

# Holy Spirit, Church and Nations - Part 2

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The primary work of the Holy Spirit is to secure the place of the Lord Jesus and to bring the heavenly nature of Christ into believers.*

**Duration:** 52:34

**Scripture:** Acts 2:4, John 3:30, Acts 1:9-11, Acts 2:38, Acts 4:31, Acts 16:6-7, Ephesians 5:18

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the futility of human striving and the deceptive nature of the world. He argues that despite thinking they are free, humans are actually prisoners and deceived by lies. The preacher emphasizes the importance of living a truthful life, both in conduct and in fellowship with others. He highlights the need for worshiping God in spirit and truth, as stated in the Bible.

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## Transcript

...is particularly the Spirit of Christ, the Old Dispensation, Spirit of God, in the more general sense. You have only to turn over the pages of your New Testament to see how often that association, connection, is noted. Because we are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts.

The Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of the Christ. He, the Holy Spirit, was given to the Son for His mission in and throughout this dispensation. Jesus was anointed of the Holy Spirit for the particular work that He had been chosen by the Father to do, and especially in this dispensation.

That work, that mission, did not end when He left this earth. There is a very true sense in which it only began when He left this earth. Not altogether, but in a fuller way, a much fuller way, He began His real mission when He ascended to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

It's an impressive thing to note how the Holy Spirit is always related to Jesus. The preaching at the beginning was undoubtedly in the power of the Holy Spirit. They were filled with the Spirit and then immediately they preached.

There's no doubt about it that they preached by the Holy Spirit. It was the Holy Spirit who was inspiring them to preach. Inspiring the preaching.

What did they preach? It was all about the Lord Jesus. It was all about the Lord Jesus. Preaching about Him, the Holy Spirit inspired them to preach the Lord Jesus.

The Holy Spirit was in those acts which are strewn throughout the early record. The acts were truly the acts of the Holy Spirit. Many, many forms of His activity, not only in the miracles that were performed, but an apostle ascended to take his way in a certain direction.

The record says the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not. The Spirit of Jesus suffered them not. The same apostle writing to a church said that he trusted through their prayers and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

The supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. And that supply was for the accomplishment of his mission. The Holy Spirit was in and behind all the teaching, fulfilling the promise of the Lord Jesus.

When He, the Spirit of truth, would come, He would guide into all the truth. The truth that we have in the New Testament is Holy Spirit provided truth. But it all relates to the Lord Jesus and the conformity of believers to the image of the Son of God is the work of the Holy Spirit.

He is the transforming and conforming Spirit, but His model is Christ. The Holy Spirit is wholly and utterly committed to the Lord Jesus. We may say that the inclusive, and many-sided, but the inclusive work of the Holy Spirit is firstly to secure the place of the Lord Jesus wherever He can.

We must remember that. We must not put it in other ways. We must not think of it in other terms.

The Holy Spirit will do this and that. Yes, He will do this and that. And perhaps a hundred or a thousand things and aspects are all related to one thing.

They are not things in themselves. We must emphasize this here very, very strongly. Holy Spirit may give light.

Holy Spirit may give leading. Holy Spirit may do quite a lot of things. But do remember that everything that the Holy Spirit does is included in one object.

It is all to one end, and that in the first place is to secure Christ's place in this universe, in men, in this world, to secure the place of the Lord Jesus. Our way of speaking may mislead us very often. We would say the work of the Holy Spirit is to save souls.

Yes, quite right. Why? Just to have them saved? No. That the Lord Jesus shall have His place.

Those souls are to be the residences of the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit may instruct believers and build them up. What for? Just that they shall be mature Christians? Not at all.

But that the Lord Jesus shall have a larger place. No matter what the Holy Spirit does, He has but one all-inclusive object, and in the glorifying of the Lord Jesus. That is, the giving of the Lord Jesus His place.

And then, filling all things with Christ. Filling all things with Christ. Do not think of being filled with the Spirit, of the fullness of the Spirit, in any other way than this.

That the Holy Spirit's filling is intended to be filling all things with Christ. You can get these ideas. Oh, be filled with the Spirit.

Then, what will happen? Well, we'll have such a good time. We'll have ecstasy. We'll have enjoyment.

There will be power in our life. And see, all those things. Think about being filled with the Spirit.

Oh, that's a wonderful idea. But do remember, dear friends, that the filling with the Spirit is in line with that eternal purpose of God. That eternal thought that He, the Son, shall fill all things.

And you can have these experiences, and these ecstasies, and these emotions, and all these things, and yet, and yet, be sadly lacking in the Lord Jesus. Have all the teachings, the truth, and yet, and yet, the measure of the Lord Jesus to be so small, so small. It's terribly sad to go about the world and meet Christians who would lay down their life for the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Holy Ghost, the person of the Holy Spirit, and so on. And yet, you don't meet the Lord. You meet them.

You come up against something that is themselves. You are hurt by them. Yes, it can be like that.

No, simply, but essentially, the Holy Spirit is committed to one end, one end only, to fill all things with Christ. And if you want to know what it means here, they were filled with the Holy Spirit, You see, by the effect, they simply talked about the Lord Jesus, preached Christ. Everywhere they went, it was Christ.

They were bringing Christ with them wherever they went, and as far as they were allowed to, as far as consent was given and openness of heart was provided, they, so to speak, filled people with Christ, and filled places with Christ, filled companies with Christ. That was the work of the Holy Spirit. And unto that, the Holy Spirit is always seeking a transformation in believers, because we naturally are not a bit like Christ, and naturally, we don't give very much place to Christ.

The work of the Holy Spirit is to transform us into the image of Christ. It is Christ, only Christ, the beginning and the end. Now, in that connection, the great governing truth is that the nature of Christ is the foundation of the work of Christ.

The character of Christ is the foundation of the work of Christ, of the work of the Holy Spirit. The measure of Christ is the measure of the Spirit. You cannot have more of the Holy Spirit than you have of Christ, and it is the character of Christ.

These two things are so painfully overlooked, the detaching of the Holy Spirit from Christly character, and thinking of it as something in itself, the Holy Spirit, the work of the Holy Spirit, the power of the Spirit, the works of the Spirit, working for the Lord. They are things in themselves so often, in the thoughtless, thoughtless mentality of so many. But the Holy Spirit is not thoughtless about this.

He's not a bit thoughtless about this. The Holy Spirit only commits himself to the Christ. Make no mistake about that.

He will not commit himself to you or to me, or to any institution or thing. He only commits himself to Christ, and it is according to the degree of Christ that the Holy Spirit commits himself. And when we say the degree of Christ, we mean the character of Christ.

You see, the whole Bible comes down powerfully and mightily upon that truth. All the types and the figures of the Old Testament about the Holy Spirit, the anointing oil and so on, you look more closely, you will find that a certain provision is always prescribed by God for that symbol. If you take the oil alone, that oil shall not come upon man's flesh.

The anointing requires garments that cover man's flesh, requires certain provisions and prescriptions of God before that anointing oil dare be applied. We could extend the symbolism further afield, but there it is. And when you understand, you see, that that prescription of God, whether it be the garments or whatever it may be as the basis required by God for the oil to come upon that person, you will find that that prescription is something relating to the character of Christ.

The character of Christ. And it is therefore foreshown that the Holy Spirit is only given to the Lord Jesus. He will only be given to you and to me as the Lord Jesus has his place and in proportion to the measure in which he has his place.

More of the Spirit, more of the Spirit, a greater fullness of the Spirit, very well, you're asking for the Holy Spirit to displace you and all that is of you, and you're going to have a bad time. You're going to have a wonderful, marvelous time of ecstasy if only you get filled with the Spirit. Don't make any mistake about it.

That may be one side of it, but it may be that you'll have to be taken through the fire and through the mill to come there. It depends on how much resistance there is to Christ. The clearer the way, the more selfless the motive, the quicker it can be done.

But the principle, the principle is that these two things go together, the work of the Spirit and the character of Christ. Don't get away from that. Character of Christ is the foundation of the work of the Holy Spirit.

That, of course, brings us face to face with the fact that Christ is an altogether different creation from what we are. He's a different creation. When he was here, he was a stranger in this world.

He was a stranger. It is written the world knew him not. And while, of course, that applies specifically to his deity, it also applies to his unique, unique humanity.

The world did not know him in the sense that it could not understand his mentality, his difference, his way, his candor, and understand that by which his course and conduct would govern. The world doesn't do it like that. The world doesn't do it like that.

For one thing, the world does not act on principle. The world acts on policy. Jesus absolutely refused from beginning to end to be governed by policy.

What is policy? It's a strange person from another world who doesn't do that in some way or other. No, the world knew him not. He's a special and different kind of person, a different creation from what we are.

That was the real explanation of what a difficult time he had in this world. He was differently constituted. You see, he was a Holy Spirit-constituted being.

He was begotten of the Holy Ghost. He was Holy Spirit-constituted by birth and by anointing in his mission, and being so different in his constitution, upon that basis he was tested and perfected in a contrary world. You can get a hold of the significance of that.

It will explain a lot. See, when you and I are born anew, we are born of the Holy Spirit, begotten of God, born of the Holy Spirit, and in the deepest reality of our being, there's a difference of constitution. If that is not true, if anybody who bears the name of Christian, they are not a Christian.

A Christian born anew has, in the innermost part of their being, another constitution introduced. Maybe in its elementary form as of babyhood, but it's something different, altogether different. It's the difference, the

crisis from all other people.

Now then, the whole of our life under the Holy Spirit is the testing and the trying of that other constitution in a contrary world. We are in a world now as born-anew believers, which is contrary to our nature, contrary to our constitution. And that constitutes our difficulty, our suffering, our trial, our testing, and the basis of our perfection.

You know quite well that anything, anything in creation that does not become subjected to adverse forces never becomes anything with any stamina or endurance in it. Is that true? Hothouse plants can't stand up to anything. You've got to nurse them all the time.

Anything that you protect from adversity will suffer, suffer terribly, come really to nothing that abides, can stand up to anything. The law, the law of God is that stamina, endurance, strength, maturity, the abiding comes out of test, trying, and adversity. May explain a lot why the Lord allows the winds to blow so cold and fiercely against his Church and his people.

But there it is. What is the Lord doing? Well, here is his own son in this world with another constitution being tested, tried, and perfected by the very difference of the world in which he was placed, the difference to his own constitution. He was made perfect through suffering, and the suffering was of this kind, conflict of two constitutions, the one in the world and the one in himself.

You and I are supposed to have this heavenly constitution, and it's an awful thing to live in this world with a heavenly constitution. It ought to become more and more awful. You can settle down and become a dean, comfortable and happy in this world.

You've abandoned the very constitution of heaven. If it is true that more and more it is difficult for you to endure this world as being what it is, then that's a good sign. It's a good sign.

Now that's exactly what happened to Lord Jesus. He was of a different order, and his suffering came along the line of testing and trying by reason of another constitution in the midst of which he had to live. And this heavenly constitution had to triumph.

It had to triumph over the other that was all about him pressing upon him. And thus he was made perfect through suffering. There is no other way for you and for me.

Flames are lost. In the end, in the end, if we abide faithful, if we do not cast away our confidence, if our faith does not give way, it's because of the difficulty, the hardness of this spiritual conflict. We do not let go.

We shall emerge a full-grown man, spiritual, whose stature will increase unto the stature of Christ. Well, that's the history of the Church, and that's the history of believers. Now, where's the Holy Spirit coming in this? Well, you see, the Holy Spirit came from heaven when that question had been fully answered in the Lord Jesus.

I put it in this way, whether it sounds doctrinal or not, I don't know, but there was a question all the time through the earthly life of the Lord Jesus. Really, there was no doubt, but there was a question. A battle was going on, and when there's a battle, there's always a question as to the issue whether this heavenly thing was going to gain the ascendancy or whether this earthly thing, under Satan's power, was going to gain the ascendancy.

It was a big battle on this one question. Heavenly kingdom here opposed to an earthly kingdom, the kingdom of God opposed to the kingdom of Satan, and the other way, this conflict, and it all focused upon and centered in the soul of this one man. The battle rages right to the end, right to the end, to the last moment of the cross.

Who is going to prevail? Which side is going to win? The whole thing is, is the heavenly nature going to triumph over this diabolical nature? When that question was fully and finally answered, Mark you, it was answered when he reached heaven. He is being received. That's the right way to talk about the ascension.

Being received, getting a reception in heaven means that the question is finally asked. The heavenly man has triumphed in his constitution in a world, in a world so utterly different than its constitution. The question is answered.

The whole thing is settled. When that is settled, the Holy Spirit comes. And what does he come to do? He comes to bring the heavenly nature of that man into believers.

And then the battle starts up again. And that's the battle that you and I are in. After all, it is not a battle of outward things, it's a battle of spiritual things.

That's the way it comes to it. Battle may take up many forms, many things, people, situations, circumstances, but after all it focuses upon our spirit, upon our heavenly life, upon our heavenly constitution. That's the center of it all.

That's the battle. Are we going to yield to the devil and his constitution going to get the other hand in that eligibility, in that bad temper, in that loss of good faith and all that? Is it going to, or is this other? Faith in God, the love of the Spirit, the patience of Jesus Christ. Is this going to triumph? That's the form of the battle.

The Holy Spirit has come to bring into us another constitution. And then so to work as to completely develop us according to that new constitution until we too are perfected in Christ. This comes back, doesn't it, all the time as a matter of the measure of Christ.

There is no, I said this afternoon, there is no substitute for the Holy Spirit. No substitute for the Holy Spirit. That opens the door at once to that whole terrible change which came about so early after the apostles, even before they had gone again, after they had gone.

The substitute for the Holy Spirit, there they are, the crystallization of Christianity into an earthly man-made system. The composing of creeds, of Christian doctrines to become the legal form of government. The forms, vestments, and orders, clericalism and what not, all came in so early.

Organization, yes. All substitutes for the Holy Spirit. Moving away from the spiritual to the ecclesiastical, the sacramental results, the world triumphed and the devil lost and initiated the emasculated church, a changed Christianity which cannot stand up to the forces that are at work in this universe.

Well now, let's come to one thing. We're talking about what the Holy Spirit is and He is inclusively, we have said, the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of the Christ. And we have further said that that means the character of Christ.

And He is inclusively, we have said, the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of the Christ. And we have further said that that means the character of Christ. We just look at one thing this evening about the character of Christ as taken up by the Holy Spirit in His own nature and therefore in His own words.

The Holy Spirit was called by the Lord Jesus the Spirit of Truth. The Spirit of Truth. Now there's a very large plate given by God to Truth.

He is the God of Truth. He is very jealous over the truth. He desires truth in the inward path.

He holds lines in abomination. He has confined all liars to the lake of fire. He excludes from the New Jerusalem everything that makes a lie.

Jesus called Himself the Truth. I am the Truth. And He is called the faithful and true witness.

On the other hand, Satan is called the liar and the father of lies. Now note, the whole structure of creation collapsed when the lie entered in. Satan injected a lie into man.

Man accepted it, received it. The result, the whole structure of creation collapsed. The man himself became and remains a falsehood.

He is not the man that God made him or intended him to be. He is a deceived creature. There is a lie in the very constitution and nature of man as he is.

He is not the true man that God intended. He is a misrepresentation of the man that God spoke of when He said, Let us make man in our own image and after our own likeness. There is a lie in the work of man.

And in all his work, he hopes and believes and works and strives and it comes to vanish in the end. It is in vain. Disappointing, a wasteland at the end of all his strivings and all his work.

He thinks and argues that he is free, but he is a prisoner. He thinks and believes that he knows. He proves to be a fool.

He thinks that he can do and he does many, many great, seemingly wonderful things. But all his doings lead to greater problems to be solved. And the greatest problem of all is satisfaction, is rest, is joy.

See? No, man is building not on rock, but on sand. His world is run by lies. No, this is a terrible thing to say.

How rare downright honesty is in this world. What a lot of misrepresentation and deception and pretense and mixture and exaggeration and appearance has to be drawn into the running of this world. It's true.

Many a well-meaning man who in his own soul revolts against it will tell you that it's not possible to be successful in a world like this, if you're going to be honest, absolutely honest. And the lie has got into religion. The indictment of our Lord, of the Pharisees and the scribes was hypocrisy, pretending.

Because this is true, that this creation is shot through and through with a lying deception, man cannot stand. A false world is bound to collapse if there is anything that is not absolutely true according to God in Christianity. It will go to pieces.

It will go to pieces. Anything, anything that has in it an element of untruth has in it the seeds of its own ruin. The Holy Spirit, therefore, is called the Spirit of Truth.

Jesus is the eternal values. The values which are eternal are those which are absolutely true according to the standards of God. The value of the gospel is that it is the truth of the gospel.

The truth of it. The eternal certainty of Christ is that he is the truth. Now this is a very challenging thing.

It separates and discriminates between not the black lie always and the transparent truth but between the beautiful lie, the soulish lie, the sentimental lie, the formal lie, the religious lie. John the Baptist said about the Lord Jesus that he would lay the axe to the roof and his hand was in his hand. He would thoroughly purge his writings.

What's the axe? What's the winnowing stand? It's the truth. And so he looked on the temple in Jerusalem and he looked on the temple at Mount Gerizim in Samaria and then to the woman who thought that one or the other, especially this one, which he was, sat in Samaria was the truest thing. He said, believe me, woman, we are coming when the true worship is to worship God in spirit, in truth.

God is a spirit. They that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. We are coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall men worship God.

He's discriminating between the formal, the traditional, the historical, the symbolic, if you like, at best, and the real. It's the truth. And he said, only that which is spiritual after the very essence of the divine nature is truth.

Therefore this temple and that temple will collapse. Not one stone will be left upon another. It's not the truth, it's false.

It's false. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of truth. It is, dear friends, very, very important, solemnly important that our position is a true position.

You and I have got continually to look at our position. Is my position a true one? Is it secondhand? What is it? What is it? The position in which I stand, how did I come to this position? What is it that puts me in this position? Is it, to me, so true as to be absolutely a matter of life or death? If it's like that, true like that, you can't resign from it. You can't give it up.

You can't withdraw from it. It's your very self. To do so would be to commit spiritual suicide.

It's so true. That's the Lord Jesus. He goes through his life again and here he is.

Oh, this man is not just come to perform something and to give some teaching and that sort of thing objectively. This man is this thing. He's going to that cross to shed the last drop of his blood because it's so real, so true.

The vision is that it can help. Our position must be true or we'll not stand, we'll collapse, we'll go to pieces. If there's a lie, we will disintegrate as the creation did when the lie entered in.

Our life must be true. Our life must be true. Our conduct must be true.

Our walk before others must be true. Our walk before God must be true. Our life must be true.

It's going to be an agony, mark you, for it to be so. It's got to be true. Our testimony and our teaching must be true.

Is it true? Our fellowship must be true. No faint love. No pretension of fellowship.

No trying to make believe. No merely outward thing. Our fellowship must be true.

The Holy Ghost will be satisfied with nothing less than being true in the matter of fellowship. He'll say, look here, look here, you are trying to make believe in that matter of fellowship with that person. You're trying to bolster up something.

You're trying not to let something collapse. But it's not true. He'll take you down deep until it is true.

Our church must be true. Must be the true church. Say much about that, didn't we? Our business must be true.

Oh, do, do take this matter of the Holy Spirit into your business. Is your business really true? Is your manner of business really true? When you are going to pay for something, are you quite sure that you are paying all that you are to pay for that? That you're not getting it to your own advantage and someone's going to suffer in this transaction? Is that true? You see, even John the Baptist raised questions like that at the Jordan. About exacting more than should be.

Yes, in business, we must be true. You can't have one order of things in Christianity and another one in the world. True in business? Our spirit must be.

Well, we must never be less than we profess. God help us. We must never be more than we profess.

God help us. He is the Spirit of truth. That, you see, is the character of the Lord Jesus.

To be filled with the Spirit. It's a very, very exact thing to do. An anointing of fire, trying to steal a march on the Holy Spirit.

No, no, he's not being taken advantage of like that. He cannot hoodwink the Holy Spirit. He cannot.

Now, these are very solemn. But what do you think of me when you talk about being filled with the Spirit? You all want to be filled with the Spirit. We all do.

We hear the command, be filled with the Spirit. We want to be filled with the Spirit. But understand that the Spirit is the character of Jesus Christ.

He's the Spirit of Jesus Christ. And in this one respect, he is the Spirit of truth. To be filled with the Spirit means that everything's got to be true.

Exact. Right. Real.

No lies. No falsehood. No hypocrisy.

No make-believe. No pretend. No exaggeration.

No imitation. Everything. True.

Then, oh God, make us like his Son in heaven. And then the Holy Spirit will do things. The Holy Spirit will do things in a church like that, to a people like that, and to lives like that.

He will. You will not have to try and get it done. He'll do it.

See, that brings us right back to the point of this afternoon. Why? Things change. When at the beginning they were so spontaneous, so spontaneous, so mighty, so wonderful, he was present with the Spirit of truth, and when he came up against something that was untrue, it was dealt with.

It was dealt with and not tolerated. It's fierce, Sir Peter, I know, but he's jealous of the jealousy of the Holy Spirit for the truth. He sees that the church can be wrecked and ruined if there's a lie getting in.

Satan is seeking to bring it in. Why has Satan filled my heart? Well, I don't want you to go away oppressed, heavy. But we started off by saying we are concerned about this matter of a life of fullness and a powerful witness in the world, and troubled because that impact upon the world is not as it was in the beginning.

See, it ought to be. The Holy Spirit has not changed. God has not changed.

If Christ is the same, then fine. If it is true that the Holy Spirit commits himself to the Lord Jesus, then once more the answer is we need more of the Lord Jesus. And when we say that, we need him in his character.

We only begin with this matter of the truth. Character is much more than that, but truth is the foundation of everything.

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