

Live in Awe of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit in the Believer's Life #1

April 7, 2019

I want to invite you to take your Bibles this morning and turn to the Gospel of John chapter 3 in your pew Bibles.

Today and next Sunday I'm going to wrapping up this series in "*Living in Awe of the Holy Spirit*" by focusing on the Holy Spirit's impact on each of our lives. Today I want to focus our attention primarily on what Jesus taught regarding the Spirit's impact on our lives and next week I'll focus on what the rest of the writers of the New Testament teach regarding the Holy Spirit's influence on our lives.

One of the very first instances where Jesus talked about the Spirit was during an evening encounter with one of the members of the ruling Jewish council, a Pharisee, by the name of Nicodemus. Most of you are familiar with a portion of what Jesus says to this man, because the well known, [John 3:16](#), appears during this conversation. But I want to focus on the earlier portion of this talk.

The first words out of Nicodemus' mouth were more a discussion starter, trying to set the tone by being complimentary to Jesus. "*Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.*" That was a nice complimentary lead in to this important conversation. But Jesus didn't merely come here to get people to think nice about who he is. He came to bring the kingdom of God from heaven to earth and ultimately into our very lives. And so, Jesus cuts right to the chase and shares with Nicodemus what he needs to know.

Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."

This certainly had to have caught Nicodemus off guard. And he replies with an understandable question. "*How can someone be born when they are old?*" Nicodemus asked. "*Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!*" Lest we come down too hard on Nicodemus here, if you and I were in Nicodemus' sandals we'd likely ask a very similar question. Being born is something a baby does, not a grown person. A grown person can't possibly crawl back into their mother's womb to begin the birth process all over again. But Jesus makes it clear that he's not talking about a physical birth, He's referring to a spiritual birth.

Jesus answered, "*Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.*"

Now, there's various interpretation of this text, but I take it to mean that Jesus is referring to the act of being baptized (or immersed) into water, which results in every believer receiving the Holy Spirit. This is certainly consistent with what Peter taught on the Day of Pentecost when he answered the hearers question of what should we do now that we understand who Jesus is and what he did for us on the cross. Peter's response was: *Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."*

The response was that 3,000 people accepted the Lord and were baptized that very day. And notice that last phrase of Peter's instruction, "*for all whom the Lord our God will call.*"

This is consistent with Jesus' earlier teaching in John 6:44

John 6:44 (NIV) "*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.* I believe the means by which the Father draws each person to Himself is through the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit comes and prompts people to come into a saving relationship with the Father. He might prick your mind or heart to hear the saving message of Jesus with an openness that you've never had before. He might take a message you hear from the pulpit or on the radio or something from a conversation you have with a friend, where suddenly there's an openness and connection that had never been there before. And something clicks and you realize you need to move beyond just simply knowing about Jesus and actually taking the bold step of formally accepting him as your Lord and Savior and be baptized in water and then receive the Holy Spirit as the indwelling presence of God constantly.

So, Jesus' point here in his conversation with Nicodemus is that if you want to gain access into the Kingdom of God it's not going to happen by your deep knowledge of the Law or your careful keeping of the Law. Acceptance into the kingdom of God only happens by being baptized in water and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. It's a complete surrender of yourself to God and His will for your life.

Paul in his letter to Titus shares very similar thoughts:

Titus 3:4-7 (NIV) *But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

Notice, we're not saved by what we've done or accomplished but by God's mercy. "Mercy" is not receiving something we deserved. Because of our many sins we deserve death, i.e. eternal separation from God. But Christ paid the penalty for our sins when he died on the cross and so we're offered grace instead of judgment by God. And the means of us accepting and receiving that is "*through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,*" That's the same kind of message Jesus told Nicodemus on that night. And Paul goes on that God doesn't just sparingly give us the Holy Spirit but he generously pours it out and the result of that is that *we become heirs having the hope of eternal life.* We'll talk more about the ramification of that next week.

In summary: the way we gain access into the Kingdom of God is through baptism and the result is God generously gives us His indwelling Holy Spirit.

Now, turn ahead in your Bibles to John 14. Jesus is in the Upper Room with his disciples. It's just hours before he will be arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane and ultimately scourged and hung on a cross. He's spending these last few hours trying to prepare his disciples for what's about to happen. So far, he's washed the disciples feet while teaching them about servant leadership. He's revealed that Judas will be the one to betray him and sent him out to begin that process, He's told them that he was going to be leaving them to prepare a place for them and then would come back to take them there. Philip communicates the disciples confusion by asking, "*Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.*" To which Jesus responds with these words, beginning with **John 14:9-14.**

Two notes on Jesus' words.

1. vs. 10 – ***Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in Him.*** And the very words Jesus speaks are from the Father living within Him (that's the Holy Spirit communicating the Father's words to Jesus). Jesus repeats that claim in verse 11.
2. Jesus makes an astounding claim in verses 12-14. *Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.* Think with me for a moment. Throughout Jesus' ministry the Father was constantly communicating His desires to the Son through the indwelling Spirit. I believe Jesus listened intently to that leading throughout his ministry. So, let me ask, did Jesus ask for anything that the Father did not answer? No, except for his prayer in the Garden when he asked the Father to possibly take this cup of suffering from him, and yet not my will but yours be done. Similarly, Jesus is promising to his disciples and to us that that exact same principle will be in operation in our lives. He will do everything we ask, as we follow the Spirit's lead. It's through the indwelling Holy Spirit and His Word, the Bible, that God communicates His will to each of us. And as we listen and respond to the Spirit's leading, then what we ask of the Father will always be answered and received. The result of this is that there are millions of followers all over the world who are filled with God's empowering presence and seeking God's will in and through their lives and they collectively will be able to accomplish far greater things than even Jesus did. Do you believe that's possible?

Next Jesus gets much more specific about the indwelling presence of God promised to every believer.

John 14:15-21 (NIV) *"If you love me, keep my commands. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept*

him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. 21 Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

That's a lot of information concerning the Holy Spirit. Let's try to unpack that, because it's key for us to understand what Jesus is promising.

Jesus has just told them, once again, that he's going to be leaving them.

1. But he's not going to leave them as *orphans*. The essence of an orphan is that they've been left all alone by the death of their parents. Jesus knows shortly they are going to feel abandoned when Jesus is nailed to a cross. They become frightened, scared, confused and fearful for their own safety. They immediately go into hiding in an undisclosed place behind locked doors. Their world was turned upside down when Jesus is crucified. Everything they've believed about Jesus for the last 3 years appears to have been a hoax or a horrible nightmare. Some of you have felt all alone at times in your life. You've felt abandoned, perhaps even by God himself. Therefore, Jesus' promise here is great news to not only the disciples but to everyone of us as well. It means that we are never alone. Even though life might be hard at times, God in His graciousness and extreme generosity never leaves us alone. And you can count on that, even though at times you might not always feel it. When you're feeling alone and scared, thank God for His constant presence with you.
2. Jesus says, "*I will give you another advocate*" The word Jesus uses for "*another*" here means **one of the same kind**. Jesus is our advocate and He's going to send another one, just like him, to live within us constantly.
3. *I will give you another advocate* The Greek word here for "advocate" is "**parakletos**". This word refers to someone who comes alongside of you to encourage, strengthen, and provide compassion, comfort or guidance. I actually prefer the **NAS translation** which refers to the Holy Spirit as our "*Helper*". Those are all things that Jesus did when he was here on earth with His disciples and continues to do now through the indwelling Holy Spirit. Do you need direction for your life or someone to just come and sit with you in your grief and sorrow? The Holy Spirit is there 24/7 to sit with you and pass on God's love for you. When others abandon you, God never does through His Spirit. Think of what a difference this made in the lives of these apostles. They were frightened and confused after Jesus was crucified, but 50 days later, after they'd received this Holy Spirit, Peter stood up on the Day of Pentecost and boldly proclaimed the message of salvation to those in town. And later when the Sanhedrin arrested them and tried to intimidate them into stop talking about Jesus, they were unstoppable and after they were released praised God and asked for more boldness to proclaim the message.
4. Notice this communal relationship that exists between us, the Heavenly Father and Jesus. Vs, 10 Jesus had stated: "*I am in the Father, and the Father is in me.*" And now he states that "*we are in Jesus and Jesus is in us.*" We have the same relationship with Jesus as he had with the Heavenly Father. And we are empowered by Jesus' presence in us. And Jesus says that *the Father and Jesus will love us and show themselves to us*. That's through the Holy Spirit.
5. Later in vs. 25 & 26 Jesus adds that the Holy Spirit will "*teach us all things and remind us of everything Jesus taught and said.*" If you ever feel a leaning that you think is from the Holy Spirit but it contradicts what Jesus taught, then it's very likely the Holy Spirit that you're sensing leading you. It's from another source. Jesus reiterates this truth in 16:12-15 "*I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.*" The Holy Spirit will continue the teaching ministry of Jesus in your life. He personalizes God's Word to each of us as He applies it to our lives. But in order to benefit the

greatest from this you need to be in God's Word. The Bible is God's main source of teaching and the Holy Spirit is supplementing what's in it by making it personal.

6. "*He will glorify me*" (John 16:14) I love this ongoing relationship. When Jesus was on earth he gave all the glory to the Father. And now, the Spirit, living inside of us, is continually glorifying Jesus. And so, expect the Holy Spirit to keep directing your heart and minds toward Jesus. The Holy Spirit doesn't seek any glory for Himself. He simply wants to help you become captured by God's love for you expressed through Jesus. And as the Spirit glorifies Jesus in our minds and hearts, we become more like Jesus in our attitudes and actions. At the core of who we are, the Spirit is trying to transform us in to the character of Jesus. So, in Galatians 5 we read about the fruit of the Spirit being manifested in our lives, that's the character of Jesus being developed inside of us. In the first century a disciple of a rabbi wanted to become just like the rabbi. So, he became as familiar with the rabbi as possible. In Jesus' case they spent all the time with Jesus. They gleaned from his teachings and watched how he treated people and how He showed God's love and kindness and grace to common people. And the Holy Spirit wants to develop that same personality traits inside of each of us.

I hope you're beginning to capture what an incredible resource the Holy Spirit is to every believer. Why wouldn't you want to do every moment of life listening to and discerning this Spirit and allowing Him to share Jesus' teaching with us and share with us God's plans for our lives?

Next week we will dive in deeper to what the Holy Spirit is designed to do in and through our lives.

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- b.

2. How does God draw us to Himself?

3. According to Titus 3:4-7 how are we saved?

4. What does Jesus promise in John 14:15-21?

- a. He will not leave us as _____
- b. He will give us _____ advocate
- c. He will give us another _____

Advocate is from the Greek word, *parakletos* and means:

5. What will the Holy Spirit do according to John 14:25-26?

How can you tell if what you're hearing is from the Holy Spirit?

6. What will the Holy Spirit do according to John 16:14?

What role has the Holy Spirit served in your life to this point?

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