

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

WEEK 6: THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: PART 2

INTRODUCTION

Few subjects are of more immediate moment in the experience of the believer in Christ than the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in His relation to the spiritual life. Important as other considerations may be from the standpoint of doctrine and accurate interpretation of the Scriptures, the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer has a prior place because it is directly related to every reality of the believer's experience. **The believer's sanctification, spiritual understanding, assurance, service, prayer, and worship all spring from the work of the Spirit within.** A proper understanding of the doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer will do much to unlock the possibilities for spiritual blessing and usefulness, and it is, accordingly, the duty of those who teach and preach to give careful attention to its study and proclamation.¹

TWO MAIN VIEWS ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

Continuationism

- Those who hold to this position agree that every spiritual gift mentioned in the Bible is for use and should be practiced today.
- Many (not all) also hold to a "5-fold ministry," believing that the 5 offices mentioned in **Ephesians 4:11** (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) are restored for the church today.
- They would see apostles, not in-line with Paul or Peter, but more as those who are sent out to start movements and have a special blessing from God as great leaders.
- Within the continuationist movement, you have two main groups...Charismatics and Pentecostals.
 - While both groups hold to the same ideological belief that all the gifts are in operation, there should be noted some stark contrasts.
 - Firstly, Pentecostals are known for their flamboyant, over the top focus on the Holy Spirit. Everything from holy laughter to slain in the spirit to levitating to far off prophecy.
 - This is not the same with Charismatics. Most Charismatic churches you would visit would look very similar to MBC, a focus on expository preaching, elder led, small groups, etc.

¹ John Walvoord, <https://bible.org/seriespage/8-work-holy-spirit-believer>

- Pentecostals are known for having a higher view of their feelings or following a “word” from the Lord. Charismatics are known for being more academically minded and attempting to be sensitive to the leading of the Spirit through His Word.
- Pentecostals have no distinction between men and women in the pulpit. Charismatics only allow men to serve as church pastors/elders.

Cessationism

- Cessationism is the view that the “miracle gifts” of tongues and healing have ceased—that the end of the apostolic age brought about a cessation of the miracles associated with that age. Most cessationists believe that, while God can and still does perform miracles today, the Holy Spirit no longer uses individuals to perform miraculous signs.
- A major point not to miss...we still believe in miracles and healings just not the man who thinks he is a healer from God performing miracles at will.

WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER

- “To make the long story short, the Spirit does everything for us that we need in our life with God.”²

Conviction

- John 16:8–11 “And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”
- It is a fascinating picture in which one can imagine three elements of the procedure being presented. The first appears to be like a charge for which the defendant has been indicted. The second can be envisioned as the standard to which the defendant is required to conform, and the third can be viewed as the rationale the presiding judge uses to render the verdict. All of these elements can come within the basic meaning of this Greek verb, which is “bring to light, expose, set forth.”³
- Spurgeon says of the Holy Spirit, “He comes on purpose to convince men of sin, to make them feel that they are guilty, greatly guilty— so guilty that they are lost, and ruined, and undone. He comes to remind them not only of God’s loveliness, but of their own unloveliness; of their own enmity and hatred to this God of love, and, consequently, of their terrible sin in thus ill-using one so infinitely kind. The Holy Ghost does not come to make sinners comfortable in their sins, but to cause them to grieve over their sins.”

² John M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2006), 162.

³ Gerald L. Borchert, John 12–21, vol. 25B, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 165.

- To be convicted is to experience an utter horror of our sin. Our attitude toward sin becomes that of Joseph who fled temptation, crying out, “**How could I do this great evil and sin against God?**” (**Genesis 39:9**).
- If the Holy Spirit did not come to convict people of their sin, there would be no salvation. The world, left to itself, sees nothing wrong with whatever it does. It certainly does not see their evil as opposed to God.

Baptism of the Spirit⁴ and Indwelling of the Spirit

- How do people receive the Spirit? First, the Spirit regenerates, giving us a new birth.
- In the new birth, the Spirit is like the wind, which goes anywhere it wants (**John 3:8**).
- So, in the first instance, it is not we who receive the Spirit but the Spirit who receives us.
- This initial regeneration is sometimes called in Scripture the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Paul describes it this way in **1 Corinthians 12:13**: “**For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit**” (cf. Matt. 3:11; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16).
- ***You see that the baptism of the Spirit includes all believers.*** In fact, the baptism of the Spirit is what makes us one body. Without that baptism we are not part of the body of Christ.
 - So, everyone in the body has been baptized in the Spirit.
- ***Some people think that the baptism of the Spirit is an experience that comes after conversion.*** But 1 Corinthians 12:13 and other texts show that that is not so.
- ***Everybody who is converted,*** everyone who is a Christian, is baptized in the Spirit.
- ***There are not two groups in the church,*** one baptized in the Spirit and the other not. If that were true, it would be a basis for disunity rather than, as Paul says, a basis for unity.
- ***Nor is this a repeated experience.*** It happens at regeneration, at the new birth. And as we shall see, the new birth happens only once.
- In the baptism of the Spirit, the Spirit comes on us with power to serve Jesus as his covenant people. He unites us to all the other people in his body, so that together with them we may do God’s work in the world.
- Closely related to the baptism of the Spirit is His indwelling.
- After being baptized into the body of Christ, the Holy Spirit takes up residency in the person. Some of the major characteristics of indwelling in the NT are⁵:
 - Always at salvation (just as baptism)
 - Inclusive of all believers individually (just as baptism)
 - Permanent

⁴ John M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2006), 163–164.

⁵ John MacArthur and R. Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2017), 368.

- Cohesive in the collective sense of the universal church
- An empowerment for holy living and fruitful service
- We see this in some key passages in the NT:
 - Romans 8:9–11 “However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God *dwells in you*. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead *dwells in you*, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who *dwells in you*.”
 - 1 Corinthians 3:16 “Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the *Spirit of God dwells in you*?”
 - 1 Corinthians 6:19 “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of *the Holy Spirit who is in you*, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?”
 - 2 Timothy 1:14 “Guard, through *the Holy Spirit who dwells in us*, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.”

The Filling of the Spirit

- “Now, although the baptism of the Spirit occurs only once, there are other experiences of the Spirit that occur repeatedly. Ephesians 5:18 says, “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.” Paul addresses this command to Christians, and so to people who are already baptized in the Spirit. The filling is something more.”⁶
- There are three “fillings” of the Spirit in the Bible. One being in the OT, which we briefly discussed last week. Then there is a special filling which came upon people at very specific times in the Gospels and the book of Acts. Finally, there is the filling that applies to us as post-Pentecost Christians.
- **Special Filling in the Gospels and Acts (Pentecost):**
 - The uniqueness of this filling is the Greek word which is used *πίμπλημι*. The other Greek word which is used after the Gospels and Acts is *πληρόω*. To be sure, *πληρόω* is also used in the Gospels and Acts, but never in the unique sense of *πίμπλημι*.
 - *πίμπλημι* signifies a special filling of the Holy Spirit in the Gospels and Acts.
 - Speaking of John the Baptist in Luke 1:15 “For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and *he will be filled* with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb.”

⁶ John M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2006), 164.

- Acts 2:4 “And they were all *filled with the Holy Spirit* and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.”
- Acts 4:8 “Then Peter, *filled with the Holy Spirit*, said to them, ‘Rulers and elders of the people...’”
- Acts 4:31 “And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and *they were all filled with the Holy Spirit* and began to speak the word of God with boldness.”
- Acts 9:17 “So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and *be filled with the Holy Spirit.*’”
- Acts 13:9 “But Saul, who was also known as Paul, *filled with the Holy Spirit*, fixed his gaze on him...”
- What do these (and other) instances have in common? **They were special empowerments for specific purposes in which the duration of time was left undefined.**
 - This is not something that we should be seeking out in our modern church age as it was for the establishment of Christ coming and the church being solidified.
- **Normal filling for the church today**
- πληρόω is what was used for the normal filling in the church then and now.
- This is “a disposition characterized by the Spirit’s control and not restricted to a special task. An emphasis on an abiding relationship with the Holy Spirit. Such fullness is to be the desire of the contemporary church.”⁷
- From Acts 14 through Revelation 22 and beyond (at least until the rapture of the church), there are no mentions of “filling” that relate to enablement or equipping as had been the case in the Old Testament, the Gospels, Pentecost, and the period after Pentecost through the first missionary journey. It is thus assumed that the “filling” described in *Ephesians 5:18–21* prevailed as the exclusive form of filling beginning with the 2nd missionary journey, which began in Acts 14.”⁸
 - Acts 6:3 “Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, *full of the Spirit* and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.”
 - Acts 13:52 “And the disciples were continually *filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.*”
 - In the above passages, we are simply told they were filled with the Spirit, not filled for a special purpose or occasion. This is to be the case for every believer.

⁷ Justin McKitterick, *Theology I*, The Expositors Seminary, p. 186.

⁸ John MacArthur and Richard M., eds., *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2017), 371

- Ephesians 5:18 “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit...”
- Here is our command for the church...be filled with the Spirit.
 - Here is our πληρόω verb in the imperative, signifying a command from Paul.
 - Paul commands believers to continue being filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit.

What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

- Humans have two choices—be filled by the flesh in unbelief (Rom. 1:29–32; see Acts 13:10, 45; 19:28–29) or be filled by the Holy Spirit in salvation and sanctification (Eph. 5:18). Being filled authenticates one’s genuine salvation by allowing God’s will to prevail in obedience to Scripture’s teaching and the Holy Spirit’s direction.⁹
- By using Scripture in the life of the believer, it produces the effect of being filled with, and subsequently walking in the Spirit.
 - Colossians 3:16 “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”
 - Galatians 5:16 “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.”
- When we live our life in the power of the Spirit our actions will be yielded to the Word of God for us to accomplish the work of God.
- “Those who are filled with the Spirit are not said to have more of Him, but rather He has more of them. Further, filling is determined by a walk of faith whereas baptism, sealing, and indwelling occur automatically at regeneration, i.e., at saving faith.”¹⁰
- We are told that we are baptized with the Spirit but that we are responsible for the filling of the Spirit. We are never left without the means to accomplish the commands that God gives.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE BELIEVER WORKING TOGETHER

Sanctification

- This is the current place in your life between justification (salvation) and glorification (in heaven). You have been saved so that you will be holy in the world and before God.
- Romans 6:19b “For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, *resulting in sanctification.*”

⁹ John MacArthur and Richard M., eds., *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (Wheaton,: Crossway, 2017), 373.

¹⁰ Justin McKitterick, *Theology I*, The Expositors Seminary, p. 187.

- 1 Thessalonians 4:3–4, 7 “For this is the will of God, *your sanctification*; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality,” “that each of you know how to possess his own vessel *in sanctification* and honor...,” “For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, *but in sanctification.*”
- 2 Thessalonians 2:13 “But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation *through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.*”
- To be sanctified is to have the Spirit, the Word and faith to follow what God commands.
- It is a continual saying no to sin and yes to Christ.
- ...sanctification requires a lifetime to complete. As we grow in grace, we are gradually – but steadily – changing to be more like Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:18). This occurs in a process of daily spiritual renewal (Colossians 3:10). The apostle Paul himself was being sanctified even as he ministered to others. Paul claimed that he had not reached perfection, but that he “pressed on” to attain everything Christ desired for him (Philippians 3:12).¹¹

Prayer

- Two times in the Scriptures we read about praying in the Spirit.
- Ephesians 6:18 “With all prayer and petition *pray at all times in the Spirit*, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints...”
- Jude 20 “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, *praying in the Holy Spirit...*”
- What does pray in the Spirit mean?¹²
 - “Praying in the Spirit is not a feeling, it’s not an emotion. It’s not some kind of ecstatic experience. It’s certainly not babbling in tongues. It’s not unintelligible speech. Praying in the Spirit simply means that you’re praying consistently with the Holy Spirit’s purpose and will. That’s praying in the Spirit.
 - The way to understand it best perhaps is Romans 8 where it says, “The Holy Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.” In other words, in an internal trinitarian language that has no words. “The Holy Spirit is always praying for us, and we know” – says Paul – “that the Father hears His prayers because He always prays according to the will of God.”
 - So praying in the Spirit then is praying in the will of God.
- Should we pray to the Holy Spirit?

¹¹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/progressive-sanctification.html>

¹² <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/70-50/bible-questions-and-answers-part-74>

- Jesus is our advocate or intercessor, and the Holy Spirit is the One who assists us in articulating our prayers to the Son.
- All that we do is fully trinitarian, therefore, to pray to God the Father *is* also praying to God the Holy Spirit.
- If it is okay to pray to the Father, and the Son, is it alright to pray to the Holy Spirit? The answer would be yes because the Holy Spirit is also God. Nevertheless, we never see an instance in the Bible where anyone prays to the Holy Spirit. Why is that? The answer is that the Holy Spirit does not bear witness of Himself. He bears witness of the Son (John 15:26). But still, we can pray to the Spirit because we are also called into fellowship with the Spirit. 2 Cor. 13:14 says, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.”¹³

Service

- **1 Peter 4:10–11** “As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; *whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies*; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”
- The Holy Spirit gives gifts to believers and then empowers us to use those gifts (1 Cor 12:7, 11).
- We know that every believer has gifts, though they vary from person to person (1 Cor 12:4).
- We should not be jealous of other’s gifts but know that we have gifts that are uniquely given to us for the purpose of serving in the area where God has placed us (1 Cor 12:14–18).

Daily life

- The Spirit also functions as fruit-producer in our lives. When He indwells us, He begins the work of harvesting His fruit in our lives (Galatians 5:22-23).
 - These are not works of our flesh, which is incapable of producing such fruit, but they are products of the Spirit’s presence in our lives when we are walking in the Spirit.
- Among those functions is that of revealer of truth. The Spirit’s presence within us enables us to understand and interpret God’s Word (John 15:26).
- **2 Timothy 1:7** “For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.” We have a new boldness towards the world. Not out of pride but knowing that we have the Holy Spirit and God on our side, we are already conquerors.

¹³ <https://carm.org/about-doctrine/to-whom-do-we-pray-the-father-the-son-or-the-holy-spirit/>

FALSE TEACHINGS AND BELIEFS

Slain in the Spirit

- This is when a minister lays his hands (or waves them over a crowd) on someone or multiple people, and they collapse to the floor. They claim they were overtaken with the power of the Holy Spirit and simply could not remain standing.
- Those who support this idea typically use passages such as Revelation 1:7, where John sees the Son of Man and “fell at His feet like a dead man.” Some other passages of men falling as they see the glory of the Lord or having an encounter with Him (Eze. 1:28; Dan. 8:17-18; 2 Chron. 5:13-14; Matt. 28:1-4; Acts 9:3-6).
- While these passages may seem to fit what these churches are teaching, upon further investigation they fall very short. **Firstly**, Scripture never mentions a man touching or waving his hands to knock people down. *These men fell to the ground or became like dead men as they had an actual encounter with the Lord.*
- **Secondly**, these encounters were not done at the whim of a person. Furthermore, they only happened five times in Scripture and never in a church setting. This was never the normative practice for OT Israel or the NT church. Paul did not teach or ever reference anything like it expect in his own account of his salvation in Acts 9. Paul was with unsaved men and the Lord came to Paul to speak directly with him.

Prophets and Prophecy

- Prophets were foundational to the church (Eph. 2:20), they were there for the church to be built upon.
- Having Christ as the chief cornerstone, they built the foundation for the church. After, we see the church growing and spreading throughout the world. The church today is still being built upon the foundation which was laid some two thousand years ago.
- We need to consider the source of the information which the prophets spoke. We know they spoke on behalf of God and recorded it for us in the pages of Scripture. This means their information could never be wrong or misleading. If God is still speaking today, what comes forth should be recorded as Scripture. But we know that the Bible is complete and there can be nothing more added or taken away (Rev. 22:18-19).
- So, because prophets were foundational to the church and God’s word is His complete revelation to us, there are no more prophets in the church today.

New Revelation from God

- Today, we have many, many people from the conservatives all the way over to the Pentecostals who are claiming that they are hearing from God, and Some have even written books about it.
- If God still speaks today, what do we with His words? How can we know that they are from God?

- God’s final revelation to us is found in the pages of the Bible. If God is still speaking to us today, then it would be adding to the pages of Scripture; though we know that has been forbidden (Rev. 22:18). Furthermore, Jude 3 says, *the faith* has been once and for all delivered to the saints. We have no need of any new revelation from God. We have everything from Him that we need for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3).
- It is by the Holy Spirit that man is illuminated through the Scripture to know God. Once born-again, the believer is not to seek new or more revelation, but to seek to submit to the Scriptures and walk in the Spirit (Rom. 8:4; Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:12). The only way we can know what God desires from us is by reading and hearing the Scriptures taught.

Led By the Spirit

- To be led by the Spirit means that we are following the Spirit. Many times throughout Scripture the believer is exhorted to walk worthy (Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:12) of the Lord. He is the One who has called us unto salvation, therefore we submit our lives unto Him.
- It is through our spiritual disciplines which we can learn more about what the Lord desires and how we can walk worthy of His calling.
- As we read the Scriptures we begin to find out the things which the Lord desires and detests. Paul says we are to “let the word of Christ dwell within you.” (Col. 3:16). This means the main source of our knowledge of the Lord’s desires for us is going to come from the Bible.
- As we are actively killing sin and resisting its temptations, we need to be reading the Scriptures. What we read in the Scriptures we then need to tirelessly put into practice.
- We are no longer under the law, trying to please God by our works of righteousness (Gal. 5:1). We have access to God now through prayer (Eph. 2:18). Through prayer, we can draw near to the Lord in our time of need, having the confidence that He will give us mercy and grace (Heb. 4:16).
- Following the Spirit’s leading in our life, we will see the fruit of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18-20). This is what the believer should be striving for, not looking for signs and wonders, dreams and visions or any other manifestations.
- The Spirit uses His Word for teaching, rebuking and to train believers in righteousness (1 Tim. 3:16). This is what it means to die to the flesh and walk worthy of the Lord who called you.