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# THE SAVING WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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*“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin,  
and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because  
they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because  
I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;  
Of judgment, because the prince of this  
world is judged”—John 16:8-11*

L. R. Shelton, Jr.

# THE SAVING WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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# 1. Its Necessity

**I**N prayer for the Holy Spirit's leadership as to the need of our hearts, I have been impressed to give a series of messages on the theme: *the saving work of the Holy Spirit*, specifically, in the salvation of the saints. We find much spoken today about the Holy Spirit, much written about the Holy Spirit, and we hear of those—many in fact—who are seeking the Holy Spirit; but we see little of the work of the Holy Spirit in our midst—the true work, the primary work for which He was sent into the world: “To reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me [Christ]; of righteousness, because I [as the sinner's perfect righteousness] go to my Father;...of judgment because the prince of this world [Satan] is judged” (Joh 16:8-11), as well as all those who are controlled by him.

We hear and read much today of those who are seeking the Holy Spirit when they should be seeking Christ, Whom the Holy Spirit came to reveal, for they have never bowed to His authority. There are those who are seeking for the power of the Holy Spirit in manifestation when they know nothing of His powerful work in their souls to break the power of sin. There are those seeking the gifts of the Spirit who have never been partakers of the greatest gift He can bestow, and that is a broken heart and a contrite spirit before God. There are those who are seeking the Holy Spirit so they can see miracles, but have never had the miracle of the New Birth worked in their hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, the purpose of these messages is that we may see the *work of the Holy Spirit in our salvation*. You see, dear friend, the salvation that God gives in Christ is a spiritual thing; it is called in Scripture the New Birth, the creation of a new man, the implanting of a new nature, the giving of a new heart, the passing from death unto life, the bringing in of a new covenant, the drawing up of a new hope, the casting down of the strongholds of Satan, the loosing of the prisoner, the delivering of the captive, the giving of sight to the blind, the translating from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, and the walking on the road of holiness toward heaven.

If all this is accomplished in salvation—and it is, plus much more—and if salvation is a spiritual thing, discerned and understood only by a spiritual man, then *how* is all of this going to be done, seeing we read in Scripture that the man to whom salvation in Christ is given is *dead in trespasses and sins*?

*How* is such a marvelous work, as set forth in 1 Corinthians 2:9, to be performed if a man is dead in trespasses and sins? For we read: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nei-

ther have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

*How* is a man going to believe when he does not know what and whom to believe, seeing he has no spiritual eyes with which to see his own sinfulness and the beauty of the Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ?

*How* is a man going to repent when he has no knowledge of what to repent? *How* is a man going to flee from the wrath to come when he has no knowledge of his danger as a criminal before a just and holy God? *How* is a man going to seek Christ when he has no idea how to seek Him or of any need that Christ may fulfill for him? *How* is a man going to be constrained to seek light when he has no knowledge that he is in spiritual darkness? *How* is a man going to love God when he does not *know* that he hates Him?

*How* is a man going to cry after liberty if he does not know he is in bondage? *How* can a man exercise a free will in choosing Christ when his will is enslaved by Satan? *How* is a man going to seek heaven when he is satisfied to go to hell? *How* is a man going to walk in the paths of righteousness and true holiness when he is satisfied with the paths of self-will, self-pleasing, self-confidence, and self-righteousness?

*How* is a man going to pick himself up by his boot-straps and bring himself to God, seeing he lies dead in sin?

I hear someone say, “Pastor, all of those questions are not necessary, for all a man has to do is believe, and the work of salvation is done!” I will respond by asking a few more questions: What are you going to do with John 5:40 where our Blessed Lord says: “ye will not come to me, that ye might have life?” It is a matter of the will, and here our Lord said, ye will not.” I ask, “Who is going to make the will of man willing?”

What are you going to do with John 6:44 which says, “no man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him?” First it was “will not,” and now it is can not.” Who then is going to give us the power to come?

What are you going to do with 2 Timothy 2:26 which says that the sinner is taken captive by Satan at his will? First it was “will not,” then “can not,” and now we are told that the sinner is under the will, or power and dominion, of Satan.

What are you going to do with John 8:44 where we find written, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do?” Put all of these Scriptures together and you will have “will not,” “can not,” “under the power of Satan’s will,” and the positive statement that the sinner “will do the lusts of his father, the devil.”

Listen now to this reasoning. “*Will not*” means that the sinner’s will is depraved, and therefore he cannot come to Christ unless a work of divine grace is wrought in his soul by the power of the Holy Spirit. “*Can not*” means he is helpless within himself to come unless the Holy Spirit draws him unto Christ. “*Under the will of Satan*” means that One stronger than himself and Satan must set him free. The lusts of his father, the devil, he will do until he dies and goes to hell, unless Someone [the Holy Spirit] sets him free.

Again, the Scriptures ask the question, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?” (Jer 13:23). If this can be done, then and only then may you do good

that are accustomed to doing evil. Since an Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor a leopard his spots, neither can you who are accustomed to doing evil do good, without the work of the Holy Spirit in your hearts and lives!

In James 3 we read these questions: “Can the fig tree..bear olive berries? either a vine, figs?” No! because it is against their nature. So it is in things spiritual: it is against your nature to admit you are a sinner before God and to seek for His salvation in Christ. It is against your nature to love righteousness and holiness and to practice that which God loves.

What I am trying to prove from Scripture with all these questions and answers is that *the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation* is absolutely necessary to us if we are ever to be saved. We read in John 6:63: “It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.” Listen again! “...the flesh profiteth nothing.” The flesh has no part in the work of God. Listen to John 3:6 where our Lord tells about the New Birth: “that which is born of the flesh is flesh.” We must be born again by the instrument of the Word in the hands of the Holy Spirit. All fleshly activities amount to nothing where the regeneration of dead sinners is concerned. Neither the logical arguments advanced by the *mind*, nor the hypnotic powers brought to bear upon the will, nor touching appeals made to the *emotions*, nor beautiful music and hearty singing to catch the *ear*, nor sensuous trappings to draw the *eye*, are of the slightest avail in stirring dead sinners. It is not the choir, nor soloist, nor the preacher, but the Spirit that quickens.

This is very distasteful to the natural man because it is so humbling to the flesh. But this is God’s Word, that the Holy Spirit came into the world for the express purpose to convince, convict, and reprove of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment—to take the things of Christ and reveal them unto us; and no one else can do the Holy Spirit’s work.

This is humbling because the Holy Spirit sets aside all of our natural ability, and He works upon the heart of man to convince of sin and to show him his need of a Savior. He uses means, but He does the work. In Ephesians 2:1, it is called the quickening work of the Holy Spirit. He has to make the sinner alive, because he is dead in trespasses and sins. This Scripture does not say that the sinner is sick, that he is faint, that he has grown callous and hardened and seared; but it says he is absolutely spiritually dead. It does not say that he needs to rededicate himself or to turn over a new leaf to be regenerated, for he is dead. Whatever that term “death” means in connection with the body, it means the same thing in connection with man’s soul, viewing it in its relation to spiritual things. When the body is dead, it is powerless, it is unable to do anything for itself; and when the soul of man is dead in a spiritual sense, it must be—if there is any meaning in the figure—utterly and entirely powerless and unable to do anything of or for itself.

When we see dead men opening their coffins, coming out of their graves and walking our streets alive and well, then and only then will we believe that souls who are dead in sin may turn to God when they please, repent when they please, lay hold of Christ with true saving faith when they please, change their nature, and make themselves heirs of

heaven apart from the divine power of the Holy Spirit. He alone makes us willing in the day of His power (Psa 110:3).

Yes, the work of salvation in the human heart and life is a divine work, for salvation is of the Lord from the beginning to the end. God's Word teaches that we are the "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1Pe 1:2). This same truth is brought out in these words: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and behalf of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2Th 2:13-14).

In both of these Scriptures it is brought out that all is *from* God the Father, all is *through* God the Son, and all is applied *by* God the Holy Spirit. So we can say with the Apostle in 2 Timothy 1:8-9 that "according to the power of God" we have been saved, and called "with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Yes, to have a part in this glorious salvation made for poor dead sinners, we must be quickened by the Holy Spirit and made alive in Christ. For us to be made alive in Christ, for us to be partakers of His divine nature, He must plant the incorruptible seed of life in us and bring it forth to everlasting life in Christ.

Please follow in the text as we show from the Word of God the work of the Holy Spirit in our salvation and the necessity of His work today.

## 2. Unbelief

This saving work of the Holy Spirit is of a necessity if any soul is to be saved. We read in Ephesians 2:1-3 these words: “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”

Therefore, since God’s salvation has been planned for His people who are dead in trespasses and sins, then the Third Person of the blessed Trinity must come, and will come, to quicken (make alive) these dead souls and draw them unto Christ. This is exactly the work ascribed to Him in John 16:8-14 in these words: “When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.”

We hear our Lord saying here that “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will reprove [convince] of sin, because they believe not in me.” We learn from this Scripture, then, that the Holy Spirit convinces the sinner of the state of sin, which is a state of *unbelief*. Every man is in a state of unbelief by nature, therefore every man must be convinced of this state, convicted of this state, and given power by the Holy Spirit to turn to God in true saving faith—with a reliance upon the truthfulness of God’s Word and the truthfulness of God Himself, Who cannot lie. Now my friend, if you have never been convicted by the Holy Spirit of the sin of unbelief, then you do not know what true saving faith is—for true saving faith is a gift of God. We cannot work it up, for it is a grace, and grace is of love.

You will ask then, “Wherein does the sinfulness lie in unbelief? of what does it consist? Listen! If, as Romans 4:20 tells us, faith gives glory to God, then unbelief casts reproach and scorn upon Him and calls Him a liar. Remember, now as we go into this second part on *the work of the Holy Spirit in our salvation*, we are going to show you the necessity of this work by bringing before you the state of sin in which every soul lies outside of Christ, and that is *a state of unbelief*.



This then is the first work of the Holy Spirit in the soul: to reprove or convince us of this awful state in which we dwell, with our backs as it were toward God, and our minds and affections alienated from Him and set on the things of sense and time. It is because the Holy Spirit has never convicted sinners of the awfulness of unbelief, that has led to this wholesale “easy-believism” today, which leaves the soul without true life and conversion.

Again the question is asked: “Wherein does sinfulness of unbelief lie? of what does it consist? First, I would say its sinfulness lies in this fact: *it robs God of the honor of all His attributes*. If the only way God can be revealed unto us is in His attributes, then robbing God of the honor of His attributes is the sinfulness of unbelief. Therefore, unbelief strikes at the sovereignty and authority of God. As His subjects, as His creatures, we owe Him the right of believing His Word, obeying what He has commanded, and following Him with all our hearts. But unbelief tells us we do not owe God so much; therefore, our wills and hearts are against Him in unbelief. Being ignorant of God’s righteousness and going about to establish your own righteousness, you have not submitted unto the righteousness of God (Rom 10:1-3). Therein lies the sinfulness of unbelief. It robs God *of His sovereignty*. My friend, this does not mean that God is not sovereign, but it does mean that as a reprobate creature you will be punished for setting aside His claims over your life through your unbelief.

The sinfulness of this state of sin, this state of unbelief, strikes at the holiness and righteousness of God. “How can this be done?” you ask. Listen! Romans 3:25 sets before us the Lord Jesus Christ as a propitiation for sin, to declare the righteousness of God, and so to declare that His holiness was not set aside in the work of Christ for sinners. Therefore, unbelief casts this gracious and merciful act of God back in His face, saying that this act was unrighteous because such a sacrifice was not necessary, seeing the sinner is not in such an awful state of sin. Oh what an awful state unbelief is, then, when it casts back in God’s face His salvation in Christ!

The sinfulness of this state of sin, this state of unbelief, strikes at the *power of God*. We say in our hearts, “The all-powerful God Who made heaven and earth is not sufficient for me. I must have another god, or many other gods, like Israel in the wilderness when they bowed down to the golden calf and were told: “These, O Israel, are the gods which brought you out of Egypt.” Oh how this sin of unbelief strikes at the POWER OF GOD, when it says God is not powerful enough to save us, take care of us, feed us, defend us, hold us, and keep us from all sin; yea, even to break its power over us, so that we need never again to bow at its altar! Again, I say this sin of unbelief strikes at the power of God by saying He cannot keep us from harm, take care of the weather, provide that which is needful, and so keep us to the end when we have cast ourselves into His everlasting arms.

Are you beginning to see the reason the Holy Spirit must convince us of this sin of unbelief? It is because it robs God of His *honor and glory*.

The sinfulness of this state of sin—this state of unbelief—strikes at the *wisdom* of God. You see, unbelief charges God with being stupid, senseless, and foolish for making

His Son a sacrifice for man's salvation. It tells God that this work was a needless work, for surely there was some other way that a sinner could have been saved, that man really was not so sinful and destitute as to require God to come down Himself in the Person of His Son to offer Himself without spot to God for the salvation of sinful man. Oh, my friend, do you see what a state of sin unbelief is, when it charges the all-wise God with folly in the death of His Son?

The sinfulness of this state of sin, this state of unbelief, shows itself in striking at God's *truthfulness*. The Scripture says that he who believes sets to his seal that God is true, but unbelief makes God guilty of perjury; it calls Him a liar. What saith the Scripture? "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son...he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son" (1Jo 5:9-10).

What a charge against every soul outside of Christ under the sound of my voice to-day, a charge of slander against God—calling God a liar! If you have not believed in Christ to the saving of your soul, O that the Holy Spirit will convince of this awful state of sin that you are in today!

Listen on this point further, and let God, as it were, defend Himself against such a charge of being a liar. In Hebrews 6:17-20, not only does God give us His Word, His promise, but He swears by Himself that He is not a liar, but that He is trustworthy: "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things [by His Word and by His oath] in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." What shall we say then to this? "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom 3:4). God is trustworthy; He cannot lie; He will not lie; He shall bring to pass all that He promised He would do.

The sinfulness of this state of sin, this state of unbelief, shows itself in striking at God's *goodness*. How? My friend, no greater act of love could spring from eternity than that of our living God's parting with His only Delight in heaven, by sending forth from His very bosom His only Son to become the Sin-Offering for His people. No greater love could be shown than this: that God would empty heaven to save one soul from his sins and punishment in hell. And I praise Him that that soul was mine. I know there are many others, but I praise Him that He saved my soul.

In the *second place*, the sinfulness of this state of unbelief not only strikes at the attributes of God, but *it strikes at the Person Whom He sent to work the work of redemption, Christ Himself*.

Unbelief strikes at the *glory of His condescension*, because it says that it was not necessary that He come.

Unbelief strikes at the *humbleness of His spirit* in becoming a servant, a bond-slave, so that He could, by His death, deliver those who through fear of death were in bondage to sin and Satan.

Unbelief strikes at the *glory of Christ in His obedience unto death*, even the death of the cross, because it makes that obedience of none effect to your never-dying soul.

Unbelief strikes at the *glory of Christ in His dying love for sinners*, for it turns this love into a sentimental thing instead of the outpouring of the heart of Christ in true love. Surely Christ died with a broken heart over the sins of His people.

Unbelief strikes at the *glory of the lordship of Christ*, because it says, "I will not bow to His authority; this Man shall not rule over me!" But, my friend, you are wrong; for God's Word says that "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phi 2:9-11).

Yes, unbelief might deny Him here and not bow to His authority, but there is coming a day when the blindness of unbelief shall be taken away, and to that same Jesus, Whom you have despised and rejected here, you shall bow as Lord, to the glory of God the Father. But my dear friend, there will be no mercy then; for only in this life can you be saved.

Unbelief also strikes at the *sufficiency of Christ*: the greatness of His priesthood, the fulness of His satisfaction, His prevailing intercession. Yes, it rejects Him in all of His offices as Prophet, Priest and King. Unbelief says, "I can have no benefit from Him, therefore I will leave Him alone." Unbelief says, "No Prophet for me! I do not need a teacher; I have wisdom within myself for my needs. No Priest for me! I need no perfect Sacrifice for my sins. My good deeds will outweigh my bad deeds. I need no one to intercede for me." Unbelief says, "No King for me! I will bow to no other authority but my own." Yes, you say that in your heart: "No Prophet for me! No Priest for me! No King for me!" But if the Holy Spirit ever convinces you of sin, of this awful state of unbelief you are in, you will cry unto Him for mercy. No one will have to tell you to pray the publican's prayer, for you will go about like Job crying, "O that I knew where I might find him!" or like Ephraim, "Turn me, Lord, and I shall be turned from my awful sin of unbelief;" or like Paul, "Who art thou, Lord? What do you want me to do?" or like Simon, the sorcerer, "Someone pray unto the Lord for me."

My prayer has been all week, "Blessed Holy Spirit, do Thy work of convincing among these who hear today, that they may look to Christ and live!"

### 3. “Ye Must Be Born Again”

In the prior section, we showed you from God’s Word that the Holy Spirit must work in our hearts the salvation that God gives to poor sinners, because each one of us is totally depraved, dead in trespasses and sins. Each one of us lies buried in the grave of sin, held captive by Satan at his will; and therefore we must, of necessity, be resurrected by a power greater than our own, and greater than Satan, if we are ever to be saved.

I praise the Lord that He has not left us to die in our sins; I praise Him that He didn’t leave it up to our puny little “free will” either; but that He sent the Holy Spirit to work into our hearts that finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If God in His sovereignty and in His grace and mercy had not sent the Holy Spirit, no man would ever have been saved; the work of Christ would have been to no avail. If it had been left up to the “free will” of man to decide whether he was going to accept it or reject it, *every man would have rejected it* apart from the sovereign, irresistible grace of the Holy Spirit in bringing us, convincing us of righteousness and of judgment, and bringing each sinner back to God. Without His work in our hearts, we would lie dead, buried in sin, and would never move one inch toward the Lord Jesus Christ; for the Scriptures tell us that there are none that seek after God and none that desire Him. But praise His Holy and Righteous Name, the Holy Spirit makes us willing in the day of His power.

Now the question is asked, “*What is the Holy Spirit’s method of working in the hearts of His people who are sinners, dead in trespasses and sins?*” Dear friend, as we showed you in the last message, He begins by convincing us of the awfulness of the sin of unbelief. And why? because unbelief is the mother-sin of them all. You see, this sin *robs God of His glorious attributes, and it also robs Christ of His glory as Lord*. In short, unbelief calls God a liar, saying, “It was certainly not needful for God to go to such lengths to save poor sinners by coming and dying in their place, for surely they are not as rotten-in-sin as the Word of God declares them to be.” My dear friend, you are wrong! This is just the reason why the Holy Spirit *must* do His work of regeneration in our hearts, or we would all be eternally lost.

There is another facet of this sin of unbelief: *unbelief denies the lordship of Jesus Christ, denies His deity; it denies His authority to rule over you, and therefore blinds you to the eternal fact that God’s Word declares that God has made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ*.

Here is where the work of the Holy Spirit comes in. We read in 1 Corinthians 12:3 these startling words: “...no man can say that *Jesus is the Lord*, but by the Holy Spirit.” You see, this truth of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, His authority over every man, is learned, understood, and appreciated as the result of the ministry or work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit alone Who is able to interpret to our souls in deep conviction the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

It is easy for anyone and anybody to say, “He is my Lord.” But is it true? Do we know it in reality? For we must remember our Lord’s own words in Matthew 7:22-23: “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you.” You see, we can take His name, and profess the fact that He is Lord, and sing, “All hail the power of Jesus’ name, let angels prostrate fall,” but is this the sign that He is Lord? Oh no, my friend, it must be the conviction of our hearts that shows in our lives that He is Lord; that He is Lord alone. It must show in our lives of obedience that we have indeed learned by the Holy Spirit that He is Lord, and bowed to the name of Jesus, and crowned Him Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Listen to what God’s Word says about the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Listen to Philip-  
pians 2:9-11! “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” You see, this is God’s purpose; this is God’s plan; this has been decreed in God’s eternal counsel; and He worketh every-  
thing after the counsel of His own will, which is this: that in Jesus Christ *all things* shall consist, and in Him would dwell the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col 2:9). Therefore, this bowing of the knee, this confessing with the tongue to the authority of Jesus Christ as the Lord of glory will be performed by everyone, either in grace or in judgment, either in time or eternity. My friend, I did not say this, God said it. I was sent only to proclaim it. I know it is true because I have experienced it in my own soul by the grace of God under the teaching of the Holy Spirit. I bowed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ; I bowed to His authority to rule over me in order to become His bonds-  
slave; for I knew there could be no salvation in His Saviorship if I did not bow to His Lordship. The Holy Spirit taught me this under conviction. He convinced me of the rebellion and pride of my heart against God and His Christ. I learned what every soul whom God saves learns: that the Saviorship of Christ is hid in His Lordship; we cannot have one without the other. I know another thing: I must daily, as His child, continually bow to Him as Lord; I must bow to the authority of His Word, for He is Lord indeed of my life.

So brethren, it is false—I don’t care how much you connect it with the name of Christianity and say you are preaching the whole counsel of God—*it is false when you say that a man does not have to bow to the lordship of Jesus Christ to be saved!* My friend, that’s false; it’s out of hell, born in hell; it’s the deceiving “gospel” which is not a gospel; it’s that easy free-believism that we have today. Every man whom God ever saves bows to Him as Lord in this life, and you will bow to Him *in that day* when He will be your Judge! Oh my friend, I say this in love, but I say it in sincerity: this is God’s Word, and I’ve been sent to declare it today.

One other thing we must learn and understand which is taught us only by the Holy Spirit. is this: God’s salvation is wholly and completely of grace. God does not owe you or me anything! What He does for us comes out of a heart of love and mercy, given to us freely in Christ Jesus—based on His graciousness, and certainly not on anything He sees

in us! *There is nothing in us that commends us to God*—nothing, absolutely nothing! All that God sees in us is sin, that's all! For He said, "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside; they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one" according to Psalm 14:2-3.

Therefore, since we have no claim upon Him Who sits as Sovereign upon the throne, then He and He alone dictates the terms of salvation. These are plainly given unto us in His Word. He commands men everywhere to repent; and in repentance there is the laying down of our arms of rebellion and the hoisting of the white flag of surrender—unto the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ to rule over us, govern us, and lead us from now throughout eternity.

We cry like Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Act 9:6). And when he cried this, it was speedily shown him by the Holy Spirit what he had to do. Hear his own words in Philippians 3:7 "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Yes, nothing more was gain to the Apostle Paul now; the only thing that mattered was to know Christ. This is what he tells us in that 8<sup>th</sup> verse: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." He said he wanted Christ as *his* Lord more than he wanted anything in the world. He went further and said, "For His sake I have lost *everything* and consider it *all* to be mere rubbish, in order that I may crown Jesus Christ as my Lord, the Lord of my life."

Do you know why he did this? First of all, he had seen in the Lord Jesus Christ a righteousness, a preciousness surpassing anything he had ever known. Then second, he wanted to be found and known as being in Him, not having any self-achieved righteousness that could be called his own, but that he might possess that genuine righteousness which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness that every man must possess to enter heaven.

He cried, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" And the answer came back: "Down at the feet of Christ; let go all you have; give it up in your heart; count it as dung and take up your cross and follow me." And this he did, and so does everyone whom God saves.

Have you bowed to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ? When you said God saved you, was it a little mental profession that you made? a mental decision that you gave? Did you walk down the aisle and give the preacher your hand? or did you have a Pauline conversion? "Did I hear you right, Pastor? You're asking me, 'Did I have a Pauline conversion?'" I say yes! Every soul whom God saves has a Pauline conversion. Listen to Paul's own words in 1 Timothy 1:15-16! "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

You might ask, "In what way do we have a Pauline conversion?" We are first stopped by the Holy Spirit as Paul was on the road to Damascus, and we are convinced of the sin

of unbelief: that we have not believed on Christ by bowing the whole man to the whole Christ in repentance, and crowning Him as Lord. *Second*, we have a Pauline conversion by renouncing our own righteousness, which is nothing but filthy rags in the sight of God; we renounce our own doings as ground of acceptance before God. *Third*, it is by bowing our knees before God, humbly confessing the Lordship of Jesus Christ Who had been sent, acknowledging and crowning Him as Lord of our lives.

Whether it be long Holy Spirit conviction or short, whether it come like a hurricane wind or a variable breeze, each soul whom God saves must be dealt with and convinced of the same things and in the same manner as was the Apostle Paul, that is: *the Holy Spirit must convince him of sin; that he has no righteousness God will accept.*

Now, I trust you are beginning to see that it must be by the power of One greater than yourself for you to bow the whole man to the whole Christ; otherwise you would never yield yourself up in obedience and submission to the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, I say it again because I have experienced it in my own soul: *no man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit.*

I'm often asked the question, "Pastor, why do you preach like this?" It is because the Bible tells me to. Listen to 2 Corinthians 4:5! "...we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." Therefore, all men must be called to submission to Him, for He Who is now Lord and Savior will one day sit as Judge. My dear friend, I would be a traitor to your soul if I did not tell you that one day you are going to have to bow to Him as Lord, for *He is Lord both of the living and the dead.*

There is so much preaching today that calls on men only to believe—"Only believe!"—without following on to know Him in repentance. Men are told to trust Jesus to take them to heaven when they die, who are nevertheless living in the practice of sin and in rebellion against God and His laws! They neither yield to His authority, acknowledge His Lordship, nor walk in His obedience; yet they are encouraged to hope for salvation. But my friend, no such salvation is taught in God's Word! Christ came not to save us *in* our sins, but *from* our sins; He came not to give us a little conscience-ease so we could go on living as we please, but to *deliver* us from the power and dominion of sin and set us free. This is the reason I preach as I do; for it takes the power of God to save a sinner. You can't save yourself! You can't just will it done and it's done! God must make you willing in the day of His power, which He does for us by His Holy Spirit, Who works His salvation in us, convicting and convincing us of our need to bow to the authority of Christ and crown Him King of our lives.

But oh! what a blessedness and mercy it is to fall at His feet and crown Him Lord, to bow to His authority! What joy and peace there is in believing Him as the Savior of my never-dying soul, to rest in His unchanging love; to know He cares for me, to know He loves me, watches over me, knows my downittings and my uprisings. Praise God, He understands my thoughts afar off; I know Him as the Lifter up of my head, the Counselor for every problem, the Deliverer of all phases of my life; I know Him as the Lover of my soul on Whose bosom I can rest and pour out my soul every hour. I tell you this in grace: what joy it is to know the One Who listens to all I have to say, and tells me from

His Word that He is making all things work for my good! That's my Lord! That's the One to Whom I have bowed, and I praise Him for it.

Yes, to know Him as Lord, to obey Him as King is truly heaven on earth. In Him I live and move and have my being, and in Him I have all things—and I give glory this day to His holy name.

Do you know Him? Have you bowed to His authority? No man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Spirit; and I praise God that He has sent the third Person of the Trinity to reveal these things in your heart this day, by His sovereign grace, is our cry.



## 4. “Jesus Christ Is Lord”

In the prior sections, we showed from God’s Word that the Holy Spirit *must* work in our hearts the salvation that God gives to poor sinners, because each one of us is totally depraved, dead in trespasses and sins, lying buried in the grave of sin, held captive by Satan at his will, and therefore of necessity must be resurrected by a power greater than our own and greater than Satan.

We have shown also that the work of the Holy Spirit as described in John 16:8-11 is to *reprove, convict, and convince* us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, so we will know our need of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who has been set forth as our Justifier and Deliverer from sin, and its power, dominion, and presence.

We have shown also that the Holy Spirit must convict us of the awfulness of the sin of unbelief, because it robs God of His glorious attributes, and robs Christ of His glory and authority as the eternal Son of God, Lord over the living and the dead.

Now, in this section, I would like to set before our hearts the place the Scriptures give to the work of the Holy Spirit in all the phases of the salvation that God gives in Christ. I pray that He Who has been given to open our eyes, the Spirit of truth Himself, will this day open all of our hearts to view this truth of the necessity of His work.

The Scriptures plainly declare in 1 Corinthians 2:11, 13-14 these words: “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but by the Spirit of God...[for] the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned...the Holy Spirit teacheth [those spiritual things to us]; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

Again, the Scriptures declare in 1 Corinthians 12:3 that “...no man can say that Jesus Christ is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit.” Here we have the greatest proof of the necessity of His Work. We will not, and cannot, call Jesus “Lord” in a true saving way apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. No man will crown Jesus Christ as the Lord of his life, until his will is broken, until he is brought to see and know his utterly lost condition without Christ. The Holy Spirit alone makes us willing in the day of His power. He gives us that which God requires: “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psa 51:17).

In the matter of the New Birth, it is imperative that the Holy Spirit work, for the Scriptures plainly declare in John 3:3: “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” When Nicodemus on this occasion asked our Lord how this could be accomplished, he was told it was by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. In describing

this same thing, we read in 1 Peter 1:23 these words: “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.”

Yes, the Holy Spirit takes the Word of God, the Word of Truth, and plants it in the heart of the sinner whom He will save; and that seed, that Word, watered and nurtured by the Holy Spirit, springs up into eternal life. The New Birth is not a decision you make; it is not a feeling you get, nor is it something that you can produce by any work that you might perform. No! It is the operation of the Spirit of the living God in your heart and affections that produces this New Birth—by using the Word of God, the Word of Truth. Our Lord in John 3:8 declared unto Nicodemus that the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of man is like the wind: “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit [of God].” The work in the heart of man is performed by the Holy Spirit in His own way and in His own time, for He is sovereign.

Let us give you an illustration of this. In Luke 1, we find the story of the visit of the angel Gabriel to Mary, the virgin woman who was engaged to Joseph of Nazareth. When Gabriel announced to the virgin Mary that she was to be the mother of the Messiah, her question was: “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” (vs. 34). Gabriel’s answer was: “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (vs. 35). Mary knew one thing if she knew anything, and it was that without the male sperm she was as helpless to produce a child as she could be. She knew that she could pray, beg, do all manner of penance, deny herself all things; but without the male sperm uniting with her female seed, the thing was impossible. She knew that though she lived to be a hundred years old she could not of herself produce a child.

Then she was told that the Holy Spirit would do it. He would come upon her; He would overshadow her; He would place the male sperm in her womb. He would guard over it, and that Holy Thing which would be born of her would be called the Son of God. As it was in the birth of our Lord in the womb of the virgin Mary, so it is in the New Birth or the birth of our Lord in our hearts—Christ’s being formed in us, a new creation (2Co 5:17; Eph 2:8-14; Gal 4:19). It must be done by the Holy Spirit. We can beg, pray, do all manner of works, live morally clean lives, go to church, be baptized, take communion, preach, teach, give our money and our bodies to the Lord’s work, deny ourselves everything under the sun, but we cannot produce the New Birth; we cannot plant the seed, water the seed, give the seed life, nor form Christ in us without the Life-Giver Himself doing the work. This is the necessary work of the Holy Spirit.

What do the Scriptures say? “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2Co 4:6). Praise the Lord, when He commands, it is done! Yes, it is the work of the Holy Spirit to brood over the sinner, as He brooded over the earth when it was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep—when He commanded the light to shine out of darkness. So in the salvation of a sinner, the Holy Spirit commands the light to shine into our souls convincing us of the

darkness, sin, misery and deadness we are in; then grants us repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, giving us faith to lay hold of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is offered in the Gospel as the Substitute for sinners, God's Sin-Offering. Yes, He grants faith to see in Christ the precious Love-Gift of the Father to His people. Only then can the sinner see by faith that the Lord Jesus meets his every need, and that in His shed blood there is the forgiveness of sin and the putting away of the wrath of God for him. In His light we see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Again, the Scriptures declare that only by the Holy Spirit can the love of God be shed abroad in our hearts. In Romans 5:5 we read: "...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us." You see, there is no love of God in us, no love for God that we can produce of ourselves, in our hearts and affections. Why? because by nature we hate Him. Scripture declares that we are by nature *haters of God* (Rom 1:30). Therefore, if there is any love in our hearts for God we can rest assured that it was put there by the Holy Spirit Himself.

O that you and I would know and understand this great truth more and more! that because we are totally depraved sinners, void of everything that would bring us to God, *salvation has to be of the Lord*, or no soul would ever be saved apart from His work in him. Has the Holy Spirit ever shown you this?

Listen again to the Word of God! It is plainly declared in both John 6:63 and Ephesians 2:1 that the Holy Spirit alone quickens our dead spirit and makes us alive in Christ. Second Corinthians 3:6 declares that the Holy Spirit alone gives life, spiritual life, and therefore eternal life in Christ. Ephesians 2:18 tells us that by the Holy Spirit only we have access unto the Father on the basis of the shed blood of our Lord Jesus. Romans 8:26 tells us that it is the Holy Spirit Himself Who helps our infirmities. "...For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

Also, we read in 1 Corinthians 12:13 that by the Holy Spirit alone we are baptized into the body of Christ—His church—and made one with Him. Therefore, we see from all these Scriptures that there is no way to be born again—to see the kingdom of God, to get into the kingdom of God to be partakers of God's divine nature, to be united to Christ and have access to the Father—but by the work of the Holy Spirit in us. I for one am going to ascribe all the work of salvation to my glorious triune God: to the Father for choosing me, to the Son for dying in my place, and to the Holy Spirit for applying it to my heart and life.

O may we bow in adoration before our triune God and give praise unto Him, for Himself as manifested unto us in His three Persons! Let us adore His wisdom, give thanks unto Him for His grace, and love Him for His condescension to make Himself known unto us in the Person of His Son. Let us praise His holy name for His Holy Spirit, Who was sent to convince us of sin and bring us to Christ. Let us praise Him for seeking us out as lost sinners and saving us by His grace, if indeed He has done this work in our hearts.

Let me speak this last word unto you who know the Lord Jesus. How much we should praise the Lord for the gift of His Holy Spirit to us in the salvation He has given us! We owe all that we have to His work in us. He is the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, "Abba, father" (Rom 8:15). He is the One Who bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God (Rom 8:16). He is the Spirit of Christ, for He is given by Christ and speaks of Him (1Pe 1:11). He is the Spirit of life, for He is the Communicator of the life of God, and the Sustainer of the life of God in us (Rom 8:2). He is the Spirit of Truth, in opposition to everything that is false and untrue (Joh 14:17). He is the Spirit of grace, as the Bestower of all the graces of the spiritual life (Zec 12:10). He is the Spirit of power, as opposed to all that is weak and inefficient (Act 1:8). He is the Spirit of holiness, therefore He alone can sanctify and make us like Christ in holiness (Rom 1:4).

The list seems to be endless, of the things the Holy Spirit does for us and in us. We are sanctified by Him, moved by Him, kept by Him, filled by Him; we have joy in Him, bear His fruit, sing in Him, pray in Him, rejoice in Him, and our body is His temple. Therefore, we should not grieve nor quench the Spirit, but be controlled by Him moment by moment; for He is the Father's and the Son's Love-Gift to us. We should yield to Him, be filled with Him, be controlled by Him and praise our living God daily for His presence within us.

## 5. After Conversion

In the prior sections, we have seen from Scripture the work of the Holy Spirit in our salvation. This is a tremendous subject; one that could be expounded upon every day of our lives and not be exhausted. Without the work of the Third Person of the blessed Trinity we would be lost forever! The Holy Spirit's work in the understanding, affection, and will of man, is just as necessary a work, if we are to be savingly joined to Christ, as the work of Christ is.

Oh how blessed to see and know the work of our triune God in our behalf; and for this we praise Him. We see the Father electing and sending the Son, the Son coming and dying to bring us to God, the Holy Spirit convicting and delivering us from sin; the Father giving His Son, the Son giving His life, and the Holy Spirit applying it all; the Father loving us, the Son suffering for us, the Holy Spirit quickening us; the Father chastening us, the Son helping us, and the Spirit comforting us. We have the Father to father us, the Son's propitiation to fit us, the Spirit's power to furnish us; the Father's promise to cheer us, the Son's peace to calm us, the Spirit's presence to control us; the Father's grace to save us, the Son's grace to strengthen us, the Spirit's grace to sanctify us; the Father's grace to beautify us, the Son's atonement to benefit us, the Spirit's life to beam through us; the Father's illumination to teach us, the Son's indwelling to triumph over and through us, and the Spirit's inspiration to throb through our whole being with His love.

So you see, the Scriptures teach that all the Personages of the Godhead are interested in our salvation, which our triune God has given us in Christ; for God's people have been the object of His love from eternity. So we may say it again: in salvation the Scriptures teach that *all is from the Father, all is through the Son, and all is applied by the Holy Spirit*.

Now it is this application of God's salvation for His people by the Holy Spirit that has had our attention in the prior sections. First, the necessity of the Holy Spirit's work because we are dead in trespasses and in sin; second, because we lie guilty beneath the mother-sin of unbelief; third, because we must be born again by the Holy Spirit; and fourth, that only by the Holy Spirit can we call Jesus Christ "Lord."

In this section, we focus on the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Christian—the true believer, the child of God—and see His work in us after He saves us in Christ. What is the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Christian? The Holy Spirit is the Love-Gift of the Father and the Son to the believer, to live within him, giving him spiritual life, assuring him of his sonship, and communicating to the believer the benefits of the Gospel.

This then is the continued work of the Holy Spirit in taking the things of Christ and revealing them unto us according to John 16:8-11.

The Holy Spirit is Christ's promised Gift to the believer. We read in John 14:16-17a, where Christ asked the Father that the Spirit might be the believer's possession: "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth." Again, in John 15:26, He gives us this great truth and blessing: When the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." O what a blessing, what a mercy from our living Savior, that He gives His own Spirit—The Spirit of Christ—to indwell each and every one of His blood-bought ones! For if we have not the Spirit of Christ, we are none of His (Rom 8:9). We have received Him; He has come and taken up His abode in us, by our believing and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. You see, Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, so His Spirit dwells in our bodies by faith. We do not receive the Holy Spirit by keeping the law, but by believing the Gospel as it is known in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, as the Holy Spirit is the source of the miracle of the New Birth, so the Holy Spirit is the Source of the believer's spiritual life. Galatians 3:3 tells us that our spiritual life began in the Spirit, and Romans 8:2 tells us that "The Spirit of life" continues this life in us. It is His life that He continues to give us, for we are still of ourselves nothing and can do nothing; but He Who quickened us and made us alive in Christ, also quickens us day by day to walk in newness of life. This is His work, and I praise Him for it. John 6:63 reads: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

How does He do this? The Holy Spirit testifies with the Christian's spirit that he is a child of God (Rom 8:16). He makes the believer sure of his union with Christ (1Jn 3:2) whereby *we know* that Christ abideth in us by the Holy Spirit which He hath given us. Also, in 1 John 4:13 we read: "*hereby know we* that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."

What does this mean? What do the expressions "we know" and "hereby know we" mean? When a man knows something, he is aware of it. And what is a man aware of here? It is this: that he dwells in Christ and Christ dwells in him. You ask, "How does he know this?"—by the indwelling Spirit of Christ. With what are we dealing here? We are dealing with *life*—a living Savior by His living Spirit indwells a living man, who was once dead but is now alive, who communes with the living Savior by the living Spirit, experiencing daily this living union.

Do you know that salvation is something more than just a decision? something someone told you that you had because you said "yes" to a set of Scripture verses and repeated the "sinner's prayer"? Do you know that it is something more than just a notion, but something that is felt and known? *Salvation is life*, life in Christ, given to us by the blessed Holy Spirit.

Listen! What are you going to do with this verse of Scripture? “hereby *know we* that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit?” (1Jn 4:13). Could I live in someone and someone live in me and not know it nor have communion with that person? No! Could I have lived with my wife these 38 years and not know it, nor have communion with her, have union with her, weep with her, laugh with her, share all of my life with her? No! It would have been impossible! Why? because we are two living creatures, drawn together in the holy state of marriage and therefore sharing with each other the depths of our beings. So it is in salvation: when I came to Christ by the Spirit as a poor, helpless, lost sinner and was enabled to look away to Him as my all-in-all, I was married to Christ by faith, as He became my Husband, my Head, my Savior, and my Life; then, praise His Name, I entered into a living relationship by faith with Him, and He became a living reality to my soul.

And how do I know that I dwell in Him and He in me? By His Spirit Who has been given to me. Yes, it is a living union between Christ and His people, because the living Spirit of God indwells the poor, repenting, believing sinner, who was once dead in trespasses and in sins.

There is another evidence of life in the believer which is brought out in these verses: “...but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. [Therefore] the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Rom 8:15-16). Then, in Galatians 4:6: “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” You see, dear friend, where the Spirit of Christ dwells there is spiritual life, which life is in Christ; for we read in Colossians 3:3-4: “...your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Or as Galatians 2:20 puts it: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith [faithfulness] of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

But one of the greatest things the indwelling Holy Spirit does for the child of God, is that He leads him into that life of progressive sanctification whereby he is enabled to “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph 4:24). Yes, the child of God is set apart for God and His use. First Peter 1:2 tells us that it is “through sanctification of the Spirit.” Second Thessalonians 2:13 tells us that “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”

Not only does the Holy Spirit conform us to Christ in holiness, but He also produces the character of Christ in us. Galatians 5:22-23 reads: But the fruit of the Spirit [whereby He makes us like Christ] is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance:

LOVE—true love has its source, sphere, and end in God Himself. Love is heaven-born, Christ-centered, and Spirit-produced.

JOY—joy is a plant which grows in the soil of holiness and is planted by the best of Gardeners, the Holy Spirit.

PEACE—peace is the calm of God, stilling the spirit of man to its rest and refreshment in Christ.

LONGSUFFERING—is suffering long without retaliation or recrimination; enduring under provocation and loss.

GENTLENESS—is right and true spirit which is unruffled by opposition and keeps sweet in all circumstances, like Him Who is meek and lowly in heart.

GOODNESS—is doing good and helping others for love's sake; finding in others' needs the opportunity to meet them.

FAITH—is the heart's confidence and rest in God, as expressed in obedience to Him.

MEEKNESS—is a spirit which is satisfied with whatever comes and does not complain.

TEMPERANCE—is a spirit under control, which is sober in all things.

All of these are the products of the Holy Spirit in making us like Christ, which find their life and nourishment in the Lord Himself.

How much then should we give praise and thanksgiving unto our living God if indeed He has worked in us by His Spirit this Christ-like life and character!



## 6. In Sanctification

We set before you in the previous messages, first, the necessity of the Holy Spirit's work, because we are totally depraved and are dead in trespasses and in sin. Second, we showed you the necessity of the Holy Spirit's work, because we lie guilty beneath the sin of unbelief, which is the mother-sin of them all. Third, we showed you the necessity of the Holy Spirit's work, because we must be born again before we can see or enter into the spiritual kingdom of God. Fourth, we showed you the necessity of the Holy Spirit's work in our hearts to enable us to call Jesus Christ our Lord. Fifth, we showed you the necessity of the Holy Spirit's work in making the Lord Jesus Christ a living reality unto our hearts.

In this sixth and last part, we want to set before you the necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit *in making us holy*, because He has been given the work of making us like Christ; therefore, He is called "the spirit of holiness" (Rom 1:4).

In 1 Peter 1:13-16, we find these blessed words of instruction: "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

Yes, the Scriptures teach that God desires that we live holy lives, conformed to His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and set apart for His holy use. That this is the reason He saved us by His grace is plainly set forth in Ephesians 1:4 in these words: "According as he [God] hath chosen us in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him."

This is also brought out in 2 Thessalonians 2:13 in these words: "...God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth"—chosen to be set apart by God the Holy Spirit as a habitation of God. Also, 1 Peter 1:2 tells us that we who are saved were elected "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

Yes, the Holy Spirit's work in the life of the believer is to conform him to Christ in holiness and to set him apart in sanctification for God's holy use, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:10). And what God has ordained, dear friend, He shall bring to pass. You see, this matter of sanctification is not an optional thing with God's children, but is commanded by God, for it is written, "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1Pe 1:16).

Listen further! God the Father commands it (1Pe 1:16); God the Son died and rose again for it (1Pe 1:18-21); and God the Holy Spirit has been given and indwells God's children to make this possible and actual in our lives (1Pe 1:22).

The Scriptures plainly teach that to be in Christ is to have both "positional" and "practical" (progressive) sanctification. First Corinthians 1:30 declares that God has made Christ our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. He is made *wisdom* for our ignorance, *righteousness* for our guiltiness, *sanctification* for our pollution, and *redemption* for our enslavement. The Scriptures plainly declare this great truth of what we have in Christ and what He has been made for us. Therefore, we have in Christ a "positional" righteousness, a position of perfection; and God the Father—because of Christ's cross-work in the shedding of His precious blood in our behalf—has given us a perfect standing before Him in heaven, which standing is in Christ.

But this is not our state down here. Why? Because we have been left in these old bodies with all of their evil and corrupt tendencies which continue to drag us down. We read in Galatians 5:16-17 that there is a warfare going on in the life and body of the believer: "This I say, then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." This is indeed our state down here while we wait for our Savior and Lord from heaven, Who, when He comes, will give us a new and perfect body like unto His.

Now you will want to ask the question: If God has designed that we should be holy as He is holy, and walk in this world in a life of separation, what has He done so that I may walk as a child of light in obedience to His will, seeing I am yet in this depraved body? Rejoice with me in this, will you? He has given us of His Spirit to fill us, control us, guide us, and take the things of Christ and reveal them unto our hearts. Herein lies our hope of walking in practical and progressive sanctification, while we are yet in these depraved bodies.

The Holy Spirit puts a new nature in us and gives us a hatred for sin. He puts within us a desire to be like Christ; and the only way we can be like Him is in holiness, for all of His graces flow out of His character of holiness. Therefore, there is in the heart of every one of God's children a cry after Him, to be conformed to His will and way.

As the Holy Spirit works in us to produce practical, or progressive sanctification, He brings before us the commands, precepts, and admonitions of the Word of God; and the new man in turn seeks after, longs after, and thirsts after, conformity to these commands, precepts, and admonitions, for he is a child of God; and he that is of God heareth God's Word (Joh 8:47).

You ask, "What are some of the commands, precepts, and admonitions that are brought before us by the Holy Spirit from God's Word?" First Thessalonians 4:3-4: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour."

First Peter 1:14-16: "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [behavior]; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

Second Corinthians 6:17; 7:1 "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

First Thessalonians 4:7: "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."

First Corinthians 6:18: "Flee fornication."

First Corinthians 10:14: "...flee from idolatry."

Second Timothy 2:22: "Flee also youthful lusts."

First Timothy 6:11: "...flee these things [riches]."

Romans 6:13: "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

You may ask again, "How is all this going to be put into practice, seeing we are still in these bodies?" Listen to Romans 6:22! "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Hear God's Word, hear it and rejoice! When God saves us in Christ, the Holy Spirit sets us free, free from the power of sin. *He breaks its power, and sin no longer reigns.* Hear Romans 8:2: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Hear it again and rejoice! In salvation the Holy Spirit breaks the power of sin and sets me free from its reign.

Hear it again! He gives us His nature so that we might call after Him, cry after His overcoming grace. He has given us exceeding great and precious promises and faith to lay hold of them. All of this the Holy Spirit works in us by His sanctifying power and grace. Faith lays hold of the Word of God and trusts the living God for power to overcome. Listen to the precious promises that faith lays hold of, and by which it overcomes! "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1Jo 5:4). "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom 8:37). "For sin shall not have dominion over you" (Rom 6:14). "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1Jo 1:9). "As sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 5:21). "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy..." (Jude 24).

Hear it again! "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world" (1Jo 5:4). By faith in a living Christ, Who shed His precious blood for him, the child of God overcomes. He overcomes by faith in the precious promises as he sees Christ in the promises, the One Who gave Himself for him.

One more question before we close this series of messages on the work of the Holy Spirit in our salvation: "What are the marks of the Spirit of holiness working in the life of God's child? Let us go back to the verses which we read in 1 Peter, chapter 1. Notice in vs. 15 the word "conversation," which means "behavior." This shows us what a practical matter holiness is. A holy person will have these marks, (vs. 13):

A GIRDED MIND—He has a mind that will not hinder the Christian walk.

A SOBER SPIRIT—We are living in a frivolous age; therefore, the mark of a holy man is just the opposite: he has a sober spirit. Why? He is living under the gracious control of the Holy Spirit, and waits for the Lord from heaven.

A QUITE HEART—We are to be filled with holy optimism in a world where there is absolutely no hope. A holy man looks out on the world and sees the events that are leading up to the great consummation of all things; but he also looks up to Christ, and the peace of God which passes all understanding fills and floods his soul (Phi 4:7).

A TENDER CONSCIENCE—This is mentioned in vs. 17: "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." Yes, we are to live in fear. This is not the fear which has torments, but it is that fear which may be described as being afraid to grieve our heavenly Father, to sin against His holiness, love, and light.

A LOVING DISPOSITION—Vs. 22 tells us to have unfeigned love of the brethren, or as Ephesians 4:32 puts it: "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

A PURE MOTIVE—"Laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envyings, and all evil speakings" (1Pe 2:1). Malice means wickedness; guile means craftiness; hypocrisies means pretences, making out that you are something different from what you really are. But a holy person lays aside these false dispositions and attitudes and is marked by sincerity: his motives are pure.

A CLEANSED MOUTH—This is also mentioned in 1 Peter 2:1 where we read of "evil speakings." This does not refer so much to impurity of words, as to gossip, slander, tale-bearing, careless talk, and the spreading of evil rumors.

What a practical thing this holy life is which is worked in us by the indwelling Holy Spirit! It is a life that is characterized by a girded mind, a sober spirit, a quite heart, a tender conscience, a loving disposition, a pure motive, and a cleansed mouth.

The secret of this life is that we must be born again, that we must be obedient to the truth, and must be utterly abandoned to the Holy Spirit, Who alone can work it in us. The Word of God says in Philippians 2:12-13: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."



**L.R. Shelton, Jr.** (1923-2003) was born and reared in New Orleans, Louisiana. As a young man, he was the Associate Pastor in his father's Baptist church. Though he did not attend college or seminary, he devoured the writings of Spurgeon, Pink, Lloyd-Jones, and the Puritans. In 1970, he moved to Litchfield, Minnesota to establish a church, a Christian bookstore, and an evangelistic ministry. During that time, a God-given burden to publish and distribute Christ-centered literature from prior centuries grew in his heart. His vision was to send it worldwide, free of charge. In 1978, he moved to Pensacola, Florida, where he founded Mount Zion Bible Church, which became home to Chapel Library and the quarterly magazine, the *Free Grace Broadcaster*.