



The Ministry of the Holy Spirit: The Purpose

INTRO

Our need for the Spirit of God is just as great as ever. The needs around us demand it, and the needed changes within us demand it. I have to agree with author John Stott on this when he observes, *"Today, the general picture of the church remains one of steadily diminishing Christian influence in an increasingly secular community. The dead, dry bones of the church need the living breath of God."*

Author Jack Taylor has an analogy that dramatizes the helplessness of churches today that depend on their own ingenuity and efforts, rather than on the power of the Holy Spirit. He writes,

"To a large extent, we go around beating on trees with bare ax handles. At intervals, under the suspicion that this is not getting the job done, we call for strategy conferences on how to make our ax handles more effective, or improve our swing. We take a census of the trees, motivate the wood choppers, declare that this is the day for felling forests, and with polished ax handles and persuasive personnel, we embark towards the woods. But, alas, though the noise of these workmen is great, the sound of falling trees is missing..."

Taylor concludes... *"This is movement without might, energy without effectiveness, much doing but little dynamic! There is little to show after all is done but bruised hands, and tired bodies, and wounded trees. What is missing? The ax head of course - the cutting edge of it all. And what is the ax head of the Church? It's the life of God in Christ released through the work of the Holy Spirit! The church with all our abilities and programs are but handles on which swings the ax head of God's life. It's the ax head that has to be recovered!"*

As we continue to look into the ministry of the Holy Spirit, tonight, we dive into the **PURPOSE** of the Spirit.

- Last week we discussed the PERSON of the Spirit.
 - That He is divine and, at the same time individual
 - That He is invisible yet tangible
 - And He is HOLY by nature of being the very essence of God.

Trying to define the purpose of the Holy Spirit is almost more complex than describing His Person.

- There's not one statement that you could make about the Spirit's purpose because it's so multi-faceted.
- As I studied the work of the Spirit and His purpose as God, I was able to frame it as a threefold purpose. Here's an umbrella statement that we will work from tonight.

QUOTE

“The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to accomplish the will of God around us, within us, and through us.”

Pastor Josh

APPLICATION

When we think of the Holy Spirit accomplishing God's perfect will, I think this threefold description can be found within the framework that Jesus established in His teaching of the Spirit. As we will see tonight, Jesus taught us that the Holy Spirit is working around us. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Jesus teaches us that the Holy Spirit is now within us because of the ascension of Christ into heaven. Jesus also demonstrated that the Holy Spirit comes upon us and works through us by giving us supernatural gifts and power to fulfill our calling to be his witnesses as we carry out the great commission.

1 The Spirit Around Us

APPLICATION

It's important for us to understand that the Holy Spirit is not a mere expression of a force that solely exists for the Christian, but rather the person of the godhead that has always been present and active and is present and active within our present-day context. The Holy Spirit is not confined to work simply within the church. He actively works in the world and the lives of those who live apart from Christ.

I will note that those unregenerated through faith cannot receive the Holy Spirit in the sense of personal filling. **Galatians 3:14** tell us clearly that the promise of the Holy Spirit can only be received by faith. However, the reach of the Holy Spirit regarding the truth He inspires and the evil He restrains is not limited.

Jhn 16:8-10 NKJV - 8 "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 "of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 "of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

CONVICT

Convict - To bring forth undeniable evidence that dismantles every other opposing view.

- Through the gospel, the Holy Spirit illuminated the darkness of man's truly sinful state, exposes the truth about God's judgment upon those guilty of sin, and reveals the hope of righteousness available through the risen Christ.

The reality is that you would not be saved, redeemed, going to heaven, aware of God, awakened to righteousness, or spiritually connected to Christ apart from the work of the Holy Spirit.

- He is the one who exposed you to the truth of the gospel, took the blinders off to give you understanding, convinced you of your sinful state when you thought you were

pretty good and gave you the hope that God still loves you and desires to reconcile you to himself!

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QUOTE

“*The Spirit does not merely accuse men of sin, he brings to them an inescapable sense of guilt so that they realize their shame and helplessness before God.*”

Merril Tenney

APPLICATION

I don't know about you, but this is one thing that truly comforts me about the state of our world today.

- In the midst of all the wickedness, manipulation, deceit, and falsehoods in humanity, the Spirit is still speaking, convicting, convincing, exposing, drawing, and calling.
- When I live and preach the gospel, I don't solely have to rely on my best efforts to change someone. The Holy Spirit will do the work He does best. When a person resists the truth, they aren't resisting you; they are resisting the Holy Spirit.

Act 9:4-5 NKJV - 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" 5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."

Goad - what is a goad?!

- An oxgoad is a long **iron or wooden rod with a prick** at the end used to prod cattle to go in the right direction. The greek root is the word that is translated as sting or prick (OKJ - pricks).
- You're exposed to the gospel, and the Holy Spirit is stinging you. You try to avoid it, argue against it, run from it, but everywhere you go, he's prodding your soul to get your attention and push you back toward the truth.

But here's the frightening thing. The more one resists the prod, the more calloused they become to it. Resist the spirit, ignore the truth, and run from the conviction that you need Christ and his forgiveness, and there will come the point when your conscience becomes seared and calloused to the point that you will be given over to the lie and the liar. You will reap the destructive consequences of your unwillingness to respond to the Spirit's call.

THE RESTRAINER

I believe that the Holy Spirit not only convicts of sin, but in many ways, He restrains the fullness of sin from running its course.

2Th 2:7 NKJV - 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.

While there's no complete consensus, many believe that the restrainer Paul refers to is the Holy Spirit. Considering that the "mystery of lawlessness" is the spirit of the antichrist, righteousness comes from the Spirit of God.

- Imagine the moment the Spirit lifts His restraint from sin's power and Satan's deception. The church is raptured, so there's not a voice of absolute truth in the world. It's almost as if the world will go from wading in the waters of sin and rebellion against God to taking one final step into the deep end!

But this Spirit who is at work in the world is the same Spirit that takes residence in us to connect us to the life of God.

2 The Spirit Within Us

BIBLE PASSAGE

Jhn 14:16-17 NKJV - 16 "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- 17 "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."

There was a sense that the disciples, up to that point, had experienced the Holy Spirit's work as observers. They knew His power, for Jesus worked miracles in the power of the Spirit. But until Jesus breathed on them so that they might be indwelt by God, they had not known fellowship with the Spirit, the life of the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit, or the deep personal connection to God that only the Holy Spirit can bring.

John 20 records the first reception of this promise of Jesus for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. After the resurrection of Jesus, he appeared to the disciples on multiple occasions. At the end of John, as Jesus reminds them of the mission he will be sending them on, we read:

Jhn 20:22 NKJV - 22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

A. HE SEALS US

2Co 1:22 NKJV - 22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

Eph 1:13 NKJV - 13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,

Eph 4:30 NKJV - 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

sealed and guaranteed

- **Sealed - we belong to the king. His impression is on us and he declares that no one can tamper with his property.**
- **Guaranteed - down payment. He has given us proof of His ownership in our lives by giving us the Holy Spirit.**

B. HE REASSURES US

Rom 8:15-16 NKJV - 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." **16** The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

Gal 4:6-7 NKJV - 6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" **7** Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

C. HE SANCTIFIES US

1Co 6:18-20 NKJV - 18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. **19** Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? **20** For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

D. HE TEACHES US

Jhn 16:13-15 NKJV - 13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into 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. **14** "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. **15** "All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.

1Co 2:13 NKJV - 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

E. HE CHANGES US (INTERNALLY NOW, EXTERNALLY LATER)

Gal 5:22-23 NKJV - 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Rom 8:11 NKJV - 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

F. HE UNITES US

1Co 12:13 NKJV - 13 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.

3 The Spirit Through Us

ILLUSTRATION

Ball on a table not moving

DAY OF PENTECOST

In John 20, Jesus, with a gentle breath, filled his disciples with His promise and His presence. Not long after this, in Acts 2, the gentle breath turned into a galeforce wind on

the day of Pentecost when that same Spirit who dwelt in them came upon them, manifesting His power to testify to the reality of Christ.

You could say that when a person places their faith in Christ, Jesus breathes on them, allowing them to receive His presence in their lives. Their very bodies become dwelling places of God's Spirit. God then proceeds to turn up the leaf blower and moves them into places and positions where He manifests His power through their lives.

QUOTE

“*Jesus continually breathes fresh breath on and into His Church. “Receive the Holy Spirit” isn’t a one-time command. It’s an attitude. It’s the permanent posture we should maintain toward the Holy Spirit. Our approach to Him should always be one of receiving...*

BIBLE PASSAGE

Eph 5:18 NKJV - 18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled (continually) with the Spirit,

A. HE EMPOWERS US

Act 1:8 NKJV - 8 "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."

2Ti 1:7 NKJV - 7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

1Th 1:5 NKJV - 5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

No less than 12 times in the NT is the Holy Spirit alongside the word power. He gives power of speech, power of miracles, power of witness, power over fear.

Luke teaches us the Jesus was conceived in the power of the Holy Spirit. He was led by the Spirit, and did signs and wonders by the power of the Spirit.

B. HE DISTRIBUTES TO US

1Co 12:7-11 NKJV - 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

QUOTE

“ There is no transaction that happens between man and God that isn't mediated by the Holy Spirit.
