

Place: Lurgan Baptist 9:10:2001

Reading: John 16:1-14

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND YOU

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CHRIST

On one occasion Dr. Campbell Morgan asked R.W. Dale, pastor of the great Congregational Church in Birmingham, England how he managed to preach such solid doctrine in his Sunday morning sermons. " How do your people react to such heavy teaching ?" inquired Morgan, to which Dr. Dale replied, " I never ask them."

It might be added that when Dr. Morgan asked this question he was referring to the contents of a book by Dr. Dale on " The Atonement," a book that is still a classic today. In this series entitled " The Holy Spirit and You," we are touching a truth that has sadly been neglected. The shameful negligence of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit is the great sin of the Christian Church, and the greater sin of the average believer. I trust however, that as we look at this series that you might not find it " heavy teaching," but " helpful teaching." To someone who is not thoroughly acquainted with the work of the Holy Spirit, it is nothing short of amazing to discover what a great role the Spirit of God plays.

To some believer who is only accustomed to thinking of the Holy Spirit in terms of the new birth, and sanctification its startling to realise the Spirit's role in Creation, in Inspiration. But have you ever thought about the Holy Spirit in the life of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ ? Now remember the Lord Jesus is perfect God and perfect man, in coming to earth Paul says, " He made Himself of no reputation." (Phil 2:7) that is, " He emptied Himself." " He emptied Himself not by ceasing to be what He was, (God) but by assuming something He was not before (Man)." Now as you think of His perfect humanity, you cannot get away from role of the Holy Spirit in the life our Lord Jesus. Do you recall what He said the Pharisees ? " But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God." (Matt 12:28) How did Christ cast out devils ? By the Spirit of God !

Its interesting to notice that the work of the Holy Spirit in the Gospels follows the Old Testament pattern. As in the Old Testament, some saints were filled with the Spirit, but this ministry was limited to a few, only four people being mentioned in addition to Christ, John the Baptist, (Lk 1:15) Elizabeth (Lk 1:41) Zacharias (Lk 1:67) and Simeon (Lk 2:25) You see, when our Lord Jesus Christ was here during the days of His flesh, the Holy Spirit seemed to exclusively occupy Him. After His wondrous birth by the Spirit, you never have any reference to the Holy Spirit having anything do with any other individual, until after our Lord's resurrection. (Jn 20:22) I wonder has that thought ever struck you while reading the gospels ? After our Lord's birth, you have no reference in the gospels to the Holy Spirit having anything to do with any other individual ! He concentrated on our Blessed Lord.

John declares, " the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." (7:39) There had to be one man who could receive the Holy Spirit in His fullness, before that Gracious Holy Spirit could be poured out upon men. My there was never a moment in our Lord's

experience when He was not full of the Holy Spirit. Indeed John says, in contrast to the Old Testament prophets, " God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." (1 Pet 1:11 Heb 1:1) In Him, " dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Col 2:9) The word " giveth," is in the present tense, indicating a continuous and uninterrupted flow of the Spirit in His life. So our subject this is this " The Holy Spirit and Christ."

(1) THE SPIRIT'S ACTIVITY IN CHRIST'S LIFE

As I have hinted already, the Holy Spirit has a special relationship to the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ. (Rom 9:9) In (Phil 1:19) He is called the Spirit of Jesus Christ. And a study of the life of the Lord Jesus reveals that the Holy Spirit was active at every crucial juncture in the life of the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit was active at:

(a) THE BIRTH OF THE LORD JESUS:

Matthew speaking of Mary says, " she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." (Matt 1:18) Luke was a medical doctor and his account is even more extensive.

Look at (Lk 1:26-37) Now notice here:

1. THE HEAVENLY PLAN:

Consider: (1:28-31) The miraculous conception of Christ, clearly explained here to Mary, had always been the divine plan. In (Gen 3:15) we read about the

" woman," and " her seed." To say the least, because all other births mentioned in the Bible are credited to the seed of a man, this is a unique emphasis, and we believe, an emphasis regarding Christ, the coming seed.

A stronger statement is found in (Is 7:14) where it is written, " Behold a virgin shall conceive." Since no woman can conceive until virginity is broken, we are definitely introduced to a plan that is heavenly and divine. But notice not only (1)

2. THE HEAVENLY POWER:

Look at (1:35) I want you to notice here, that not one word is said about Joseph. Now Mary is engaged to Joseph and among the Jews at that time engagement was the next thing to marriage. You did not break it except by divorce and if an engaged girl was found to be unfaithful to her fiancée it would be treated like adultery. (Jn 8:41) So Mary is wondering how this is going to be done. Her perplexity is seen in (1:34)

" HOW ?" The angel says its not going to be done through Joseph, but through the power of the Holy Spirit ! Now this is the miracle of the Virgin Birth or Conception of the Lord Jesus ! You'll note that the baby was going to be " a holy thing," (1:35) which means " set apart, special," in this case " sinless." Peter speaking of the Lord Jesus says, " He did not sin."

(1 Pet 2:22) In order to " do no sin," you must have no sin in you.

Thats what John says, " In Him was no sin." (1 Jn 3:5) This is why He did no sin, in fact (2 Cor 5:21) underscores this by saying, " He knew no sin."

(2 Cor 5:21) Christ never experienced sin. Now the keyword in (1:35) is " overshadow," its the same word that is used in (Exod 40:35) " And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation because the cloud abode thereon and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." Now the word " abode, and overshadow," are the same. Its a picture of the Shekinah glory settling down on the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle. You see, Mary's body became the very temple of God, the Glory of God overshadowed her and the Power of God performed a miracle and the Lord Jesus was conceived in her virgin womb. in (Heb 10:5) the Lord Jesus says,
" A body hast thou prepared me." You see:

Adam was given a body directly by God without a man or a woman:
Eve got her body from the man:
Cain and Abel got their bodies from a man and a woman:
The Lord Jesus got His body through a woman, by the power of the Holy Spirit without the intervention of a man: Now do you see: (1) (2)

3. THE HEAVENLY PERSON:

" That holy thing Son of God." (Lk 1:35) Now when the Lord Jesus was born, He already had a divine nature. Christ existed before Bethlehem, but when the Spirit of God overshadowed Mary there was added to the divine nature of the Lord Jesus a human nature. But because he was conceived of the Holy Spirit, his was a sinless body. Just in passing, note that at our new birth, the Holy Spirit adds a divine nature to our human nature. (2 Pet 1:4) My the Holy Spirit was active at the Birth of the Lord Jesus and we believe in a Saviour who was virgin born !
" The claim that Jesus was virgin-born does not stir me emotionally in the least," says Leslie D. Weatherhead. Lord Soper says,
" Personally, I do not believe in the Virgin Birth. The reality of Christianity for me is that Jesus began as I began. He does not come to me as a supernatural being from another sphere." In more recent years we have men like the Bishop of Durham, Professor Jenkins coming on Television denying the Virgin Birth. We affirm our believe that Our Blessed Lord was virgin born !

(b) AT THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD JESUS:

" And Jesus when He was baptised, went up straightway out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him."
(Matt 3:16) Later, referring to this, He could testify,
" The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me to preach." (Lk 4:18) Here Christ stands at age of thirty with John at Jordan, and as He faces His short ministry of three and a half years He receives this distinctive anointing with the Holy Spirit. (Lk 3:23)
My to be effective and fruitful in our ministry, we too must not only know the fullness of the Holy Spirit but the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Do you recall what the Lord Jesus said to His disciples ?

" Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." (Lk 24:49) The word
" endue," is one of rich significance. The original carries the thought of being invested, or clothed upon with a new power. After, Pentecost, the disciples were to wear this power like a garment. Now please, do not confuse the Anointing of the Spirit, with the Baptism of the Spirit or with the Filling of the Spirit. The Baptism has to do with Relationship,

the Filling has to do with Realisation, but the Anointing has to do with Responsibility ! (1 Jn 2:27) And here is the Lord Jesus, about to take up His public ministry, experiencing this distinctive anointing ! Have you come to that place in your spiritual experience ? Do you know this continual clothing with power which is the result of a life of prayerfulness (Acts 1:14 2:4) and yieldedness ? (Acts 5:32) But notice something else:

(c) AT THE BATTLES OF THE LORD JESUS:

1. Look at Christ in the Place of TEMPTATION:

" Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." (Matt 4:1) " Then."

When ? After His baptism ! From a season of honour and glory Christ came to a season of conflict and suffering. First, came the testimony of God the Father,

" this is My beloved Son " (Matt 3:17) Then came the sweeping suggestion of Satan, " If thou be "

(Matt 4:3) After the approval of heaven, the assault of hell. After the dove the devil. After the benediction, the battle. From a Jordan experience to a wilderness conflict. My is God working in and through you ? Then watch out because Satan is planning and plotting against you ! Have you ever noticed that times of blessing are often followed by times of buffeting ?

A blessed Sunday, is often followed by some satanic attack ! " Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit to be tempted of the devil." (Matt 4:1) And after the temptation, He returned in the power of the Spirit. (Lk 4:14) Think of Christ (1) and:

2. Look at Christ in the Place of EXPIATION:

At Calvary as He pays the price for our sin ! Do you recall the words of Hebrews ? " How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God " (Heb 9:14) My the Holy Spirit was responsible for our Lord's sinless body, and then He filled that body, making possible our Lord's miraculous ministry. Now as Christ goes to die the same Spirit is there enabling Him to suffering our room and stead. " Through the eternal Spirit." Do you realise that the only witness we have in the world today of the sufferings of Christ is the Holy Spirit ? (Acts 5:32) Well, the first generation of witnesses passed away two thousand years ago, but in the Holy Spirit we have the only remaining witness to the death of Christ. That:

* Encourages me Greatly:

For when I stand before unsaved people and preach the cross, and if I depend on the Holy Spirit, God will bless and use such preaching.

My if I am true to the message of redemption, the Holy Spirit will visualise the sufferings of Christ, thereby making the preaching of the Cross the means of salvation. Yes, Christ died by the Spirit and that:

* Challenges me Spiritually:

For you and I as believers can only die in the same fashion. Paul says, " Mortify (put to death) your members which are upon the earth,

fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness which is idolatry." (Col 3:5) My how can we put to death the deeds of the body ? " By the Spirit ! (Rom 8:13) (1)

(2) THE SPIRIT'S MINISTRY FROM CHRIST'S LIPS

One of the themes that dominate our Lord's Upper Room Ministry is " Another Comforter." " And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter." (Jn 14:16) Another of the same kind. The Holy Spirit within them would take the place of the Lord Jesus beside them. But what is the role of the Holy Spirit ? What is the ministry of the Holy Spirit ? Well, the Lord Jesus in (Jn 16) talks about two fundamental ministries associated with the Spirit of God. They blind, and in consequence they " both fall into the ditch." But the Spirit of God is called here " The Spirit of Truth." Do you recall that petition in our Lord's high priestly prayer ? " Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy Word is truth." (Jn 17:17) My the inspiration of the Scriptures is in a unique sense the work of the Holy Spirit. " Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet 1:21)

2. THE TRUTH:

" He will guide you into all truth," or " all the truth." It means all revealed truth, which is recorded in the written Word. That we have in our hands " all the truth," is clearly implied by one of the closing verses in the last book of the Bible, " If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." (Rev 22:18)

One of the more troubling aspects of the Charismatic movement is the claim by some that the Holy Spirit is giving new revelation today. Most charismatics at one time or another feel that God speaks to them in some specific manner, either through an audible voice, an internal impression, a vision, or simply by using them as a vehicle to write a song, compose a poem or utter a prophecy. " God told me," has become the anthem of the charismatic movement. Strange private prophecies are proclaimed by all kinds of people who evidently believe God speaks to them. Surely the most infamous is Oral Roberts, preposterous death threat prophecy. Roberts told his nation-wide audience in the USA in 1987 that God has threatened to " call him home," if he couldn't raise eight million dollars by his creditors deadline. Whether and how that threat might have been carried out, the world will never know, Roberts received a last minute reprieve in the form of a large check from a Florida dog-track owner.

My do you know the word " canon," ? It means " a rule, standard, or measuring rod." The canon of Scripture, the sixty-six books of the Bible, is the measuring rod of the Christian faith and it is complete. In the book of Jude we have a crucial passage on the completeness of our Bibles. Jude says, " ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3) The " faith," refers to the entire body of God's truth. Where do we find that ? In the Bible." Once," or " once for all," means there will be no additional revelation. " Delivered," means it was delivered and it stands completely delivered now. My God's truth, has been once for all delivered and it stands complete. There is no new revelation ! But notice, there is another fundamental ministry associated with the Spirit of God.

(b) THE EXALTATION OF THE SAVIOUR:

Look at (Jn 16:14) The role of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus. Think of a telescope. What is its purpose ? It is not intended to call attention to itself. A telescope brings into sharp focus the beauties of the universe. It calls attention to the beauties of the heavens, not to itself. Imagine someone at Armagh Planetarium getting caught up with the intricacies of the telescope, and never using it to view the stars in this universe. Would you not think he was foolish ? My the purpose of the Holy Spirit is not to call attention to Himself, but to exalt Christ. " He shall not speak of Himself," this does not mean that He should not speak about Himself, for He has told us much about Himself in the Scriptures, but this is not His primary purpose. His primary purpose is to glorify Christ. Now do you recall what Christ's purpose was ? Well, he said, " And I seek not mine own glory," (8:50) " I have glorified Thee on the earth." (17:4)

The Lord Jesus glorified the Father, the Holy Spirit now glorifies the Son. One preacher has said, " If you see a parade and the Holy Spirit is leading it, Jesus ain't in it." One of the ways to evaluate any movement is to find the place it gives to the Lord Jesus. If the movement magnifies the Holy Spirit to the detriment of Jesus Christ, it is not of the Spirit.

As you listen to preachers, ask yourself the question, " what place does this preacher give to the Lord Jesus ?" Is Christ the centre of His preaching ? Is Christ the centre of your singing ? Is Christ the centre of your reading ? Is Christ the centre of your living ? The mother of the great preacher Andrew MacLaren advised him before he preached his first sermon, " Make much of Jesus." Is that not good advice for us all ? For the Holy Spirit exalts Christ and should not we ? (1) (2)

(3) THE SPIRIT'S PRIORITY FOR CHRIST'S LIKENESS

You see, the work of the Holy Spirit is not to make you like the Holy Spirit but to make you like Christ. His goal is to make us like Jesus, to help us live a Christlike life.

Do you recall what Paul says, " For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." (Rom 8:29) In other words the real test of the Holy Spirit in my life is not, Do I speak in tongues ? Can I perform miracles ? Is my preaching powerful ? The real test is, how much like Christ am I ? The Holy Spirit's work is much more internal than external. Of course the New Testament speaks about:

(a) A PERFECT LIKENESS TO CHRIST:

For John says, " We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 Jn 3:2) One momentary look at Him will be sufficient to produce in us the immediate image of the Saviour. My there will be no need for any purgatory ! One glimpse of Him, and the perfect portrait will at once appear. We are going to be conformed to the image of God's dear Son. We have problems with sin, down here, well one of these days, we shall be saved to sin no more. The psalmist says, " As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness." (Ps 17:15)

(b) A PROGRESSIVE LIKENESS TO CHRIST:

Do you recall what Paul says ? (2 Cor 3:18) the word here means " likeness." The great passion of the Holy Spirit is to make us like Christ ! How does the Holy Spirit make possible this likeness ? How do we take on the image of the Lord Jesus ? Well, there needs to be:

1. A HATRED FOR SIN:

You see, he is the Holy Spirit (Is 63:10) and as the Holy Spirit His glad work in your heart and mine is to transform us into the likeness of the Lord Jesus, to make us holy even as Christ is holy. My the Holy Spirit dwelling within takes away the love of sinning ? Have you a hatred for sin ? A desire to be holy ?

2. A HEART FOR PRAYER:

Did the Lord Jesus not live a life of prayerfulness ? At every turn of the way, do you not find Him praying to the Father ? " The prayer life of our Lord, " would be an interesting study ! Who inspires prayer ? The Holy Spirit. " We know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Rom 8:26) How did we become more like Christ ?

3. A HUNGER FOR TRUTH:

The only Bible the Lord Jesus had was stored in his heart. He quoted the Word of God in the wilderness and defeated the devil by it.

When He came to die, the Word of God was still upon His lips. Do you know what Paul says, the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit. (Eph 6:17) And the Holy Spirit makes us like Christ, by the creation of a passion for the Word of God. Finally, there needs to be:

4. A HUMILITY BEFORE GOD:

Do you hear Him in the garden ? " O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." (Matt 26:39) Left to ourselves there are many things we cannot do when we are brought to a crisis. But what may be impossible to the flesh is possible as we allow the Holy Spirit to have His way !

In St. Peter's Cologne, there are two pictures of the Crucifixion of Peter, that stand side by side. The reason for these two pictures ? Well, in the beginning of the 19th century, when Napoleon came and ransacked the city, he robbed St. Peter's of one of those two pictures the original and took it away. While the first picture was away from the city, the artist, in the absence of the original, painted another picture. In time the original picture was restored and the two were placed side by side. Experts now say that there is so little difference between the two pictures you cannot tell which is the original. In the absence of the original, the artist painted another picture of Peter. Now that is the glorious work of the Holy Spirit. The Original is absent. The Lord Jesus is in Heaven. But the Holy Spirit is here, and He is the Master Artist, and in the absence of the Original, He is painting the likeness of Jesus Christ upon the unworthy canvas of your life and mine.

Can I ask you, are you a worthy copy of the Original ? Conformed to His
Likeness !