

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

John 14:16-17

Intro: Perhaps you remember that on one of his visits to Ephesus, he came upon “certain disciples” (Acts 19:1), and he asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit since they had believed, *i.e.*, believed in the Lord. Their answer was, “We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit” (Acts 19:2). The book of Acts is clearly a book of transition with respect to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, but the response of those disciples could well be the answer that many present-day believers would give if they were asked about the Holy Spirit. Often the Christian life is taught as though there were no Holy Spirit, or, on the other hand, a Christian’s relationship to the Holy Spirit is taught like we were still living in the first century. By that I mean that believers are taught that they do not have the Holy Spirit until they pray and ask Him to indwell them, and that the proof that they have the Holy Spirit is that they will speak in tongues. And so, many Christians do not really know where they are with respect to the Holy Spirit. But the NT makes it very clear that there can be no true Christian living apart from the Holy Spirit.

As I have told some of you many times, along with our regular reading of the NT, I read the NT a second time year by year. But instead of reading each day’s reading twice, I begin the NT in January every year, but I also begin it again the first of July. This means that I finish reading the NT each December when I am only half through with the reading I began in July. So now as I am coming toward the end of June when I will finish my second reading of the NT, I am actually reading in 1 Peter while I am also in the Gospel of John with our regular reading. I hope I am making myself clear. I started doing this many years ago because I felt that I ought to be reading constantly in the Gospels. And so only from June 15 to June 30 am I not reading in one of the Gospels.

I have gone into this rather lengthy explanation to show you why I am now reading in 1 Peter as well as the Gospel of John. On Friday I began reading 1 Peter, and my thought were already on my message for tonight when I would speak on “the Christian and the Holy Spirit.” I was very interested to notice that Peter mentioned the Holy Spirit four times in chapter 1 of his first epistle. These four times are 1 Pet. 1:2, 11, 12, and 22.

As I thought about those four verses, I was impressed with the way in

which they comprehensively cover all the various aspects of the ministry of the Holy Spirit as He is related to our lives as Christians. Let me explain what I mean.

I am not speaking of the order in which the Apostle Peter mentioned the Holy Spirit, but I am thinking about all that Peter covered in these four references.

For example, let us look at 1 Peter 1:22. This is a part of the chapter where Peter was speaking of their salvation. That is clear from verses 18 and 19, as well as from verse 23. And here Peter made it very clear that we are not only enabled by the Lord to believe in God for salvation (see verse 21), but also it is the Holy Spirit Who also enables us to obey the truth. This is what the Apostle Paul called “obedience to the faith” in Rom. 1:5. And this is why our Lord spoke of salvation as being “born of the Spirit” in John 3:6. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, righteousness, and judgment (see John 16:8-11). All three Persons of the Godhead take an active part in our salvation, and we must not overlook the part that the Holy Spirit has had in bringing us to Christ.

But what did the Apostle Peter mean by “the truth,” in saying that we have obeyed the truth? Obviously he was speaking about the truth of the Gospel. And where do we find the truth of the Gospel? We find it in the Scriptures, in the Word of God, in our Bibles. But how was our Bible written?

Usually in answering that question we go to two primary passages, although there are other supporting passages. The first of these is in Paul’s second letter to Timothy. The verses I am thinking about have been a part of our SS memory work for this past Winter and Spring. Of course I am thinking about 2 Tim. 3:16-17. (Quote.)

The other passage comes to us from the Apostle Peter in 2 Peter 1 where in verses 19 through 21 we have these words:

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2

Peter 1:19-21).

But now from 1 Peter 1 let me add a third passage to these two I have just referred to. I am speaking now of 1 Peter 1:10-11. (Read.) There is overwhelming evidence in Scripture that our Bibles are the work of the Holy Spirit. There have been around forty different writers, but just one Author – and He is the Holy Spirit! And every Christian needs to understand this as soon as he or she is saved! I will come back to this in a moment.

But now let us look at 1 Pet. 1:11.

Later in the chapter the Apostle Peter explains how we have been saved. Look with me at verse 23 – 1 Pet. 1:23. (Read.) We are born again “by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.” But how was it that we heard the message? 1 Pet. 1:11 gives us our answer. Somehow, either by what someone told us personally, or what we heard in a message that was preached, or possibly by a verse of Scripture which we read in a book, in some way there was “preached” unto us “the Gospel with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven.” The Holy Spirit used His own Word as it was proclaimed in our hearing, we really heard it, and we believed it, and we were saved. You may read many good and wonderful books, but you will never read a book anywhere that can even begin to compare with the Bible. It is the Word of God, “living and powerful” as we are told in Heb. 4:12. It was a book written under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and it is that book that the Holy Spirit used to bring us to Christ, and it is by the Holy Spirit that we believed it when we were first saved, and it is by the Spirit that we continue to believe that it is the truth of God, the written Word of the living God.

The last verse of these four which speaks of the Holy Spirit in 1 Peter is verse 2 where I call your attention to five words: “through sanctification of the Spirit.”

Another word for *the Christian life*, is the word sanctification. Jerry Bridges reminded us when he was here at Easter time that the foundation of the Christian life is the Gospel. And we see from 1 Peter 1 that the Holy Spirit is very, very involved in the preaching of the Gospel. He has preserved it for us in the Word. He empowers the preaching of the Word. He enables us to believe the Word. And it is the Holy Spirit Who is directly involved in our sanctification. And another word for sanctifica-

tion is holiness. From the moment we are saved, the Holy Spirit goes to work in us to make us like Christ, and the more we become like Christ, the more holy we become. And it is the Holy Spirit Who sanctifies us by the Word and through the redeeming blood of our Savior which He shed for us on Calvary's Cross.

Now with that background I want to go to the two verses I have chosen as my main base for tonight.

(Read John 14:16-17.)

First of all, let me remind you that these are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every word in our Bibles has come from God. The writings of Peter or John or Paul are just as much the Word of God as those words which were spoken by our Lord. But somehow there is something very special about the words of the Lord Jesus. That is why I decided to read the NT twice every year. In that way there are only about two weeks out of the year when I am not reading the Gospels. Paul and John and Peter were enabled by the Holy Spirit to write the truth for us just as the Lord Jesus spoke the truth. Romans 8 and 1 Peter 1 and 1 John 3 carry the same authority as John 14. And yet we love to read what the Lord Jesus Himself said, don't we? Well, these two verses are the words which the Lord spoke to His disciples in the Upper Room.

He had told them at the beginning of this chapter that He was going to leave them, but also that He was coming back. But they did not like to hear that He was leaving them. They wanted Him to stay with them. But here He told them that He was going to pray to the Father, and, knowing that He always asked according to the Father's will, He assured them that the Father would give them "another Comforter."

By this expression the Lord was indicating that He had been to them a "Comforter." It is the Greek word Παράκλητος from which we get our English word, Paraclete. He is One Whose responsibility it is to help us, to be with us, to take our part, even to pray for us. In just a few words, He would come to take the place that our Lord had filled with His disciples.

Recently in our Tuesday Bible Class I had reason to deal with the Greek words for "another," and I told the Class that there were two words for another in the Greek. One means *another of a different kind*, the other means *another of the same kind*. The word that the Lord used here means

another of the same kind. And this means that since the Lord Jesus was God, Deity, the Comforter Who would replace Him would also be God. He is not an “it” as some verses seem to indicate, but the Holy Spirit is a Person, a Member of the Godhead. And the wonderful truth that the Lord was expressing to His disciples was that this coming Comforter would never leave them. The Lord told them that this Comforter would abide with them forever! And He called Him in verse 17, “the Spirit of truth.” The people of the world, people who do not know the Lord, do not have the Spirit of God, and they can’t be indwelt by Him unless they too are drawn to Christ. And the Lord concluded by saying “for ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

Please turn now to John 16, verse 7. (Read.) I want to call your attention to the word “expedient.” The Lord meant that it would be better for them, each one of them, to have all of the Holy Spirit with them twenty-four hours of every day than for the Lord Jesus to continue on with them in His physical body.

Now there are things about this that we don’t fully understand because we know, for example, that the Lord promised that He would be with His people unto the end of the age. And we know that the Father is present everywhere. But we need to believe what the Lord said. He had to ascend back to the Father before the Holy Spirit would come.

Now if we can just get this truth into our hearts, what a “comfort,” what a help, what an undescrivable blessing this will be to all of us.

Before I close on this part of the teaching of the NT about the Holy Spirit (because I want to continue with this another Sunday or two), let me ask you to turn with me to two passages in the NT.

The first is in Romans 8, and verse 9. (Read.) Paul here was teaching what the Lord actually taught in verse 17 of John 14, and that is that the Holy Spirit is in all believers, and if the Holy Spirit is not in any person it is because he is not saved, he (or she) does not know the Lord, he does not belong to the Lord.

The second is in 1 Cor. 6:19 and 20. And personally I am very thankful that Paul wrote these words to this particular church. Why do I say that? Because it was a very trouble-ridden church. Some people would say that the reason they had so many problems in the church at Corinth, was

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because they no longer had the Holy Spirit. They certainly did not have the blessing of the Holy Spirit. But the Apostle Paul was using this truth that we have been talking about tonight as a truth that would draw them back into fellowship with the Lord and with each other. (Read 1 Cor. 6: 19-20:

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.