

## **Holy Spirit Teaching Series**

*The Work of the Spirit Through the Word of God*

April 22, 2018

### **Open Bibles to Phil 1**

*4 Week series on the Holy Spirit... coming out of our series on Acts...*

Week 1... Jesus' final conversation with all his disciples... when he promised them the Spirit (John 14-16) ...

Key points...

*The Holy Spirit is a He, not an it. He is the third Person of the Trinity... Fully God  
He indwells every follower of Jesus... that means He lives in us... God in us...  
(when you really think about that it's profound)*

*As Jesus explained to His disciples, The Holy Spirit in us is better than Jesus  
incarnate with us*

Last week... about depending on the Spirit

The key to being filled with the Spirit... is recognizing your own insufficiency...

The Christian life is impossible without the Spirit... until you know that you will  
keep depending on your own resources and will never fully depend on Him

*So, we depend upon the Spirit - by faith - to do through us what we cannot do apart  
from Him (and this is exactly what the church did in the book of Acts... HS was the  
power source)*

**This morning...** *the work of the Spirit* (particularly as it relates to the Word of God) (the two are inextricably connected)

*You'll need to engage your brains...* Put on your thinking caps...

Not necessarily a light and fluffy message... going to dig deep... But you guys are a bright congregation... And it will be worth the effort

*In some ways, this sermon has been stirring in me for years...* the connection between Word and Spirit is fascinating to me and I think it's incredibly important for us

Here's who the message is for this morning... (If you fit any of the following categories, this message is for you) ...

*If you have no idea what kind of work the Holy Spirit is doing in your life... or you don't know how to engage the Spirit's work*

*If all this talk about the Holy Spirit makes you kind of uncomfortable... And you wish we would just talk about the Bible*

*Or, if you've ever thought, this church makes too big a deal about the Bible - it's about time we focus on the Spirit*

*If you've ever wondered why we teach the Bible the way we do here...*

*Most importantly... If you know you need to be changed... But you don't really know how that's supposed to happen...*

*(That's a lot to cover... and I may have just set myself up for failure by setting the bar too high... but hopefully you're curious and ready to jump into some relatively deep waters...)*

**Here's where we're going... Answer 3 questions...**

***What is the work of the Spirit?***

***How does He accomplish that work?***

***What does it mean for us?***

*(the WHAT of the Spirit's Work... the HOW of the Spirit's work... and the SO WHAT of the Spirit's Work)*

**WHAT is the Spirit's work? ...**

*Simply put... the Holy Spirit's work is the work of God on earth*

*What we see from Gen to Rev the Holy Spirit is the member of the Godhead who activates and actualizes the work of God in the world*

*Clumsy analogy... think of a construction foreman who takes the intentions of the builder and gets the work done*

*The work of the Spirit is to accomplish the work of God*

*What this means is that for almost anything God does... the Spirit is at the center...*

*Listen to this list of some of the Holy Spirit's actions in the Old and New Testaments...*

*He gives life... He guides and directs... He gives power for service... He purifies... He strengthens... He leads... He gives hope... He reveals... He gives courage... He regenerates...*

*He delivers from sin... He gives gifts... He enables us to walk by faith... He gives understanding... He unifies... He gives power to proclaim the message... He produces righteous character... He changes us to Christlikeness*

Maybe the better question is "What *doesn't* the Spirit do?"

*The HS is the agent and minister of God's purposes... His work is to do the work of God in the world*

This is important... *All that work doesn't just happen "out there in the world"... but also inside you...*

Phil chapter 1

Phil 1.6... *For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work **in you** will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*

Phil 2:13... *for it is God who is at work **in you**, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

Which person of the Trinity is "**in you**"?

So... ***The Spirit's work is to accomplish God's purposes in the world...and in you***

**HOW does He do it?** By what means? (How does the Spirit go about getting the work done... in the world, and in you?)

Throughout Scripture we read about God getting things done in all kinds of ways... (He uses people, circumstances, nations, miracles) ... *but there is one unifying thing behind all of those... one way God gets things done more than any other...*

**God primarily works through words...**

Take that in for a minute... the primary way God works is by using words...

(This is strange for us, because we don't tend to think of words this way... but God primarily works through words)

Turn to Genesis 1 (most clear and dramatic example of this...)

Genesis 1:1-3

*1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. 3 **Then God said**, "Let there be light"; and there was light...*

*...6 **Then God said**, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ...*

*...9 **Then God said**, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so.*

*...14 **Then God said**, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years; 15 and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so....*

*Here's the pattern... "God said... and it was so" (He created the world with His words)*

See this pattern all throughout the Bible...

*God created the nation of Israel by speaking to Abraham and calling him out of Ur*

*God created a unique and unbreakable relationship with Israel by speaking a covenant to them*

*God used His words to bless, guide, and discipline His people... speaking to them through prophets...*

*Jesus came as the Word of God made flesh...*

*Many of Jesus' miracles were done with words (think about him calming the storm or calling Lazarus out of the grave)*

*The gospel itself is essentially a verbal declaration by God that we, who were once under judgment, are now under grace through Christ*

British scholar Timothy Ward... *To say of God that he spoke, and to say of God that he did something, is often one and the same thing.*

*God is a master builder and craftsman... words are the primary tools of His craft*

*Interestingly... as creatures made in the image of God... our words accomplish things, too*

In Philosophy, this is called speech-act theory (relatively new field of study) ...

The idea is that despite what most people think, words are not simply passive exchanges of information... but instead *language is a means by which one person performs actions in relationship to another*

Words do things... they have power... we know this because we all remember a lie we told ourselves when we were kids: *"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me."*

Completely untrue!... words have power sticks and stones can't touch

"Words create worlds..." (from God' perspective that is literally true)

**So...** *if the Holy Spirit's work is to accomplish the work of God in the world... and the primary way God works is through words...*

*...then there must be a very important relationship between the Spirit of God and the Word of God...*

(They must be very closely and intricately connected...)

Indeed, they are...

*Theologians use two terms to describe the Spirit's work as it relates to God's Word...*

*Inspiration*

*Illumination*

**Inspiration** describes the process by which the Word of God was recorded in the texts of the Bible

Turn to 2 Timothy 3:16...

Context...

AD 67... Paul (at very end of his life) writing to Timothy (generation below him)

Training to be a pastor (Ephesus)... Paul is the voice of the sage and mentor saying, it's going to be hard and it's only going to get harder... *Here's what you need to know...*

2 Timothy 3:16 *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness*

*"All Scripture is inspired by God..."*

(NOT... "inspired" like "inspired art"... or "inspiring" like something to just put on your coffee cup...)

*theopneustos: theos (God) + pneuma (breath or spirit)*

**"God-breathed" or "breathed out by God"**

ESV: *"All Scripture is breathed out by God..."*

Its origin is from God. These are God's Words... they are words of the Spirit

2 Peter 1:20-21 *But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*

## **Definition of Inspiration**

*Inspiration is the Holy Spirit's completed action of speaking directly through the writers of the Bible, so that the words of Scripture are the words of God*

**Illumination** describes the process by which we hear from God through the texts of the Bible today

Hebrews 4:12 *For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

*"the word of God is living and active"...*

*God's Word is alive... and it has power to do things...*

*How is God's Word alive? (I'm pretty sure my physical Bible doesn't have a consciousness and a will of its own)*

*It's alive through the Spirit*

The Spirit is alive and active today through the very words of the text that He breathed out

## **Definition of Illumination**

*Illumination is the Holy Spirit's ongoing activity to open our hearts and minds to understand and trust the Word of God, so that God's purposes for His Word will be accomplished in us*

[Put "Inspiration" on left and "Illumination" on right]

**Here's what's really important...** *Do you see the connection between the inspiration of the Bible thousands of years ago, and the ongoing activity of illumination today?*

They're both activities of the same Spirit!

*\*The same Person who served as the agent of God's voice during the original composition of the text now actively speaks God's voice to us today as we read that text*

As followers of Jesus with the Holy Spirit in us... *we have continuous access to the very author of divine revelation...*

*...And that revelation... those words of God... are intended not just to communicate information... but to accomplish work*

## **Recap...**

**What** *is the work of the Holy Spirit? (To do the work of God in the world and in you)*

**How** does He accomplish that work? (primarily through words, namely through the living and active Word of God - which He breathed out originally, and has continued to speak and work through... for thousands of years... right up to today)

**SO WHAT?** (What does all this mean for us?)

**Big idea: God's work in you takes place primarily through the Holy Spirit transforming you by the living and active Word of God**

*God created the universe with words... and the same God is re-creating you with words!*

(by the Spirit of God speaking through the Word of God...

...Word and Spirit)

**What is He transforming you into?**

*The image of the Son... who is the Word made flesh... the embodiment of God's Word... His purpose for you is to be a human being fully alive... flourishing in the work God created you for*

*The words of Scripture are not passive... They are speech-acts... God is doing something in you through them... and the thing He is doing in you is shaping you to be and do all that you were created to be and do.*

**How do we engage this work?** How do we apply it?

(corporately and personally)

**Corporately...**

Why we teach the Bible expositionally...

*The transformative power is in the Word of God, not the words of a preacher*

*\*A Spirit-filled teacher of God's Word is an instrument of the Spirit in the process of illumination for the listener...*

What this means... *the authority of a sermon is not based on the authority of the teacher but on the authority of the Spirit speaking through the text*

*So, only a sermon that is a true and faithful expression of the Spirit's purpose in a particular text of Scripture has any power or authority*

This is why the key to good preaching is a thorough, prayerful, and Spirit-led explanation of the text...

*\*When there has been a careful explanation of a passage's original meaning, the Spirit can speak through that meaning to show us its significance or application in our contemporary context*

*\*So, it is the combination of discovering the original meaning of the words and listening to the Spirit's voice speak again through them that has power... Word and Spirit*

How do we engage this **Personally?**

Understanding how God's Spirit and God's Word work together in you gives a whole new dynamic to your Bible reading...

Timothy Ward: *When we read the Bible, we must be ready for God to act on us and in us. For, as we encounter his words, and as we encounter the actions he performs by means of them, we are encountering God himself.*

**When you read, ask two questions...**

1. "What is the Spirit teaching me?"
2. "And what is the Spirit wanting to *do in me* through these words?"

Talk about these questions together...

Families... Friendships... Groups

And then... live it out... don't just *know* God's Word but *live* God's Word

\*(here is a powerful connection to what Lloyd taught us last week about being filled with the Spirit) ...

The primary emphasis of all this work is not on us... but on God. We engage it... we live it out... but even that is by the power of the Spirit

(Depending on Him with a posture of, "*I can't... but you can...*") ...and through this posture of dependence... He does it through you...

*As we depend on the Spirit to align our lives with the Word of God, the Spirit is molding and shaping us into the image of Christ...*

that's how personal transformation happens... *the Spirit working in us through the Word of God as we live out God's Word in our lives... by through the power of the Spirit*

**Spirit of God... Word of God...**

*Here's a vision for our church... God's Word fully alive through God's Spirit in God's people - for the sake of a community of people around us who desperately need the life of Christ in us*



