with his business.

No, this is not the point of what the Apostle was saying. Paul was saying that the Holy Spirit makes us submit to one another by making sure that what we are doing, we are doing in the fear of God.

This is not the way of life in the world. This is "the year of the woman." We are condoning families with two Daddys, or two Mothers. Children are being allowed to go to court to get rid of their parents. We are already paying a great price in the effect that these things are having in our society, and on our culture--and it may get worse! What a difference the Holy Spirit makes in a person's life! He doesn't make weaklings out of us; He makes us stronger than ever. But not stronger to have our own way; stronger to seek God's way, God's will, AND THEN TO DO IT!

Concl: Paul could have said many more things. He could have simply said that if they were Spirit-filled, they would live according to all that he had said in this epistle which he had written to them. And that would have been true. But he started with three simple, basic, but very difficult things, knowing that victory in these areas would lead to blessing in every area of their lives.

These four verses would be a great assignment for all of us this week, and every week until we get to heaven. Don't worry about somebody else; you and I need to do what the Lord wants us to do. But remember: the Lord never expected us to do this on our own. That is why the Holy Spirit has come to dwell in our hearts. He is our Paraclete, our Helper, the One Who by controlling us, by filling us, can make us what He wants us to be, and can enable us to do what He wants us to do.

Let us quit trying, and start trusting, not in ourselves, but in the Holy Spirit. He can make us like this in our families, at church, on the job, with our neighbors--in every area of our lives. This was the very thing that our Lord was speaking about when He spoke the words we find in Matt. 5:16, "Let your light so shine..." If we were singing like we should, and thankful as we ought to be, and submissive to each other in the will of God, perhaps there would be more people who would want to find out how to become a child of God.

THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Romans 8:16; John 15:26, 27

Intro: In both the OT and the NT we read much about witnesses and witnessing. Sometimes a witness is called a testimony. The word witness can refer to the person giving the witness, or the testimony which the witness gives.

The purpose of a witness is twofold:

- 1) To convey information of some kind.
- 2) To confirm that the information given is true.

There is usually no need of a witness unless something is in doubt. Therefore, confirmation is a major factor when witnesses are called.

John the Baptist was a witness. On more than one occasion during the earthly life of our Lord, the Father was a witness. The Lord Jesus was continually giving a witness. His works testified for Him. The early Church was called to be witnesses of the Lord Jesus throughout the world, and that has been the mission of the Church in the world from that day until the present. And it will continue to be our mission in the world. We carry a message that is under suspicion at the outset, and so our witness, or testimony, involved the giving of a message, and then confirming from Scripture that our testimony is true.

All of us have benefited from witnesses. It may have been a parent or some other member of the family. It may have been a friend. It may have been directly from the Scriptures themselves. It may have been a radio broadcast or a TV program. Somehow the message of the Gospel has reached us by some kind of a witness.

In the passages before us tonight we learn that the mission of the Holy Spirit to us and to the world is that of a Witness, a divine Witness, a true Witness, an infallible Witness. And he has been sent to impart knowledge by way of His witness, and to confirm to our hearts, or to the hearts of others, that His witness is true. I want to begin with the Romans passage, and then follow that up by looking at the verses in the Gospel of John.

First, let us look at:

I. ROMANS 8:16.

I hope you remember the brief English lesson that I gave you this morning about the Holy Spirit being a Person. So, although as far as the Greek language is concerned, our translators were correct in saying "the Holy Spirit **which,**"

as it is translated in Romans 5:5, and in our text tonight, "The Spirit itself," yet we know that the Holy Spirit is a real Person, like God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, and so we cannot be satisfied with that translation. We have to say, "The Spirit **Himself** beareth witness." And, by the way, this is one verse we would use to prove that the Holy Spirit is a Person. He witnesses. He witnesses to us. He has a very important message to convey to us, a message which we need to understand.

What is the message?

It is that "we are the children of God." This is the equivalent of saying that we are the born-ones of God. This means that we are in God's family, not by nature, but by grace, by the new birth. And so, if this is one of the reasons that the Holy Spirit has come to indwell us, we can be very sure that it is important to God not only that we are saved, but that we know that we are saved.

Where is that testimony given?

Paul said that "the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." This means that it is an inward testimony. It is a conviction which we have that is strong and lasting. We know that we are saved, not because we have done what somebody else told us to do, even though they have told us the right thing. We know that we are saved because the Holy Spirit Himself puts that conviction in our spirits, our inward being, our true self.

This is what we call assurance. And please note that Paul does not say that some of us have this testimony, and others do not. No, this is a work of the Holy Spirit which He does in all of our hearts. It may be stronger in some than in others, but it is there, nevertheless. A person who merely professes to be a Christian, but is not, will not have this testimony. But everyone who is truly saved will have this testimony of the Spirit.

Now is this testimony just some feeling that we get. Well, we have to say that it is a feeling because assurance is a feeling. The conviction that we are saved is a feeling. But it goes beyond just a feeling. We can be deceived about our feelings. No, the Holy Spirit gives us this assurance which in turn is supported by the evidences of salvation.

As most of you know, we have just finished the study of the First Epistle of John in our Tuesday Class. Two times in that Epistle John confirmed what Paul teaches in Romans, which is that we have the Holy Spirit. You read it in 1 John

3:24, the last part of the verse where we read,
And hereby we know that he abideth in us,
by the Spirit which he hath given us.

And then in 1 John 4:13 we read,
And hereby know we that we dwell in him,
and he in us,
because he hath given us of his Spirit.

The whole book of 1 John is concerned with knowledge, the knowledge of salvation. John taught what Paul taught, that it is not only important to be saved, but it is equally important for us to know that we are saved. And so we have in the Word, in 1 John, but not only in 1 John, the evidences which the Holy Spirit has given us whereby we can know that we are saved. And so Romans 8:16 is not just talking about some feeling, but about feelings, convictions, emotions, which are based upon the Word of God. The Holy Spirit works, but He never works apart from the Word of God. When people try to teach you something which you cannot find in the Word, don't believe them, and don't let them waste your time.

What are some of the things which the Holy Spirit has given us as proofs of our salvation, proofs that we really are the children of God?

We are new creatures. We love God. We no longer are comfortable with sin. We love the Word. We want to learn what is in the Word, and we want to be able to identify error. We want to do what the Word tells us to do. We love the Lord's people, and we enjoy being with them. We have a burden to tell others about the Savior.

And so, while we are speaking about an inner conviction, an assurance of our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, yet it is more than just a feeling. It is a conviction supported by the evidence we find in the Word of God, placed there by the Holy Spirit, and which we recognize is descriptive of the "new" things that God has done for us.

So, as Paul said, it is through the work of the Spirit, using the Word of God in our hearts, that we can say with real confidence, as Paul did, "I know whom I have believed..." (2 Tim. 1:12).

But now let us look at John 15:25, 26 where our Lord spoke about the witness of the Spirit.

II. JOHN 15:26, 27.

These are the words of the Lord Jesus; Romans 8:16 were the words of the Apostle Paul. But both are equally the Word of God. We would know that the Holy Spirit has been given to us

as a witness if all we had were the words of Paul. But that truth is strengthened beyond any doubt when we read that the Lord Jesus said the same thing.

The witness of the Spirit in these two verses in John is twofold. First we have:

A. The Spirit's witness of Christ.

Now will you notice that all Three Persons of the Godhead are involved in this witness. The Holy Spirit was sent by the Lord Jesus from the Father on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 for the purpose of bearing witness to us of Christ. This is very clear from verse 26.

But how does the Spirit do this?

It may sound like I have just one point to make tonight, and that is true, but I want to make sure that we understand what the Holy Spirit is doing, the witness He gives, and how we receive it.

I believe that our Lord was speaking here in this passage particularly about those of us who are the Lord's people although the Spirit does the same thing to people in the world who are to be saved. But if we go on to John 16, and verse 12, we will see how the Spirit bears witness to us of Christ. It is not through some vision, nor some revelation of God which we might claim to have. The Holy Spirit testifies of Christ to us as He guides us into the truth of the Word!

We all knew very little of Christ when we were saved. But after we are saved it is the work of the Spirit to confirm more and more to us that Jesus Christ is really the Son of God, that He actually died for our sins, that He rose again, went back to the Father where He is interceding for us, and that He will come again to take us all to heaven. There is nothing that the Holy Spirit delights to do more than to take us into the Word of God to teach us more about Christ. And we can know that we are receiving the witness of the Spirit when we are learning more of Christ, and loving Christ more because of what we are learning about Him.

As a result of the Spirit's witness, you and I become just as strong in our convictions about the Lord Jesus as if we had been with Him when He was here on earth and had heard Him for ourselves. The Holy Spirit makes us just as sure of Christ as though we had been one of His disciples. I hope we really appreciate what the Holy Spirit has done for us.

Now will you notice the second part of this witness:

B. Our witness of Christ.

Verse 27 is connected with verse 26 by the word and. The truth of verse 26 comes first, but you can't separate verse 27 from it. The Holy Spirit witnesses to us by the Word about Christ, and then we witness to others about Christ from what the Holy Spirit has taught us in the Word. And the second will follow the first just as certainly as the night follows the day.

Some people try to get around certain truths in John 14, 15, and 16 by saying that what the Lord said applied only to the disciples who were with Him in the Upper Room and who walked with Him to the Garden of Gethsemane. (E.g., John 15:16, to avoid the doctrine of election.) However, I can prove from Scripture that this applies to all of us by reminding you of what our Lord said in Acts 1:8. Those words describe the mission of the Church in the world. We are to be witnesses of Christ. And how do we learn about Christ? By the Holy Spirit. And what does the Holy Spirit use to teach us about Christ? He uses the Word. The power of the Church of Jesus Christ is seen throughout history as the Church has gone out into the world to tell people about the Savior. As the Spirit teaches us, He puts within our hearts a compelling desire to tell others. If we don't feel that way in our hearts, we need to pay more attention to the Spirit's work as He teaches us the Word.

Concl: From our text this morning, Rom. 5:5, I said that if you don't love the Lord as much as you know you should, and as much as you want to love Him, the way to correct that is by focusing your attention upon what the Holy Spirit has already taught you about God's love for you, and ask Him to teach you more.

I say a similar thing tonight.

If you have trusted Christ as your Savior, but you lack the assurance of your salvation, then ask the Holy Spirit to teach you the evidence that you should look for in your life, and He will show you from the Word how to identify one who is truly saved.

If our Bible reading, and going to church, has become dull to us, ask the Holy Spirit to show you Christ in the Word. All of that will change.

And if you are convicted about your failure to witness of Christ, as perhaps we all should be, ask the Holy Spirit to

teach you more about Christ in the Word until you are so in love with Him that you will feel constrained to speak to others to tell them what you know about the Savior.

Illus: Dr. Mitchell's advice to the Multnomah graduates in San Francisco who were waiting for a ship to take them to Japan as missionaries. They asked, "What shall we tell the Japanese?" Dr. Mitchell's answer: "Sit at the feet of the Lord Jesus, and tell them what you see and learn."

May the Holy Spirit do a deeper work in our hearts that we may reap the spiritual benefits which will glorify our Savior.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH

1 Corinthians 12:13

Intro: Anyone reading Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians soon realizes that the church at Corinth had many spiritual needs. And it is interesting, and yet heart-breaking, to make a list of the problems in reading through the epistle. I have often said that anything that could be wrong with any church seems to have been wrong with the Corinthian church. Some of these problems had been related to him in person by "the house of Chloe"; he had learned about others in a letter he had received. He dealt with those he had heard about first in the first six chapters, and then, in effect, he answered the letter he had received from chapter 7 on. And so my text tonight falls into that second category, the problems that had mentioned to him in a letter.

The kind of problems we read about in 1 Corinthians were all very serious. In fact, it is only by the grace of God that the church could survive such difficulties. Many churches have gone out of existence with less difficulties than the church at Corinth had. The length of this epistle shows how concerned Paul was. But one of the terrible results of the problems was that it had created divisions in the church. We can see from 1 Cor. 1:12 that there were really four groups in the church: those who preferred Paul, those who preferred Apollos, those who preferred Peter (Cephas), and those who ignored the three of them and claimed to be followers of Christ (as though Christ could be taken away from Paul and Apollos and Peter). It must have been very discouraging to those three men, but especially to the Lord, because this was the very thing that the Lord had prayed would not happen. He was concerned about the oneness of His people. There is certainly no evidence at all that either Paul or Apollos or Peter would have encouraged such divisions. In fact, they would have opposed it--as Paul did in this letter which he wrote to them.

One particular area in which there seems to have been much trouble had to do with the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The church's occupation with human leaders had gotten the minds of the people off of the Holy Spirit. Paul actually began to speak of the Spirit's ministry in chapter 2. The divisions in the church had caused the growth of the people to come to a virtual standstill even though Paul indicated in 1:7 that they were probably the most gifted church, spiritually gifted church, that Paul had anything to do with.

Even in those days there was a false emphasis upon the importance of speaking in tongues. That is a problem in the church today, and 1 Corinthians has the answers that churches

today need--if they would only listen to the Word of God. But it seems that the mistaken idea about tongues went back to a false idea of the church, or to teaching about the church that the people in the church had forgotten. And when I mention the church, I am not referring to the local church; I am referring to the truth of the church as the body of Christ. In fact, the true nature of the church had been obscured by the Corinthian church's emphasis upon spiritual gifts.

Chapters 12, 13, and 14 are devoted to the problem which the Corinthian church was experiencing over spiritual gifts. And, like so many problems in churches, they were traceable to a failure to understand the Word of God. To be sure that did not have the Scriptures in their completed form as we do today, but they had great teaching, probably better teaching than any of us have had, and so there was no excuse for the difficulties they were having. Doctrinal problems always lead to practical problems.

The most gracious thing that we can say about the Corinthian church on this point is that they had failed to grasp the truth concerning the church, not just the Corinthian church, but the Church, the body of Christ.

There are three books in the NT which deal specifically with the church: 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, and Colossians. I remember that Dr. Mitchell used to say that Ephesians gives us the doctrine; Colossians guards the doctrine; and 1 Corinthians guards the practice of the doctrine. Now we cannot say that each book does this exclusively because there are some very important doctrinal matters in 1 Corinthians which relate to the Church, the body of Christ. And that has to do with how we have become a part of that body. And Paul said very clearly in our text that it was by:

I. THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT.

This is a doctrine which is never mentioned in the OT. John the Baptist is the first one in Scripture to link together baptism and the Spirit of God. But it was always something that was going to take place in the future.

Just before our Lord ascended back to heaven He told His disciples that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit in just a few days. And it would seem from the book of Acts that this is one of the things that took place on the Day of Pentecost which we read about in Acts 2. But my main concern tonight is what Paul said about it in 1 Cor. 12:13.

Many of the Lord's people identify the filling of the Spirit

with the baptism of the Spirit. If they were one and the same, it would certainly be clear in what Paul had to say in the Corinthian epistle. But Paul did not say anything in this epistle about being filled with the Holy Spirit. And his definition of the baptism of the Spirit in our text would lead us to believe that they are not the same. The baptism of the Spirit is that act of the Holy Spirit by which you and I have been brought into the Church, the body of Christ. This is not water baptism. The fact that the Spirit descended upon our Lord when He was baptized in water, has nothing to do with what Paul was saying here. We are talking about what the Holy Spirit does to put us into the body of Christ.

Now what did Paul say about the Corinthians and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or being baptized by the Holy Spirit?

The Greek actually says that by one Spirit we all were baptized into one body—not some of us, but all of us. And Paul was speaking to them as believers. He did not tell them to pray for it, nor to seek it; he told them that they already had it. That is not the way Paul spoke about the filling of the Spirit in Eph. 5.

Nor did the Apostle Paul warn the Corinthian believers that they might lose the place that they had received by the baptism of the Spirit. If such a thing were possible, he surely would have said it here. But he didn't say it, which should lead us to understand that this is an act of the Spirit of God which is never reversed. Water baptism can be an illustration of this because when we are baptized in water we are lowered into the water. The big difference is that when we are baptized in water, we are lifted up and out because it pictures our resurrection with Christ. When we are baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ, we are put into the body of Christ, and left there!

Let us recognize, too, that when we speak about the body of Christ, we are not speaking about the physical body of our Lord. We are talking about all of the people of God since Pentecost who are so related to Christ that He is our Head, and we are so related to each other that we constitute a body, and are members of Christ and so related to each other.

Look at 1 Cor. 12:12. (Read.)

One thing for which we must be on the lookout in our study of the Scriptures is that the same word can be used differently in different passages. This is certainly true of baptism, and it is true of the word body as well. Paul was using the human body to illustrate our relation to Christ and to each other. The body has many members. If there were just one

member, it would not be a body. The same is true of the Church, the body of Christ. We are all in the body, but we all have different functions. And so to try to make everybody in the Church have the same function is to destroy the idea that we are a body.

Now backing up to verse 11 in this chapter we see that it is the Holy Spirit who has put us in the body "as he will." It is not how we want to be in the body, but that is the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit. And our relationship with the Holy Spirit does not end with the baptism. It continues on throughout our lives here on earth. For any local church to try to get along without the Holy Spirit is like trying to drive your car without an engine in it.

Now notice that it doesn't make any difference as to our national or racial origin, nor does it make any difference as to our social position. The master and his slave who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ were both members of the body of Christ. Paul enlarged it even more in writing to the churches of Galatia when he said,

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

There is neither Jew nor Greek,
there is neither bond nor free,
there is neither male nor female:
for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

How wonderful it is when we learn this truth--not only that there is just one body of Christ, but that every true believer is in that body! Paul was not speaking of mere church members; he was speaking of all who really were trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Therefore, whenever you meet another believer, this is why you immediately feel a bond with that person--even when he may speak a different language. We are all members of the same body of Christ.

But Paul said one more thing in our text which I want to deal with before I close. He spoke of:

II. DRINKING INTO ONE SPIRIT.

What did he mean by this expression?

This is one example where the meaning of the word spirit may have changed in a single verse. We always have to determine by the context what the meaning of any particular word is. Should this word "Spirit" be capitalized, referring to the Holy Spirit, or should it be spelled with a small "s," so

that it would refer to the oneness of spirit which we all experience in the body of Christ. There have been excellent expositors who have been on both sides of this question. Fortunately the meaning of the statement is true whichever way we take it.

We have been made "to drink into one Spirit" in the sense that we partake of the Holy Spirit. Not only are we joined to the body of Christ, and to Christ, but also to the Holy Spirit--just as whatever we drink in a physical way is taken into our bodies.

But the other is true also. Our oneness with each other in the body of Christ is sustained and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, giving us the unity which we should always have, which is such a delight to God and to Christ, and yet, sad to say which is rarely seen when we look at the body of Christ today.

Concl: We look over the world today at a Church, the body of Christ, which appears to be hopelessly divided. Denominationalism is responsible in many instances. Carnality in the hearts of the Lord's people has caused divisions. Doctrinal differences have done it. What can we do in our day to revive this truth?

Frankly, I don't expect that we can do much. The Lord will take care of this problem when He comes. But personally we can make sure that, by the grace of God, we are not a part of the problem. Let us not look at people as members of this church or that church, but let us look at those who believe in Christ as fellow-members with us in the body of Christ. And most important of all, let us not forget the Holy Spirit. In these days of all kinds of technical equipment and the latest techniques for getting people to do what we want them to do, it is so easy to forget how dependent we are upon the Holy Spirit. Unity is not the result of organizational planning; unity is established and maintained and blessed by the Holy Spirit alone. And so our oneness in the body of Christ is based upon the truth which the Holy Spirit has given us, and upon Christ Whom the Holy Spirit delights to glorify, and it is a matter of the condition of our hearts.

Pride will divide us. Walking in the Spirit with true humility and dependence upon the Spirit, will certainly bring the blessing of God into our lives and into the work which the Lord has given us to do.