

The Holy Spirit's Work in a Believer's Life

April 11, 2019

Today is the last sermon in the series, "Living in Awe of the Holy Spirit". And if after today you're not in awe of the Holy Spirit's role in your life – then you've got a serious issue with awe and might want to have get professional help.

Last week we examined Jesus' teaching concerning the Holy Spirit, and one of the most profound things he said was to his disciples in the Upper Room, a mere hours before he was arrested. He told them that he was going to be leaving them but that he wouldn't leave them as orphans but would send another Comforter to be with them. And then he said that after he left them physically, that He and the Father would come and make their home with them. That's quite a change from the God of the Old Testament who appeared to His people, after their miraculous delivery from Egypt, at Mount Sinai. And as God appeared He descended upon the mountain with fire and wind and a strong earthquake. And He told Moses to warn the people not to get too close to the mountain or He'd have to kill them. That's a long way from now Jesus was promising to his disciples and to each of us that him and his Father would now come and make their home with us. Moving into someone's home and living there implies acceptance and love and a close relationship. Connie and I just spent the last 4 days living in our daughter, Molly and her husband, Brady's home hanging out with our two youngest granddaughters. And we had an absolute blast. We laughed and read stories and snuggled and prayed and ate together and I believe grew closer to each other. That's what it means to move into someone else's home and spend time with them. That's been God's desire ever since He first created Adam and Eve. And He enjoyed that type of deep relationship with them for awhile – until sin entered in. And from that point on, God had been planning and preparing for that type of fellowship to be restored. And once Jesus paid the penalty for our sins on the cross, God could once again enter into that type of relationship with His children.

That easily transitions us into the first of four categories of the Spirit's involvement in our lives listed on your sermon outline on the back of your bulletin. Please take that at this time. There's a lot of information contained on that outline and I've listed the corresponding Scriptures to each of the points in case you want to dig deeper on your own. I'm going to briefly touch on these points this morning.

Notice: there are three categories describing the Spirit's involvement in our lives and then a fourth category which is our responsibilities in relationship to the Spirit living within us, or God making His home inside of us.

Relationship:

The Spirit's involvement listed here reminds us that Jesus didn't primarily die on a cross for our sins so that we could end up in heaven. It's never been about your **eternal location** but rather it's always been about your **eternal relationship** with your Heavenly Father. That's why the Spirit provides us constant access to your Heavenly Father. There is never a time of day that He is too busy to listen to you.

- **And the Spirit is constantly pouring the Father's love into your heart.** Psalm 46 reminds us to "*Be still and know that God is God.*" We often need to get away from the many distractions of this world to just be still and soak in God's love. Years ago God spoke to me through a friend and told me that I'm busy doing lots of really good things but I was weary. And the image this friend received from God was of a castle with a moat around it. And I was told that I need to take time to swim and splash and enjoy resting in the moat of God's love for me. Shortly after that I acquired a model of a castle and I've kept it on my desk ever since to remind me of that invitation from God. We would all do well to rest in God's tremendous love He has for us often. Even if you have only a few minutes in the middle of a day go somewhere away from the distractions and thank God for His love for you. And just sit and listen for anything He wants to say to you through the Spirit.

- Now it's one thing for a parent to love their child, but it's critical that they not leave that fuzzy through a lack of communication. Every child needs desperately to know that they are loved. And so, not only does God pour His love into each of our hearts, but **He also affirms continually that we are His children.** **Romans 8:15-16 (NIV)** *The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.* Some of you need to highlight this point and even commit that Scripture to memory or write it on a 3x5 card and post it somewhere that you'll see it often. Because many Christians live constantly with self-doubt over whether you're acceptable to God or not – either based on your past or on your struggles in the present. Often those seeds of doubt are cast out by the Great Accuser – Satan himself. But after awhile He doesn't have to cast those seeds of doubt out anymore because we've grabbed a hold of his bait and we keep condemning ourselves over and over again. And we live with a deep seeded shame that God could never accept me the way I am. It's in those times you need to refer back to this passage of Scripture and sit and listen to the Spirit affirming to you that you are God's child. And if you continue to struggle with doubts, then turn ahead to the end of Romans 8 and read with great enthusiasm the amazing claim that nothing can separate us from God's love.
- **God has put His stamp of approval on us and it also says that the Spirit is a down payment,** which is a promise of the full payment yet to come.

I want to spend some additional time on the final two points in the Relationship category.

- One of the most important things in any close relationship is communication as a means to get to know one another better. And God is deeply committed to that in His relationship with you. **1 Corinthians 2:9-12 (NIV)** *However, as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived"— the things God has prepared for those who love him— these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.* What this verse is saying is that **God has great plans for you and for me. And God shares those plans with each of us through His Spirit.**

The Spirit also shares God's mind and heart with us. Have you ever felt tremendous grief over something you witnessed in person or saw on the news? It gripped your heart in an usually powerful way. That very well could be the Spirit sharing with you how your Heavenly Father is grieved by that. Or you experience tremendous joy over something, that could likewise be the Spirit sharing with your spirit your Heavenly Father's joy.

- **The Spirit helps the communication from us to the Father as well.**

Romans 8:26-27 (NIV) *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And **he** who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.*

Who is the "**he**" who searches our hearts? That would be God himself. What's on your heart matters to God, otherwise He wouldn't be searching it. The way God has access to our hearts is through the communication of the Spirit. Sometimes your pain might be so deep words can't fully express it. So, the Spirit shares the pain that's on your heart with the Father with "*wordless groans*".

That ought to create a profound sense of awe in you that God has set up a system by which we can know what's on God's mind and heart and He can listen to what's on our heart as well.

Empowerment:

- **Frees us from weary obedience to the Law and enters us into a relationship with God.**

After spending the end of chapter 7 expressing his frustration with not being able to keep God's Law perfectly it ends with a sigh of desperation as to who will rescue Paul and us from this frustrating life. But chapter 8 begins with a great declaration of hope.

Romans 8:1-2 (NIV) *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.*

Because of Christ's Jesus' death on the cross we no longer stand condemned by God. Jesus took God's condemnation upon Himself. And so the Spirit brings us out from under trying to earn a right relationship with God and offers us grace and freedom. Freedom to be able to now live our lives wholly for God every moment of every day. And in a relationship of love there isn't condemnation when someone messes up – there's forgiveness and restoration and that's what God offers us and the Spirit reminds us of that constantly – if you'll just listen to his voice.

- The result of that is that **condemnation is replaced with hope**
- **The Spirit gives every believer at least one spiritual gift to use in living out God's calling for their life and for the building up of the church.**
- **The Spirit uses our prayers as spiritual ammunition in waging war against the enemy.** Praying in the Spirit is part of the spiritual armor we are to put on every day.

Transformation:

- **The Spirit sanctifies you – continually sets you apart for God's service.** You aren't a citizen of earth. You are first and foremost a citizen of heaven and are an ambassador here on earth to spread the good news and the transforming power of God's kingdom.
- **Part of the sanctification process is that we are becoming more and more like Jesus through the Spirit's work in us.** We are being used as "*glory bearers*" whose light should be getting brighter all the time. **2 Corinthians 3:17-18 (NIV)** *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.* Let me ask you – how are you becoming more like Jesus? If the Spirit's doing His work in you then those around you ought to see you looking more and more like Jesus all the time.
- **The Spirit produces "fruit" in us.** That's really the character of Christ being developed within us. Every follower of Jesus Christ has a supernatural capacity to love others and to experience joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
- **The Spirit strengthens us to be overwhelmed by God's love**
Ephesians 3:16-19 (NIV) *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*
Notice – this knowledge of God's love for you goes beyond mere intellectual understanding. It profoundly touches your heart. And as you get closer and closer to grasping God's love for you – you're reaching the level of being filled up with God's fullness, because God is love.

Our Responsibility:

- **Set your mind on what the Spirit desires.** Continually you're walking with the mindset of I only want to think and do what the Spirit wants in my life. It's the pattern Jesus lived by. Jesus only did what pleased the Father. And the rest of the points are basically saying, try to keep up with what the Spirit wants to do in and through you. Don't stall out the Spirit because He's excited to accomplish God's will in and through your life. And we do that by not going down a sidetrack but be single minded in chasing after God's desires for your life.
- **Be continually filled with the Spirit.** This doesn't mean that the Spirit slowly leave us. It's much more about you fully yielding every part of you to the Spirit's leading and control. It's not that you need more of the Spirit but that the Spirit needs control of more of you. How do you know if you're filled with the Spirit. According to this text you'll be living in a state of worship and thankfulness to God.
- **Don't grieve the Holy Spirit.** How do you do that? The context is how you treat others. First, how you use your language, to either tear someone down or to build them up. And the next section is how do you respond when someone hurts you. Summary – forgive them just as much or to the same extent that Christ has continually forgive you.
- **Don't blaspheme the Holy Spirit** – I'll be explaining that further tomorrow night at Life Group from 6:30-8pm in the Welcome Center.

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Relationship:

- Provides continual _____ to the Father (Eph. 2:18)
- He pours God's love into our hearts (Rom. 5:3-5)
- _____ we are God's children (Rom. 8:15-16)
- Puts God's stamp of approval on us (Eph. 1:13-14)
- Overwhelms us with God's love (Eph. 3:16)
- He reveals God's _____ & _____ to us (1 Cor. 2:9-12)
- Communicates our heartaches to God (Rom. 8:26-27)

Empowerment:

- Free us from weary _____ (Rom. 8:1-2)
- Overflows us with hope (Rom. 15:13)
- Gives each person a spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:11)
- Works miracles through us (Galatians 3:5)
- Enables us to restore sinners gently (Galatians 6:1)
- Uses our prayers as spiritual _____ (Eph. 6:18)

Transformation:

- Applies teaching & preaching to you (1 Thess. 1:5)
- Sanctifies us (1 Peter 1:2)
- Makes us " _____ " (2 Cor. 3:17-18)
- Produces "fruit" in us (Galatians 5:22-25)
- Strengthens us to be overwhelmed by God's _____ (Eph. 3:16-19)

Our Responsibility:

- Set our _____ on the Spirit's desires (Romans 8:5-6)
- Walk by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16)
- Keep in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25)
- Sow to please the Spirit (Gal. 6:7-8)
- Be _____ with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18-20)
- Guard your faith with the Spirit (2 Timothy 1:14)
- Don't grieve the Spirit (Eph. 4:30-32)
- Don't blaspheme the Spirit (Mt. 12:32)

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