

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Believer's Life

by Mack Tomlinson

This sermon focuses on the new covenant ministry of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life, emphasizing the importance of understanding and honoring the work of the Spirit. It delves into the foundational truths about the Holy Spirit's role in regeneration, indwelling, teaching, spiritual understanding, gifting, fruit production, sanctification, and the assurance of our future inheritance. The sermon also highlights the need to avoid grieving, quenching, or resisting the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Scripture: Titus 3:5, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 2:12, 1 Corinthians 12:7, Romans 15:13, 1 Thessalonians 1:6, Romans 5:5, Ephesians 4:30, 1 Thessalonians 5:19

Topics: "Holy Spirit's Role", "New Covenant Ministry"

Description

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Transcript

Good morning. Welcome. Well, since Jeff and Alan have been teaching through the sections of the Old Testament and the New Testament that they have been in, and this is my single turn to do this for a while in the morning Bible study, I've just chosen a topic that is vitally important and applicable to the Christian life from the pages of the New Testament.

And what I wanna do is be a little catechetical in terms of just kind of doing a catechism, but a little more than that in an area that is not primarily going to be commentary by me as much as it is truths with scriptural proofs and number of those. So I would encourage you, if you're equipped to take notes, it'll be beneficial, or you can come back later and listen to this morning's session. So let's pray and we will begin.

Our Father, this morning, we thank you for the greatness of our God, our God, Father, Son, Holy Spirit. We thank you for the immeasurable treasure of the gospel and the kingdom of God, and that we have been made a part of that kingdom. We thank you for the immeasurable treasure and gift of the Holy Scriptures, the words of God in this book.

And we would bow our hearts this morning to ask you to open our eyes to see this morning in this morning Bible study and in the worship time as your word is opened, that you would speak to us and teach us that we might be transformed and changed, instructed and quickened and renewed for your glory and for our good. So Lord, bless us as we're together now for the glory of Jesus Christ. We pray in His name, Amen.

Romans 8 is just a springboard text. I wanna speak this morning on the new covenant ministry of the Holy Spirit to the believer in the Christian life, the new covenant ministry of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. And so you'll notice we won't even read in Romans 8, but I want you to just notice verse one, the Holy Spirit is mentioned.

Verse four, verse five, verse nine, verse 11, verse 13, 14, 15, 16, et cetera. So we know that as Paul is progressing through Romans, he is bringing us into what different ones have called kind of the Mount Everest of the New Testament in some ways, life in the spirit. Paul is unpacking and giving to us the great broad reality of life in the spirit.

Now that we are in the economy of the Holy Spirit, now that we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, that we are to be led by the Spirit, taught by the Spirit. And so here's a question that wasn't original with me, but I want you to think about it this morning. At different levels, what all was Jesus to His disciples for those three years that they had with Him? What was He to the disciples? How would you answer that? Well, He was present with them.

He was their rabbi. He was their Lord. Now you begin to fill in some blanks.

He was their mentor. He was their friend. Can you come up with some more? You could.

Right now, your brain is thinking of others. In the same way, whatever Jesus was, the fullness of what He was to His disciples, I want you to make this leap. So is the Holy Spirit to us.

You think that's a stretch? No, because the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are Lord, they are Lord, and all that Jesus was to the disciples, rabbi, teacher, friend, comforter, et cetera, the Holy Spirit has replaced the Lord Jesus on earth since the ascension to be to us in an ongoing progressive way what He was to the disciples for three years. So the new covenant ministry of the Holy Spirit to believers, now my goal in the next 40 minutes is simply to summarize briefly and biblically the person and work of the Spirit in our lives. Because He does not get enough honor properly.

In our day, due to the last 100 years of bad teaching, Pentecostalism, liberalism, extremisms, either way, the Holy Spirit, much bad teaching has infiltrated so much of the professing church, and there's been confusion and chaos widely. So this morning, I wanna remind us of His vital importance in the church and our individual lives. Because around the end of the 19th century, religious liberalism swept across America, beginning in the 19th century, end of the 20th century, swept across America from Europe, and then dispensational teaching swept the American church, really beginning with the Scofield Bible.

That's another history lesson that's very interesting. And it affected vitally the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. What's He do? What's He doing today? What's He not doing today? How do we view and understand the ministry and work of the Holy Spirit? And then even in our day, in the last 20 years, some groups within the reform community have clearly departed from a solid experiential interpretation of the Holy Spirit's work in the life of the Christian, in the life of the church.

And as a result, it's produced much damage and much confusion and false teaching. So the pendulum always swings, doesn't it? And so the pendulum has swung regularly to one extreme of in producing Pentecostalism and charismatic false teaching and practices, to the other extreme of extreme cessationism where the Holy Spirit doesn't work supernaturally today. Is that clear in how I'm expressing it? There is this extreme pendulum swing and both extremes are wrong.

Because if you examine closely, I'm talking really closely, the biblical theology of the person and work of the Holy Spirit, you begin to see that both extremes are wrong. And so let's dive in this morning to see clarity on this subject because though we're not going into the Old Testament at all this morning, His work was supremely active from Genesis chapter one. Remember the very first beginning of Genesis one, one through three in there, the Spirit of God hovered over, moved over the face of the water.

So from Genesis through Malachi, the Holy Spirit was vitally at work. And it's the Holy Spirit then that ushers in the New Covenant era and brings in, brings John the Baptist who comes preaching. And then here comes the Messiah, anointed by the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit, led by the Spirit into the wilderness, comes out of the wilderness, full of the power of the Spirit.

So when you read the New Testament through the lenses of open-mindedness, looking for the person and work of the Holy Spirit, it is just phenomenal how saturated the New Testament pages are with this reality. Now, God the Father, the Bible teaches us, purposed the work of redemption, right? God decreed it, He predestined it, and He caused it in the fullness of time to begin to come to pass. But God the Son comes then and does what? He accomplishes redemption.

In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, born under the law that He might redeem us from the curse of the law. While the Father predestined it, that is redemption, and the Son came and accomplished it, it is the Holy Spirit who executes it and administers redemption. And if it had not been the Holy Spirit who came to you and I in our deadness and sin and made us alive, we would not be here this morning.

What do we owe to the blessed work of the Holy Spirit? And yet, if we're honest with ourselves, down deep in our thinking, in our praying, in our affections, do we, just a question, do we relegate more to the Father and the Son than we do to the Holy Spirit? So, stated truths, I'm gonna give several, and then the scriptural proofs concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian. Truth number one, it is the Holy Spirit who alone regenerates us unto life. When we talk about regeneration, we're talking about drawing.

We're talking about conviction. We're talking about illumination, revelation. We're talking about our eyes being opened to see Christ for the first time.

It is the Spirit alone who regenerates us unto life. John 3. John 14 through 16. Now this is homework.

I just hope that some of us will be stirred to go and dive into, in the weeks ahead, maybe the months ahead, maybe the years ahead, into focusing on this area of the Spirit's work. John 3, John 14 through 16. Titus 3.5, what does that say? It's not by works of righteousness, which we've done, but according to His mercy, He saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

Titus 3.5. And then you have Ephesians 2, which we won't quote. I'm tempted to right now, but I won't. Ephesians 2, one through two.

So it's the Spirit alone who has brought life to us. Christ purchased it for us, but it's the Spirit alone who brings it to us. The great book by John Murray.

I'm always encouraging people to read it. Redemption Accomplished and Applied. And he goes into the father's role and the son's role.

But the glorious part of that book for me when I read it was the Spirit application of the Gospel and redemption to us. Redemption Accomplished and Applied. It is the Holy Spirit alone who regenerates us to life.

Truth number two, it is the Spirit specifically who indwells us permanently. It is the Spirit specifically who indwells the Christian permanently. John 14 through 16, several times in there, but sometimes just outright, the Lord told the disciples when He has come, the Comforter whom I will send and whom the Father will send, He will be with you forever.

He will abide with you forever and shall be in you. John 14 through 16. In 1 Corinthians 3, 16, Paul asks this question of the Corinthians, do you not know that you are the temple of the Holy Spirit and that God's Spirit dwells within you? This amazing, think of the difference, the contrast between the Old Covenant and the New, the Holy of Holies wherein dwelt the presence of God.

And no one could go into the Holy of Holies but one person, one time a year, because of the Holy presence of Jehovah. And yet, the glory of the New Covenant is you are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you. What an amazing reality.

I think I've told this story before, but half of you have forgotten it, so I'm gonna tell it again. A Christian came to me one time and said, Mac, smoking has been a bondage in my life and now I can't seem to quit. I've tried things, I don't know what to do.

And I didn't know he was gonna ask me this question. Well, you know, I thought in the moment, here's what I said, because I thought if I just lecture him, if I just give him the law, you know, will that help him? The only thing that came to my mind to say to him was this, okay, well, the next time you go to buy cigarettes, ask the Holy Spirit which brand he likes. And he looked at me.

I said, well, look, if you're a Christian, you're the temple of the Holy Spirit and you're sucking that smoke in your lungs, so ask him which one he prefers. I don't know if he ever quit or if it ever helped him, but I think he heard the fact that my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. And therefore, the great mystery is Christ dwells in us by the Spirit and our bodies, they are holy.

So it is the Spirit who lives in us. And that's a foretaste and a down payment of the guaranteed full payment in future glory when we are fully exactly like the Lord Jesus Christ in perfection, in the glory. All right, truth number three, it is the Spirit alone today who is our teacher.

And we need elders and teachers and pastors in the church, of course. But 1 John 2 speaks to this reality that it is the Spirit ultimately who is our teacher. 1 John 2, John says, the anointing you have received teaches you all things.

The anointing that you have received teaches you all things. So whatever you have truly been taught has been taught by God, the Holy Spirit to you. It is the Spirit alone who is our teacher.

John 14, 26, John 16, 13. Then number four, it is the Spirit, this is connected to number three, it is the Spirit alone who gives spiritual understanding of God's Word, 1 Corinthians 2, 12. Now we have received not the Spirit of this world, but the Spirit which is from God.

In order that we might understand the things freely given to us of God. Don't you love those moment when the light bulb turns on in your head and a verse comes alive and you see something in the moment and it's real, you spiritually are perceiving it? It's more than intellectual understanding. It's something that is seen and known in the moment and felt.

That is the Spirit of God in the moment giving you spiritual insight and understanding into the truth that you're reading, that you're hearing. The Spirit of God alone gives the spiritual insight into God's Word and the truth. Alright, next number five.

It is the Spirit Himself who sovereignly gives to the church and to every believer all spiritual gifts. It is the Spirit Himself that gives to the church and every individual Christian all spiritual gifts. So if you're a believer, you have spiritual gifts right now.

At least one, maybe more. And by the way, you can receive different gifts at different times for different purposes God has. But 1 Corinthians 12, 7-11 speaks to this.

1 Corinthians 12, 7-11 and it says, all these gifts are the work of the same Spirit who gives them sovereignly as He purposes and as He wills. No one can have whatever spiritual gift they want. No one can earn it, work for it, be good enough for it, plan their life around it.

No, the Spirit will sovereignly give to you as a member of the body of Christ the gifts you need for the building up of the body of Christ for the profiting of all. The sovereign Spirit gives those according to His will and purpose. All right, truth number six.

It is the Spirit who produces all spiritual fruit in our lives. It's the Holy Spirit who produces all spiritual fruit in our lives. Now think about this, brethren, for a second.

We have a vital relationship with our Heavenly Father, but His work in the Old Testament is history. And we see the work of redemption His work in the New Testament is history in terms of the Gospel being accomplished on the cross. The work of the Son came.

He was here for 30 plus years and He accomplished our redemption, but He left, didn't He? The Son of God, Jesus Christ, left. But the Holy Spirit is the person of the Godhead who you have a vital relationship with in an ongoing way. And it is He who makes real the Father and the Son to us.

But your communion with the Father is only by the Holy Spirit. Your communion with Christ is only by the Holy Spirit. So does He, the Spirit, have a vital, primary, practical, relational place in your life as a Christian? This is so important.

I can't overemphasize it. Because you will not live the Christian life fruitfully in any way whatsoever if your relationship with the Holy Spirit is not proper in understanding and in experience. It is the Holy Spirit alone who produces spiritual fruit in us and through us.

Romans 15, 13. 1 Thessalonians 1, I think it's verse 6. And Galatians 5, the more well-known one. The fruit of the Spirit.

What are those? Love. Only by the Holy Spirit will you love others. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, self-control, goodness, gentleness, kindness.

Now hope and power aren't mentioned in Galatians 5. They're mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13, 14 and I think in 1 Thessalonians 1. Hope and power are a fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives. How fruitful are we? To the degree you and I welcome the Spirit's work in our lives and endeavor to stay full of the Spirit, to that degree we will be fruitful and only to that degree. If you're barren, go back to this foundational reality because it is Christ who accomplished redemption for us, but it's the Holy Spirit who produces the life of Christ in us.

While Christ accomplished redemption for us, it is only the Spirit who produces the life of Christ within us. All right, truth number seven. It is the Spirit who experientially, underlined, experientially sanctifies us, our whole Christian life.

It is the Spirit Himself who experientially sanctifies us, all our Christian life. And be assured if you're a believer, He is always at work in you, changing you, sanctifying you. We feel it at times when He's near.

We don't feel it at times, but it's always happening. But this is the work of the Spirit. It is He who fills us with assurance and fills us with the love of God, Romans 5.5. It is He who empowers our praying, Romans 8. It is the Spirit who mortifies our sin along with us mortifying our sin.

It's the Spirit at work in us to put sin to death, Romans 8 also. And He guides us and He leads us. And contrary to popular theology, He speaks to us and He gives even glorious experiences.

Don't get afraid. Settle down. He gives glorious experiences of joy unspeakable.

You remember who was martyred in Acts 7? Somebody call the name out. Stephen. As Stephen is being stoned to death, you know what happens? Verse 55, but Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, in the moment, he's filled.

Well, wouldn't you want to be filled if you were being stoned to death? I think you'd kind of want to be. Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and he sees the glory of God. It says he sees the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of the Father.

And that's all he needs to die well. And his last dying words were what? Anyone remember? Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. So the Holy Spirit, in the hardest situations, can give you peace and joy and assurance and strength because it is He who experientially sanctifies us.

All right, truth number eight. In our relationship with the Holy Spirit, He can be grieved by us. Ephesians 4, 30.

What does it mean for us to grieve the Holy Spirit? In essence, it seems to mean that when we sin and we violate the Word of God, we violate God's commandments and we have an active sin that grieves the Spirit of God in our lives. It grieves Him. Ephesians 4, 30.

Grieve not the Holy Spirit by whom you were sealed under the day of redemption. He can be quenched by us. 1 Thessalonians 5, 19.

Quench not the Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 5, 19. To quench the Spirit kind of seems the opposite of grieving when He is working and moving and leading and active in you or through you.

You can resist and hinder His activity. You quench. You quench.

And it's a direct command. Quench not the Holy Spirit. He can be resisted and lied to.

Thus, He's not a force or an energy. He's a person. He can be lied to and resisted.

Acts 5 and Acts 7. He can be blasphemed, which according to Matthew 12, is an eternal sin that will never be forgiven. Matthew 12. So in our relationship with Him, we can grieve Him, we can quench Him, we can resist Him, we can lie to Him.

And many people over the centuries who had dealings with the Spirit of God, the Pharisees, the teachers of the law, people throughout church history, who had real dealings of the Spirit of God as Hebrews 6 talks about and Hebrews 10 talks about. They blaspheme the Spirit and they will never be forgiven, not in this life nor in the life to come. Matthew chapter 12.

Truth number nine. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the down payment of our certain future inheritance of eternal life and eternal glory. He is the gift, the down payment of our certain future inheritance of eternal life and eternal glory.

Romans 8 speaks to this so wonderfully. Romans 8 14 through 17 says this. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children, then what? Then heirs. Join heirs of God and join heirs with Jesus Christ.

It is not entered into the mind of any Christian throughout history all that it means that we will be joint heirs with Jesus Christ. It's incomprehensible, but it's certain and true. Your future inheritance and the fact that the Holy Spirit lives in you now is the down payment that that future inheritance is yours for sure.

Glory to God. Brethren, you and I can do nothing in the Christian life, nor can the church without the vital and essential full relationship we have with the Spirit of the Lord, who is Lord, because where the Spirit is Lord, where the Spirit of the Lord is actively at work, there is life and liberty. Because the Holy Spirit is the only authenticator of Christ to our hearts.

In closing, remember, it was not the Father who came down to be our Redeemer. It was the Son of God. But the Son did not remain on earth, He left.

And it is the Spirit who is present and does all things for the Father and the Son in the church and in the kingdom and in your heart and in my heart. Grant the Holy Spirit his proper place in your life and in your walk and in your home. Amen.

Let's pray. Our Father, we confess to you through the Lord Jesus and by the Holy Spirit that we want all that you have for us in kingdom life and living. And we're reminded of the apostle saying to us, the kingdom of God is not made in dream, but it's righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Thank you for the truth. Apply this to our lives. Take some of us down a path of great, wonderful discovery in the days and weeks and months and years ahead in this very area.

Bless your truth to our lives and to our affections for the glory, Lord Jesus, of your name. We thank you. Amen.

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