

1 Corinthians Series #31

"Spiritual Gifts" - Part 3 1 Cor. 12:4-11

I. INTRODUCTION [Turn to John 16]

A. Confusion

1. Confusion about what constitutes a true Christian
2. For many, all that is needed is a vague religious sentiment, that qualifies for genuine faith
3. What's distressing is that even among mature evangelical Christians this sense of confusion reigns
4. This ought not to be, because the Bible is very clear:
To be born again means to live a new life.
 - a. Christians are not perfect
 - b. but there is definite growth into Christ-likeness

B. Today

1. We are going to be talking about that new life today as we continue . . .
2. We're going to see how the Holy Spirit brings us **TO** Christ
3. [Early service] = Apologize; said we would look at the baptism of the Spirit. That is next week.

II. BODY

A. The Program of the Holy Spirit

1. The last night - Jesus spoke words of comfort to disciples
2. John 13-17 give us a beautiful picture of Christ's time with them at that last meal
3. Looked at Ch. 14 last week - promise of another helper who He would send after He left them
4. That promised Helper was the Holy Spirit
5. In ch. 16, Jesus tells the disciples more about what the Holy Spirit will do when He comes

7 "I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

6. Jesus had told them He was leaving them and they were deeply troubled
7. But He tells them it is to their advantage that He leave
 - a. the advantage was that as long as He was with them, the Holy Spirit's ministry was limited to the person and work of Jesus

- b. but after Jesus died and rose again, the Holy Spirit was sent to live within each and every believer
 - c. this enabled them to carry on the work of Christ
 - d. Jesus told them, "Greater works than I have done, you will do, because I go to My Father in heaven."
 - e. this was possible because the same Holy Spirit who lived in Jesus came to live in them
8. The enemies of Christ thought they had seen the last of Him when they nailed Him to the Cross
- a. how mistaken they were
 - b. all they did was succeed in furthering the plan of God to spread His Spirit among all flesh
9. The followers of Christ were called Christians within just a few years of His death and resurrection
- a. why?
 - b. because they were like Him
 - c. they were like little copies of Him
 - going here and there
 - healing the sick
 - ministering to the poor and outcast
 - and proclaiming salvation in His name
 - d. all because the Holy Spirit was working in & thru each one

8 "And when He [*meaning the Holy Spirit*] has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 "of sin, because they do not believe in Me;

10 "of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more;

11 "of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

- 10. These verse are so important for us to understand
- 11. There is a mystery involved in the process of conversion
 - a. why is it that some people respond to the gospel - and others do not?
 - b. I believe that answer is found in these verses
- 12. Anyone who wants to be an effective soul-winner needs to take these things to heart.
- 13. Jesus says that when the Holy Spirit has come He will convict the world of sin, righteousness, & judgment
- 14. We see the fulfillment of this on the Day of Pentecost
 - a. the Holy Spirit came in power upon the disciples
 - b. a crowd of the curious gathered around

- c. and Peter preached his first sermon
 - d. from start to finish he pointed to Christ and the response of the crowd was overwhelming
 - e. in Acts 2:37 we read this; **"Now when they head this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the disciples, 'Men & brethren, what shall we do?'"**
 - f. that is conviction; they were cut to the heart
 - those of us who are born again know that experience exactly
 - we too have been cut to the heart by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit
15. Conviction came when the Holy Spirit applied the words of Peter's message to the hearts of those present
- a. the Holy Spirit uses the message of Christ as the tool to convict sinners
 - b. that is why it is so important that we be faithful to share the gospel with the lost
 - whether it is simply our testimony
 - or a well reasoned defense of our faith
 - we need to be faithful to speak the word of truth
 - for that is what the Holy Spirit uses
16. The flip side is that unless the Holy Spirit convicts people, they cannot truly respond
- a. the Holy Spirit is the only one who can convince men & women of sin
 - b. you can reason with a person,
 - show them passage after passage,
 - even get them to agree with you about the evil of sin
 - yet they will not recognize their own guilt before God
 - all because pride keeps us from admitting that we are corrupt wretches
 - we are sharp-sighted at seeing the faults of others
 - but blind to our own shortcomings
 - c. only the Holy Spirit can open a person to see their sin for what it is
17. [Story about R.A. Torrey]
- a. Torrey was a gifted evangelist and pastored a church which had many people who went into the surrounding cities to evangelize the lost
 - b. one day one of these workers brought a man she had been sharing with for two hours

- c. though she had shared every passage she could think of about sin and the man's need of a Savior, he was unconvinced and seemed especially hardened to the gospel
 - d. for some reason he consented to come and speak to Torrey
 - e. At first Torrey thought, "Well, this woman is a gifted evangelist and if she has had no progress with the man, what can I do?"
 - f. still, he sat down and shared Christ with the man, using the same vs.
 - g. 10 minutes later, the man was on his knees praying for forgiveness and cleansing from sin.
 - h. Torrey explained to the frustrated gospel worker:
 - she had shared out of her own resources
 - trusting in her knowledge of the gospel to win the lost
 - Torrey realized that if she hadn't been able to lead the man to faith; he didn't have any chance to either
 - so he had simply turned the thing over to God and asked him to show the man the way
18. The power of the gospel is not in our eloquence, our knowledge, or our wit
19. The power of the gospel is in the work of the Holy Spirit taking the foolishness of the message preached and applying it to human hearts

Can I share a serious burden I have?

I have studied history a bit - and I've noticed that the outstanding mark of true revival is the profound conviction of sin that comes upon people.

Both of the Great Awakenings led by men like Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, John Wesley and Charles Finney and DL Moody;

They were marked by sincere conviction and repentance from sin.

Weeping was not uncommon.

In fact, it would be accurate to say that deep sobbing from people of all stations and backgrounds was the common characteristic of the conversion experience.

People were profoundly aroused to the seriousness of their crimes against God.

They saw themselves for what they were - lost, hell-bound sinners.

They saw themselves that way because preachers of that time were not afraid to tell people the truth.

They held up God's holy standard and trusted the Holy Spirit to show their listeners that they fell short.

God honored His word - and convicted men and women, boys and girls, by the thousands of their need of Christ.

My concern is that we rarely see that kind of conviction today.

I don't want to get into all the reasons why that is

Rather, I want to ask you to join me in praying that God would send

the Holy Spirit to convict the lost in our services.

At meals, before services.

20. This week: Radio - lady called to ask about how to pray for lost
 - a. asked if should pray for eyes to be opened.
 - b. host responded; No! They have a free will
 - c. that is exactly how we should pray
 - d. that the Holy Spirit would open their eyes and soften their hearts
 - e. the lost do not have a free will - they are slaves to sin

21. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would convict the world of sin because it did not believe in Him.
 - a. the sin of unbelief is the most grievous of all sins because it rejects the means by which all other sins are forgiven - faith in Christ!
 - b. only the Holy Spirit can convict a man of unbelief
 - c. and this is the critical point of conversion the Holy Spirit brings a person to
 - He points out the serious need of the sinner
 - He points the sinner to the remedy
 - then he points out the vast gap between the two
 - the sinner's unbelief is seen by him or her for what it is:
 - the greatest of all sins: they are treading on the blood of Jesus Christ

22. Then He said that the Holy Spirit would convict the world of righteousness because He went to His Father

in heaven

- a. the resurrection is the great validator and verifier of the person of Christ
 - b. when He rose from the dead, God showed His highest stamp of approval
 - c. In the resurrection, God says to mankind, "This is what I require of you if you are to abide in my presence."
 - d. there is a saying that goes, "The righteousness He requires is the righteousness His righteousness requires Him to require."
 - e. in Jesus we see what God requires of man
 - f. and the Holy Spirit convinces us that we do not measure up
23. The Holy Spirit convicts us of our wretchedness, and then while we are down, He turns the screws a bit more and shows how lofty the standard of acceptance is
24. But cheer up, it gets worse . . .
25. For finally, Jesus says that the Holy Spirit also convicts the world of judgment, because the ruler of this world, meaning the devil, is judged
- a. oh how our world needs this work of the Holy Spirit!
 - b. it seems very few people think at all of a day of judgment
 - c. but when the Holy Spirit is at work in a person's life, drawing them to Christ, He presses home the reality of coming judgment with irresistible force
 - d. the sinner comes to realize that the cross was not the place where Jesus was judged, but the place where their sin was judged by God
 - e. and the Holy Spirit convinces them that if they hold on to their sin, the wrath of God will fall on their head in unabated fury
 - f. but if they will just let go of sin, then their sin has been judged once and for all in Christ and they will never have to endure the torment of God's wrath.
26. Cleaning the garage
- a. son wanted to help
 - b. too small to hold the broom
 - c. in my mind, a picture of what it should be like
 - d. wanted it that way, tried to show him how to do it, what I expected
 - e. but had to lower the standard
 - f. not what God does

- He shows the standard
- and shows us how far off we are
- then He reminds us there is a limited time for getting it done

27. The gospel is a limited time offer

B. The Goal Of The Holy Spirit

1. As Jesus goes on, He tells the disciples what the supreme goal of the ministry of the Holy Spirit is

12 I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.

15 "All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.

2. Though Jesus had spent three years with them, their training was not complete
3. There was much they had yet to learn
4. Jesus tells them that the Holy Spirit would be their continuing teacher and guide in the years to come
5. But through it all, the overwhelming goal of all the work of the Holy Spirit would be to glorify Jesus
6. This is the great goal of the Holy Spirit = to glorify Christ
 - a. He doesn't promote Himself
 - b. He promotes Christ
 - c. we see this kind of promotion of others throughout the Godhead.
 - when the Father wanted to reveal Himself to man, He sent His Son
 - the Son doesn't live for His own glory, but rather the Father's
 - when the Holy Spirit comes, He doesn't draw attention to Himself - rather, He directs people to the Son.
7. In His work of conviction of sin - He draws sinners to Christ
 - a. in His work as teacher - He teaches us about Jesus
 - b. in His work as helper - He helps us to look to Christ
 - c. in His work as advocate - He defends us in Christ

- d. you name it, whatever the Spirit does, it is to the glory of Jesus as our Lord & Savior

III. CONCLUSION

A. A Sweet Work

1. What a bittersweet work the Holy Spirit does in our lives when He convicts us
2. He points out our sin
3. He reveals our need and how impossible it is that we could ever save ourselves.
4. He presses home the urgency of coming to forgiveness because the judgment of God hangs in the balance.

B. Have You Responded?

1. Have you experienced the conviction of the Holy Spirit?
2. If not, though it may seem the most illogical thing you could do, you should be in a state of complete panic
3. Because apart from conviction, a person cannot be saved
4. And if you are not a Christian, and are not under conviction, it means that the Spirit is not working on you
5. Do you see your peril? Do you comprehend how desperate is your case?
6. It may mean no one is praying for you - in which case, you better pray for yourself!
7. Or it may mean you have hardened your heart to God and will not listen to the voice of the Spirit
 - a. He has convicted you before
 - b. but you resisted Him
 - c. and now, He has left you to yourself and your sin
8. I will plead with you; nay, I would get down on my hands and knees and beg you if it would cause you to but pause and consider the fate of your soul.
9. Harden not your heart any longer
10. Welcome the conviction of the Holy Spirit - NOW!