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The Holy Spirit is Our Life, Part 2

Galatians 3:1-9

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?

Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

God himself is doing the work of building the church in the world through his people, infusing them with his spirit, strengthening them, empowering them, quickening them to go as he leads them so his faith family can flourish here on the earth.

Jesus said it this way, Matthew 16: "I will build my church." Jesus is saying this: "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades"—not quite hell, but Hades—"will not stand against it."

We can't build the church without the spirit. We can't bear spiritual fruit without the spirit because we need his help to do these things in the Christian life. And he is the builder of the church in the world through his people. And this church has been sustained by God's Spirit, carried along by God's Spirit, for many years. And as we seek him and pray to him, he can continue to help this church family flourish and grow in the fruits of the spirit, and even bring more fruit in here by the work of his Spirit.

No one comes to the father unless the spirit first draws them. So we're totally dependent upon the Holy Spirit for the work of God in the world and for the building of the church.

But it gets better. The Holy Spirit's not only our helper and the builder of the church, but he is the source of real life for us, the abundant life that Jesus promised. He's the source of all joy and hope and peace and power in our lives.

Paul wrote to the believers in Rome, saying, "If the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His spirit who dwells in you," which is to say, spiritual life. This is to say fruits of the spirit. This is to say the Spirit of God can stir in us the zeal or the passion or the zest of the Lord Almighty. This comes from the spirit.

If you've ever been around someone who's deeply entrenched by the Spirit of God, there's something different about the way they move and the way they live and the the spirit that comes off of them. They become the aroma of Christ to people around them.

He is our life. He gives life to these bodies that, yes, can live in the flesh. But when the spirit comes alive in us and the spirit reigns in us, what do we experience? Something supernatural in our lives. The resurrection life. The supernatural life.

But it's not just life. "The Lord is the spirit," the Scripture says, "and where the spirit of the Lord is, there's freedom." This freedom that is being spoken of here is a spiritual freedom, freeing us from enslavement to things that take life from us, freeing us from anxieties and worries and fears and depressions and enslavements and addictions to things that will rule our lives.

They may give us a temporary buzz, but slowly they take life from us. The Spirit of God can come in us and slowly free us from all these sins that so easily entangle us, so we can begin to live in the glorious freedom of the children of God, unhindered even by the fear of man or the fear of death. And that's a supernatural thing that doesn't happen to the natural man. Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. The Bible says true freedom. If Jesus sets you free, you are free indeed. Truly free.

But there's more. The kingdom of God is not a matter of physical things, but of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Where is life found, friends? Where is peace in this mad world found? Where is an unquenchable, inexpressible joy experienced outside of the giver of peace, the giver of joy, the giver of life?

It's good to spend time learning on how to stay in step with the spirit and be empowered and guided and led by the spirit because he is our life, our true life, our joy, our hope, and our peace.

But I understand that if you've been in the church a long time, depending on how you grew up or what you grew up in, the Holy Spirit, the topic of the spirit, might concern you a little bit. There are different camps in the body of Christ that believe different things about the Holy Spirit. And of course, there have been airs about the spirit in certain camps and extremes taken in different ways.

And I just want to assure you, we're going to try and toe the line of what the Scripture says about the spirit. But one of the things that we have to acknowledge, if we're going to know more of the spirit, we have to surrender more to him and give up more control in our lives. And that does make us sometimes nervous as people.

During the season of lent, I was talking with a friend of mine and he asked me what I gave up for lent, and I expressed to him a little of what I was doing for lent. And then I asked him, "What are you giving up for lent?" And he said, "I'm giving up control of my life to the Spirit of God."

Well, we have a tendency to take control back. I asked him the other day how it was going. He said, "I still have some work to do."

But studying the Holy Spirit can be a fearful prospect. It takes us beyond human knowledge, beyond human understanding, beyond human ingenuity, beyond human prowess, to the glory and might of the work of God, where he gets all the glory and all the praise and all the honor.

But according to the scriptures, friends, it's worth it. And not only is he our help, the builder of the church, the source of real life and joy and hope and power, but quite pragmatically, God has instructed us to learn to live Of by his spirit.

Paul writes it this way under the pen, inspired by the Spirit of God: "Brothers and sisters, we have an obligation." An obligation. It is not to live to our human nature. For if we live according to our human nature spiritually, we will drift away from God and die. But if by the spirit, cooperating with the spirit, we put to death those things that take life from us, the misdeeds of the body, we will live.

This is our obligation, our instruction to, in a sense, allow the human old nature in us to be crucified with Christ and nurture and feed and stir the new nature in us, made alive by the spirit.

Paul says, "Those who are led of the spirit"—yes, they've believed on Jesus, but then they're instructed by the mystery of the spirit in life—"those are the true sons and daughters of God, the true disciples of the Lord."

Paul reprimanded the believers in Galatians for starting in the spirit and then, in their pride, going back to human effort. "We're going to do this ourselves. Yes, God revealed to us without our human insight and human ingenuity the gift of Jesus. He helped us to believe and understand the salvation of our souls. But then we went to work in the flesh to do it ourselves."

And the Apostle Paul writes to them, and again the inspiration of the spirit: "You foolish Galatians, who has tricked you betwixt you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly crucified. That was not of your work. It was his. He did that for you.

"I would like to learn just one thing from you. Did you receive the spirit by your own effort, by human ingenuity, by great intellect, or simply by believing by faith? Again, I ask you," he said, "does God give His Spirit to work miracles among you because you work in the flesh, because you're putting a lot of effort in it? Or do the miracles come to you because God is rewarding your faith? He's responding to your belief."

And then he gives an example, just a simple example. The beginning of God's people. Abraham was not a righteous man, like without Christ, a human man like you and I, sinful and deceptive. Yet he believed. He simply believed. And the Lord credited him with righteousness.

And so it is faith from beginning to end that we stay open to the spirit. He is our help in the Christian life, the builder of the church. He's the source of real life and joy and hope and peace. And God Himself has instructed us to grow and mature and to learn how to walk more fully in the spirit.

Jesus said in Luke chapter 11, "If an earthly father who has a sinful nature knows how to give good gifts, how much more will your Heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"

We are living in the days, friends, when the prophet Joel spoke these things. "In these days, God will pour out His Spirit on all people, young men, old men, young women, old women. They will dream dreams. They will see visions. They will be empowered."

I don't know about you, friend, but I want more. I want more of this. Everything else in the world pales in comparison to the rivers of living water that can flow through our spirits when we're in line with the Holy Spirit of God.

I hope that you have a taste and a hunger and a thirst for this as well. Yes, it might mean he might disrupt our lives more. Yes, it might mean he might un anchor us from certain things that we cling to. But Jesus said, in the end, it'll all be worth it. Learning to live the resurrection life.

I sure hope you'll walk with us these next four weeks as we ask God to teach us more on how to do this. Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for this opportunity to look into your word together and see what you've revealed to us about this life and your grace and your kindness and your mercy to us. Thank you for sending Your Son to do for us what we couldn't do for ourselves.

And then, father, thank you for giving your spirit to also do for us what we couldn't do for ourselves. Make us alive in you.

Father, as we move through these next weeks, I pray that you would, wherever we're at, just beginning this journey or way down this journey a ways, that you would mature us and strengthening us in the work of your spirit. Move in us to free us from those things that we cling to that are not of you, and empower us to live in a pure, loving, peaceful boldness before you, that we might be the fresh aroma of you to the world around us.

And father, I'm mindful that maybe there is someone sitting in here this morning who hasn't come to believe on your son Jesus, and therefore doesn't have the witness of the spirit in their spirit. But perhaps today they're longing for it, hungering for it, and thirsting for it. And as your spirit draws them to you, I pray that you would grant them the gift of faith, even a mustard seed of faith, to begin their faith journey with you through Christ.

And father, I pray that you would surprise us in these next five weeks. Do in us things that we never thought possible by the work of your spirit. Empower and strengthen us as individuals and as your people, as your body, as your church.

We pray it in Jesus name. Amen.