

Monday, November 9, 2009

Have you considered some of the uniqueness of Christianity? No other religion claims God actually came here to earth and lived among humanity! (Luke 1 & 2, the Gospels) Christianity alone claims God paid the full price so each person (including you and me) can have access to Him and even a genuine love relationship with God. (Hebrews 9 & 10) No other religion claims God sends His Spirit to live with people who believe in Him and trust His truth. (Galatians 4:4-7)

This week I'm inviting you to consider one of the most remarkable and empowering truths in all Christianity...the Holy Spirit of God and the miracle of His relationship with YOU!

Did you know the Holy Spirit is fully God, just as much as Jesus and God the Father? Yes! John 4:24 is Jesus' strong statement to the Samaritan woman that God is Spirit. Several places in the Bible show us all three personalities of God each doing something different simultaneously. Consider Matthew 3:3-17...what do you see Jesus, the Father and the Spirit each doing? Luke 10:21 says "*at that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said 'I praise You Father, Lord of heaven and earth...'*". Or in the upper room, John 13-16, Jesus spoke about His Father and also the Holy Spirit, again clearly identifying the Trinity.

I know...it's very difficult for us to comprehend. I like this example: you are son or daughter of your parents / you are also career man or woman / you are also Calvary Church family member. Three totally different roles for you, but it's you in all three...right? Now if you could be home with your parents / at work in your career / at Calvary in worship...all at the same time, then you would be functioning similar to the Trinity. Does that help?

The Holy Spirit is God, thus has existed eternally and is seen in the first two sentences of the Bible! When it says "*The LORD was with Joseph*" three times in Gen. 39, is this the Holy Spirit? Or consider Numbers 11:17 and 27:18, do you see the Holy Spirit empowering Moses and Joshua? Or Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 14:6...each a different "judge" the Holy Spirit empowered to lead God's people at important times in their history. Consider 1 Samuel 10:6,7. What do you conclude?

Tuesday, November 10, 2009

This week we're considering one of the most miraculous aspects of Christianity...that God's Spirit actually resides with God's people, empowering them to live life victoriously!

Yesterday I gave you several Biblical examples of people who had the Spirit of God strongly influencing their lives. Did you know David was just a boy, perhaps 10 or 12 years old, when the Holy Spirit of God first "came upon him in power"? (1 Samuel 16:1-13) David was empowered by God's Spirit with much wisdom and patience, for even though anointed as king in that story, he didn't actually gain the throne for perhaps 30 years! During that time he served King Saul and several times Saul tried to kill him in jealousy...and God's Spirit protected him. Or what about the courage David had, as a young boy, to face Goliath (1 Samuel 17)? Was that boyhood arrogance, or God's Spirit upon him to gain victory for Israel?

You'll remember David had a tender heart that was passionate for God, and he loved worship...he wrote many of the worship Psalms in our Bible. After becoming king, he so desperately wanted the ark of God's Presence to be near him in Jerusalem, that he brought it there and instructed people to be worshiping day and night. (2 Samuel 6,7)

Sadly, even though David evidently enjoyed the presence of God's Spirit for many years, he was not immune to the schemes of the devil to draw his heart away from God and into terrible sin that would ruin his reputation (2 Samuel 11,12) and nearly cost him his life! You'll recall this is the story of David's adultery with Bathsheba, his deceitful plan to have her husband die in battle, and then his cover-up by marrying her while she was pregnant with his secretly conceived child.

While the Holy Spirit can provide great wisdom and guidance from God, He can also convict of sin...and Psalm 51 is David's psalm of remorse as he grieves with God. Notice please "*a steadfast spirit*" (10) "*a willing spirit*" (12). Both are the result of the work of the Holy Spirit. But notice vs. 11!! David's greatest fear was God would remove His Holy Spirit because of David's sin! Compare to Ephesians 4:30 *do not grieve the Holy Spirit*". Have you expected God's presence to remain even in your sin?

Wednesday, November 11, 2009

Sometimes God seems far away and uninterested, doesn't He? That was how it was for people living in the centuries before the Christmas miracle in Bethlehem. No prophet or priest had made any claim that they had a "fresh encounter" with God...for 400 years (since Malachi). But then, suddenly, unexpectedly, came the events of Luke 1!! An old priest standing in the Temple praying... was visited by an angel of God, with a message for all humanity!!

Have you ever considered how many times the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the Christmas story? May I urge you to read all of Luke 1 & 2, making a list of those who encounter the Holy Spirit! Why does God seem to make it a high priority that the Holy Spirit of God is personally, powerfully and persistently involved in nearly every aspect of the incarnation miracle...God coming to live on earth?

Now, may I ask that you look closely at each statement of relationship between the Holy Spirit and the people of Luke 1 & 2...and dig more deeply? What was the purpose God was accomplishing in each person through the "work" of the Holy Spirit in their life? John the Baptist was going to be a powerful spokesman for Messiah, proclaiming to a skeptical world that Jesus was coming. He eventually was beheaded (Matt. 14:1-12)! Mary was going to become pregnant by the Holy Spirit and then live as "mother" to Jesus, can you imagine her DAILY need for the Holy Spirit's wisdom and power? Elizabeth was going to have three months to "disciple/mentor" Mary (Luke 1:39-56), can you imagine the wisdom she would need to help Mary understand and prepare for her unique role? Simeon it seems was very familiar with the Holy Spirit and had learned to be obedient to His leading...notice Luke 2:25-27. What about the others?

Consider how the Holy Spirit made His presence known in each person's life experience and what were some of the results of these people living their lives under the regular influence of the Holy Spirit? Do you conclude that God desires a unique relationship between you and His Holy Spirit? Might God have significant things in His Holy Spirit plan for you? Are you living ready to be an active part of God's larger global purpose?

Thursday, November 12, 2009

Perhaps you've noticed Jesus did not speak much about the Holy Spirit throughout the Gospel accounts of His earthly life. John tells us of two key early conversations: Nicodemus in John 3:3-8 and an invitation to anyone who has deep inner thirst in John 7:37-39. Both are instructive. True spiritual birth that brings you into relationship with God and thus a citizen of His "kingdom" requires a miracle of the Holy Spirit. Jesus called it "born again" or "born from above". A spiritual nature simply cannot come into existence apart from a miraculous work of the Spirit of God! Time for the billion dollar question...have you experienced this "new birth" by the Holy Spirit in your life? If you have any doubt, I urge you to contact me:

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as I want to help you be sure! Why do I call it the billion dollar question? What price do you put on YOUR eternity? It's a very, very long time!!

It was in the upper room that Jesus "unpacked" the concept of the Holy Spirit for His friends. As you have time, work your way through John 13-16 and you'll notice these things: Humility rather than Pride is a pre-requisite for the Holy Spirit to come and reside with you and work in your life. (Jesus washing feet) God has no tolerance for pride. (Prov. 8:13) Jesus repeatedly positioned Himself in humility under God's Sovereign work in His life, and God's Holy Spirit then strengthened Him, led Him and protected Him. Pride says "I don't need You, God"!

The Holy Spirit empowers Truth rather than Deceit. How many times did Jesus say "I tell you the truth"? Consider John 8:12 "I am the light (truth) of the world, whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness (deceit)." Whenever you move away from thinking or speaking truth to...the Holy Spirit cannot be part of that!

Jesus invited His friends to Trust rather than Doubt (John 14:1) and that always positions you for empowerment by the Holy Spirit. I have found Scripture and Worship to be the two most effective means of inviting the power of the Holy Spirit to overwhelm me when I find myself drifting into doubt.

Finally, look at the condition of Love Obedience vs. Fearful Disobedience found in John 14:15, 23, 24, 31! Nothing invites the empowerment of the Holy Spirit more! Get it?

Friday, November 13, 2009

This has been a great week of discovering truth about the Holy Spirit and His readiness to empower your life! Paul wrote to his Ephesian friends, "I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being." (Eph. 3:16) He had experienced Jesus' promise "You will receive POWER when the Holy Spirit comes upon you." (Acts 1:8) and his desire was that EVERY Christian would live empowered...are you and I?

Why is it so difficult? Paul wrote from his own battle: "the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in (constant) conflict with each other." (Galatians 5:17) Did I hear you shout Amen!? You and I both experience this battle...everyday. But we can win it friends, because Jesus has defeated Satan and sin and death, right?

Consider Acts 19:1-7, Paul's first visit to Ephesus and his discovery that the "Christians" did not even know there was a "Holy Spirit"! Is it possible you've been doing "the church thing" and never experienced the resident power of the Holy Spirit? Consider Luke 11:13! "How much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him". Jesus said ASK if you don't have a sense of the Spirit's power! Yesterday I showed you some things which may be preventing the Spirit's work in your life. Time to look closely, talk with God, repent of that which may be standing in your way, and ask for a fresh filling.

Galatians 5:16-26 is one of the most powerful sections of the Bible concerning the contrast between a life lived selfishly, apart from God and one that is Holy Spirit filled and led! Look closely...what evidence do you see in your life? Don't pretend. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see yourself as He sees you.

Romans 8:5-17 is another powerful teaching about the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a true Christian (follower of Christ). I urge you to work through each verse carefully...what about your mind? Is "the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead, living in you"? I hope you have strong assurance of this.

Finally, Ephesians 6:10-18, is of course the battle plan for every Christian warrior who empowered by the Holy Spirit recognizes the daily spiritual battle and seeks to live victoriously! Are you armed and dangerous, empowered by the Holy Spirit?



Pastor Doug Anderson

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