

10. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

(Transcript of message preached by Pastor Rick Minett on May 22, 2005 at Grace Community Church)

"If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you" (John 14:15-17).

The role that we allow the Holy Spirit to take in our lives will unquestionably determine whether we win or lose, whether we fail or succeed in our Christian walk. We can't win without Him. We can't overcome without Him. People try to do it on their own all the time and fail, and then they wonder why they fail. And it is simply because they are trying to succeed in their own power, strength and abilities—but that won't cut it. We need the Holy Spirit! And Jesus knew that; and that is why He sent us this "Helper." And the Holy Spirit stays very busy because He not only extols Jesus; He exposes, examines, enables, encourages, empowers, equips, emancipates, and envelops believers.

The Holy Spirit Extols Jesus

Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit in John 16 and in verse 14, He said, *"He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you."* The Holy Spirit never draws attention to Himself; He is constantly drawing the attention toward Jesus. He is constantly challenging us to focus on Jesus. And it's very important that we understand that because if we are not living for the glory of Jesus then we are not going to get help from the Holy Spirit. We can shout, "Holy Spirit, help me!" until we are blue in the face, but if our passion isn't to glorify Jesus, He is not going to help us. But someone may say, "But I thought Jesus said He's our helper." He did, but He only helps in order to glorify Christ because that is His greatest priority. That is why Jesus said, *"He will glorify Me..."* The Spirit came to glorify Jesus—His plans, His will, His agenda, and His purpose.

The Holy Spirit Exposes Sin

In John 16:7-8, Jesus said: *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment..."* The Bible says that the words that are spoken in the dark will eventually be heard in the light and what has been spoken in a closet will be proclaimed on the housetops. It also says that we need to be certain of the fact that our sin will find us out. The sin of mankind will eventually be exposed, not because men want to reveal their sin, but because the Holy Spirit is light. And light always overcomes darkness. Light always exposes what is hidden in the dark corners of the human soul.

The Holy Spirit Examines Believers

There's an old fashioned term that a lot Christians do not like, but it is true nevertheless. It is called conviction! And the fact of the matter is this, if a believer is sinning and doing it perpetually the Holy Spirit is going to be all over his or her case until that issue gets straightened out. That is why the old preachers of a past generation called the Holy Spirit the "Hound of Heaven." Ephesians 4:30 says, *"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."* Now what does that tell us? That tells us that Paul was talking about believers, not unbelievers—people sealed for the day of redemption. And that also tells us that believers are capable of grieving the Holy Spirit. And how do we grieve Him? We grieve Him when we sin. And when we do, He is going to convict us. He's going to let us know. He's going to make our life as uncomfortable as He can until we get that matter taken care of, because He's like a metal detector in an airport—He's going to start "beeping" whenever illegitimate things walk into our lives and He's going to keep on beeping until we start emptying out our pockets and come clean.

As believers, we are living in the light and because we are in the light, we can't get away with what the world gets away with because the Holy Spirit won't let us. He loves us too much to do that. So don't feel bad if the Holy Spirit is convicting you of something, be thankful, because if He is convicting you that means that you are at least walking in enough light to feel the conviction. The real problem is when one sins and is no longer convicted.

The Holy Spirit Enables Believers

In John 14, Jesus said, *"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper..."* The word "helper" in the Greek is "paraclete." It means to "come alongside to enable." It means to help, to enable, to comfort and to counsel. The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives is so important that Jesus said that it was imperative that He go in order for the Holy Spirit to come. And the reason is because Jesus, while on planet earth, limited the location of His deity to the presence of His humanity. In other words, He could only be at one place at one time.

We have folks that attend our church from all over the greater Houston area. After church, some of you will drive to Humble, some to Spring, some to Tomball, some to Katy, some to the Heights, some to Meyerland, and some here, there and everywhere. And if Jesus

were walking on planet earth as He did 2,000 years ago, He could only go in one direction because the location of His deity was tied to the presence of His humanity. Now what if you go to Katy and you need Jesus—you don't want to hear that He is tied up with me in Hunter's Creek, do you? Of course not! When you need Jesus, you need Jesus right now! And in order to be sure that He could be everywhere at all times, He had to leave in order for the Spirit to come because the Holy Spirit isn't limited to time and space, and therefore, He can go home with each and everyone of us at the same time. And He goes with us to enable us and help us face whatever struggles come our way. In John 16:13-14, Jesus said, *"...when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you in all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."*

The Holy Spirit Encourages Believers

I love that old story about the eagle that knocked over one of its eggs and the egg hatched in the middle of a turkey farm. The eaglet got out, looked around and noticed all these turkeys and just assumed that even though he looked different, he must be a turkey! So he learned to walk like a turkey, and bob like a turkey, and gobble like a turkey—because after all, his environment was filled with turkeys. But one day a flock of eagles flew over and one of the eagles saw the eaglet and swooped down and said to the eaglet, "What in the world are you doing down here?" The little eaglet replied, "I'm hanging out with my family, the turkeys."

"Why are you calling them your family?" the eagle said. The eaglet replied, "Well, I was born amongst them. I was reared by them. I eat with them and sleep with them. Doesn't that mean I must be one of them?" And the eagle said, "Little fellow, someone has lied to you. Someone has told you that you are something other than what you really are. Now stretch out those wings! Now flap those wings! Now flap them higher!" And before long the little eaglet began to rise up off the ground, and the harder he flapped his little wings the higher he went, until before long he was following the eagle all through the skies. And guess what happened? The turkeys looked up and said, "What in the world do you think you are doing?" And the eaglet said, "I'm going to be what I was created to be, you turkeys!"

I'm afraid that some of us have been hanging around with turkeys so long we think we are one of them. But God didn't save us to waddle through the Christian life; He saved us to soar. But you can't soar with eagles as long as you think you are a turkey! One of the most wonderful things the Holy Spirit does is remind of us who we are in Christ. When the devil whispers in our ear that we are a failure and fool and might as well just give up—the Spirit is the one who shouts in our other ear, reminding us that we are an heir of God and joint-heirs with Jesus, and that we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us! Romans 8:16-17 says, *"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heir with Christ."*

The Holy Spirit Empowers Believers

After His death and resurrection, and just prior to ascension to the right hand of the Father, Jesus' final statement on planet earth had to do with the coming of the Holy Spirit and what that would mean to you and me. In Acts 1:8, Jesus said, *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you..."* And what does He give us power to do? First, to be witnesses. Jesus said, *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* Second, to pray the way we need to pray. There are so many times I don't know how to pray. There are so many times the issues are too confounding and too perplexing for me, so it's impossible to articulate what I'm feeling because sometimes I don't even know what I'm feeling. And that is when the Spirit, my "helper" comes along to assist me. He helps me to pray the will of God. Better still, He prays through me! Romans 8:26 says, *"...the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groaning that cannot be uttered."*

Third, the Holy Spirit empowers us to worship the Lord as we should. We've already established the fact that His greatest priority is to glorify Jesus, and that obviously means that He takes great delight in teaching us to glorify and worship the Lord as well. When a group of us were in Israel years ago, we had the opportunity to go to the most famous well in history—Jacob's well. It is mentioned several times in the Bible, but the story that most of us remember is the story about a woman from Samaria that meets Jesus at this well. Here a conversation ensues and they begin to talk about worship. She suggests to Jesus it can be confusing because some said one should worship God on the mountain, while others said one should worship God in Jerusalem. And in verse 23 & 24 of John 4, Jesus said, *"...the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is a Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."* And the only way to worship God in spirit and truth is by being led by the Spirit. One need to go no further than the first few chapters of Acts to see the impact the Holy Spirit had on the early believers. Prior to the Spirit, this was a weak band of gutless men. But when the Spirit came, everything changed and these spaghetti Christians had a backbone of steel.

There is a great scene in the movie "Crocodile Dundee" where Dundee and his girlfriend are walking through New York City and a man jumps out from around the corner with a knife in his hand and says, "Give me your money." The girl screams, "He's got a knife!" But Dundee stays cool. He says, "That's not a knife, this is a knife!" And with that, he reaches down his pant leg, pulls out a machete two feet long, and when the bad guy sees that knife he takes off running. Beloved, the adversary of your soul has weapons formed against you; that's true. But what you have inside of you is bigger than what he can bring against you. That is why the Bible says, *"Greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world"* (1 John 4:4).

The Holy Spirit Equips Believers

One of the most specific ways that He does that is through something called the "Gifts of the Holy Spirit." And please remember that is exactly what these are—gifts. You don't buy them, earn them, nor are you taught them. Spiritual gifts are like grace; free for us to

possess even though we don't deserve them. Now the reason Holy Spirit equips us with these various gifts is because God has a supernatural and divine plan for planet earth, and now that Jesus has ascended to the Father that plan is to be carried out by the Church, the body of Christ. But we cannot do what needs to be done on our own; we need something more. We need special gifts and abilities that enable us to serve the body of Christ, promote the kingdom of God, and move forward the Church. And in order to accomplish those three things, the Holy Spirit has given us three types of gifts: Serving gifts, speaking gifts, and sign gifts. There are "serving gifts" that help others, such as: helps, administration, mercy, giving, etc. There are "speaking gifts" that proclaim the gospel, such as: prophecy, teaching, exhortation, etc. And there are "sign gifts" when God does something extraordinary for a divine purpose, gifts such as: miracles, healing, tongues, the interpretation of tongues, etc. 1 Corinthians 12 talks about these gifts, and in verse 7 it says, *"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all."* That single verse tells us three very important things. One, these equipping gifts come from the Holy Spirit. Two, these equipping gifts are given to all believers. In other words, all of us have at least one gift in operation in our lives. Verse 11 of that same chapter says, *"But...the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills."* Three, this verse tells us that these equipping gifts are given for the "profit" of others. He doesn't give us gifts to hoard, but to share for the benefit of others, and if we don't, then do not be surprised if He takes them away.

The Holy Spirit Emancipates Believers

Satan doesn't want you to be free. Matter of fact, he wants you to be so bound up by your past or your failures or your feelings of insecurity that you can't do a thing for Christ. But God wants to free us from that bondage and He has sent the Holy Spirit to do exactly that. And that is why 2 Corinthians 3:17 says, *"...and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."* Jesus Christ died on the cross so that you could be free. Not unrestricted; not living without rules; but He died in order that while you are living under His rules you can be all that God wants you to be.

You probably remember stories from history class about the thousands of slaves who, after the Civil War, preferred to stay on the plantations in the South instead of riding the freedom trains to the North because they weren't willing to leave familiar surroundings even though staying meant they were still slaves. They were free—but they refused to think as free people. They refused to act like free people even though there were others who were there to not only help free them, but also help assimilate them into their "new free world." The Bible is very clear: Jesus Christ sets us free. That's why Galatians 5:1 says, *"Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free."* But in order to do that, you've got to think like a free person! You've got to realize that you don't have to be a slave to those old sins, those old propensities, those old habits, and those old desires. And you've got to realize that the One that set you free, not only set you free; but He also sent someone to help assimilate you into your new free world. Simply put: Christ set you free and He has sent His Spirit to keep you free—so stop being a slave!

The Holy Spirit Envelops Believers

That is exactly what He wants to do. He wants to not only cover us completely, He wants to fill us and that is why Ephesians 5:18 tells us to *"be filled with the Spirit."* The verb "filled" is in the "imperative" tense. That means it is a command, not a suggestion. It doesn't say, "If it's convenient...If it fits your agenda..." It says, *"Be filled!"* Also, this command is for all believers. It is not for one isolated group or another; it doesn't belong to this denomination and not the one across the street. This command applies to all believers. Furthermore, the verb used here is not only in the "imperative" tense, it is also in the "passive" tense, which means that this is not something you can do for yourself, but someone must do it for you. And of course, that filling must come from the Holy Spirit.

Do you know why so many Christians are so unfulfilled? Do you know why so many Christians feel so empty inside? It is because they are trying to fill themselves with things that were never intended to fill us in the first place. There is only one thing that can truly satisfy us and that is the filling of the Spirit. Anything else falls short!

For instance, when you were saved, when you accepted Jesus as your personal Savior, you were in that moment "baptized." 1 Corinthians 12:13 says, *"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit."* Galatians 3:26-28 says, *"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."* The word "baptism" in the Greek means to be immersed. It is the picture of a garment that is immersed in dye, so much so that when it comes out it has changed. That means that when we are saved we are baptized in His Spirit—immersed into His Spirit and put into the body of Christ. But that's not the end of the story. After we are baptized or saved, we still need to be "filled." Not once, not twice, not three times—but daily! And the reason is pretty obvious when you think about, isn't it? The "old man" is still hanging on for dear life! The first time you hit your thumb with a hammer after you were saved and the words that came out of your mouth were NOT the doxology—you realized that the flesh was still hanging around, right? You may be saved today, but until you go to heaven, the flesh is something you have to contend with. It hangs on and battles with you even after you are saved, and frankly, it has no intention of letting go. And that is exactly why you need the Holy Spirit to fill you on a daily basis. This is what the Apostle Paul was talking about in Romans 7 and Romans 8. For instance, in Romans 7:18, he says, *"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find."* You may truly want to change. You may plan on changing. But desire isn't the issue; power is the issue! In your own strength you cannot do it; you need something more. You need something inside of you, not outside of you; and you need it on a daily basis!

We live in a world that depletes us spiritually: Sin depletes it, disobedience depletes it, battling the flesh depletes it, people deplete it... So like a car that needs to go back to the gas station on a regular basis, we need to be refilled. Cars were not designed to drive on empty and neither were you. You need to be filled and the Holy Spirit wants to do exactly that for you.

Have you ever wondered why Paul talked about being drunk and being Spirit-filled in the same verse? Again, in verse 18 of Ephesians 5, Paul says, *"And do not be drunk with wine...but be filled with the Spirit."* I grew up in the home of an alcoholic so I know a little about the subject of being drunk. I know my father never got drunk by looking at a bottle of Jack Daniels; he got drunk by drinking a bottle of Jack Daniels. And the more he drank, the drunker he got and the more the alcohol controlled him! When my father was sober he was a totally different man than when he was drunk. When he was sober he was quiet, but when he was drunk he was loud and boisterous. When he was sober he was well spoken, but when he was drunk he spoke like a blabbering idiot. When he was sober he was passive, but when the juice kicked in he became aggressive. When he was sober he could walk a straight line, but when he was drunk he was falling all over the place. And essentially what Paul is saying is this: "What liquor is to the body, the Spirit is to the soul." He makes you act in ways you wouldn't normally act! He makes you talk in ways you wouldn't normally talk! He makes you walk in ways you wouldn't normally walk!

We need to get intoxicated—in the Spirit, and we need to do it continually! Because when we get drunk in the Spirit, we are going to love when we used to hate, we are going to walk away instead of getting mad, and we are going to be able to control our passions and actions because something else has taken over. But we can't get drunk unless we drink; and we won't drink unless we are thirsty. And therein lies the problem! In John 7, verses 37-39, Jesus said. *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'* But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive..."

Are you really thirsty? Are you thirsty to be filled with this Helper that extols, exposes, examines, enables, encourages, empowers, equips, emancipates, and envelops? Actions are predicated on desire; so do you desire to be filled with the Spirit? Jesus said that if you'll desire Him more than anything else in your life you will be filled and out of your heart will flow rivers of living water. And that is reason enough to say, "Holy Spirit, fill me afresh today!"