

You are Not Alone! (Holy Spirit)
John 14:15-25)
Argyle – 10/8/17 – Implications of Our Life in Christ

Introduction to Worship

This morning we are covering familiar territory as we are talking about the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit. In fact, this is the fourth sermon Bryan or I have preached in the past year that has focused on the Spirit. We are accumulating information which is good, but have we grasped the implications of this information about the Spirit in our lives? As you prepare for worship this morning, reflect on the impact the Holy Spirit is having in your life and invite him to grow his influence.

Introduction to Scripture

The context of this morning's Scripture passage is a gathering of the disciples the night before Jesus would be crucified. Jesus knew he was leaving this world so he gave them these last minute instructions on how to carry on his mission after he was gone. The Holy Spirit was one of the key themes in Jesus' final teaching. Since the responsibility to carry on Jesus' mission has been passed on to us, these words are very relevant to our lives today. (Read) (Pray for the people next to you to encounter the Holy Spirit this morning.)

Introduction

In Christ we are accepted! That means we are reconciled to God the Father through our faith in Jesus' death and resurrection. We call that justification. In

Christ we are, also, delivered! That means we are set free from the power of sin so that we can live holy lives. We call that growth in holiness sanctification. This morning we are considering the third of four primary implications of our life in Christ. This outline comes from Richard Lovelace's book, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*. The third implication is, in Christ we are not alone!

As he was preparing to leave this world, Jesus said, "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. (John 14:18-19a) Jesus had made it clear to his followers that he was leaving this world. He would no longer be physically present with them. Yet, he was promising that he would be with them. How could this be?

Jesus was introducing them to one of the most amazing truths of the Christian life. Following his death, resurrection and ascension, Jesus would continue to be spiritually present with his followers through the person of the Holy Spirit. They would not be alone in carrying out the work that he had given them to do. Jesus said, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you."(John 14:16-17) This would have been a remarkable promise if Jesus had just said that the Holy Spirit would be with them. But what made it more astonishing is that Jesus said the Spirit will be "in you." The Holy Spirit will be with us and will be in us. The Apostle Paul spoke about this in his first letter to the Corinthians. "Or, do

you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?”(I Corinthians 6:19)

When you became a Christian, Jesus came into your life in the person of the Holy Spirit. You made a decision to believe in and surrender your life to Christ and he responded supernaturally by sending his Spirit to live inside of you. We are not alone! We call that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. So, what does it mean that we have the Holy Spirit living inside of us?

Establishes Us for Christian Living and Ministry

First, it means that the Holy Spirit establishes us for Christian living and ministry. Paul wrote to the Corinthians. “Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, ²² set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.”(I Corinthians 1:21-22). Likewise he told the Ephesians, “...you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

The idea of a seal here is like the brand (picture) that is stamped on an animal to show who that animal belongs to. It shows ownership. If a couple of herds of cattle get mixed in together, you can sort them out by their brands. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit shows that we belong to God through faith in Jesus Christ. And not

only that, the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives guarantees our place in heaven. He is a deposit holding our spot. To be indwelt by the Holy Spirit means that we are established as a part of God's family for eternity.

Educates Us for Christian Living and Ministry

Second, the Holy Spirit educates us for Christian living and ministry. Jesus told the disciples, "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."(14:26) Later in this conversation he said, "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth."

One of the roles Kim has been assigned in her teaching career from time to time is that of a personal tutor. She will work with a student one on one to help them learn. The Holy Spirit is our personal spiritual tutor. He inspired the writers of Scripture to write what they wrote. As we read those words, he helps us to understand and apply them. The Spirit reminds us of things we have learned, usually in a moment when we really need that information. The Holy Spirit educates us for Christian living and ministry.

Empowers Us for Christian Living and Ministry

The Holy Spirit establishes, educates and, third, empowers us for Christian living and ministry. The Spirit empowers us by producing spiritual fruit in us. The Apostle Paul listed some of that fruit in Galatians 5. He wrote, "But the fruit of the Spirit is..." say it with me if you know it - "...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,

goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” The Holy Spirit empowers us to carry on the work of Christ by making us more and more like Christ. These characteristics are really a description of what Christ is like.

If you come to the Argyle Fire Company Open House on Thursday night you will be impressed by the equipment that we have - fire trucks, hoses, ladders, thermal imaging cameras, hydraulic tools, gas monitors, etc. But equipment by itself is not enough. What makes that equipment useful is when you put it in the hands of a firefighter who is available, committed, compassionate, trained and physically capable. In a minute we are going to talk about how the Holy Spirit equips us by giving us spiritual gifts to use in ministry. Those gifts are very, very important, but unless they are in the hands of a Christian who has love, joy, peace, patience and all the rest, those gifts will not be very effective. Without the fruit of the Holy Spirit our spiritual gifts are like a fire truck in the hands of an untrained civilian. It might look impressive, but it won't be very effective.

The Holy Spirit empowers us for Christian living and ministry by producing Christ's character in us. We call that the fruit of the Spirit.

Equips Us for Christian Living and Ministry

Fourth, the Holy Spirit equips us for Christian living and ministry. Paul wrote, “Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. ...⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different

kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

⁷Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”(I Corinthians 12:1, 4-7)

We can't afford to be uninformed about spiritual gifts. If you are a Christian, you have been given at least one spiritual gift by God to be used in ministry. God has work for you to do and he has equipped you to do it. You might have the gift of mercy or of administration or of wisdom or of discernment. The Bible lists over 15 spiritual gifts that God distributes to his people for the good of the church and the carrying on of his work. People often refer to people like Bryan and me as the ministers of the church, but that is not faithful to Scripture. According to the Bible, we are all ministers in the church, because we all have been equipped by the Holy Spirit to do the work of ministry. Bryan and my ministry is that of pastoring. What is yours?

The gifts we have been given will influence where we serve in ministry. Back to the firehouse for a minute. When we are called to a motor vehicle accident we take Rescue 215 (picture) with its hydraulic tools, cribbing and power tools. When we are called to a structure fire we take Engine-Tanker 211 (picture) with its water, hoses and ladders. When we are called to a brush fire we take Brush 214 (picture) with its 4 wheel drive, forestry hose, Indian tanks and rakes. Once we were called to a home being destroyed by an out of control pet monkey. We weren't equipped for that.

The good news is that God equips his church for every task he will give us. The task will determine which gifts are needed. If you are looking for a team to teach the 5th grade Sunday School class, you will look for folks with the gifts of teaching and hospitality. If it is large class requiring a large team, you may also need someone with the gift of administration. If you are looking for folks to do hospital visitation you will look for folks with the gifts of mercy and encouragement. If you are looking for Session members, you will look for folks with the gifts of administration, leadership, service, teaching and discernment. No one will have all of those gifts, which is why we need one another.

Because the Holy Spirit has indwelled us, we have been equipped for Christian living and ministry with spiritual gifts. Do you know what yours are? We have some helpful resources that can help you identify them. Email Bryan or me if you are interested.

Conclusion

It has been said that the Holy Spirit is the forgotten member of the Trinity and that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is one of the most neglected doctrines in the church. Richard Lovelace points out how historically, that is only partially true. During the Reformation, the Great Awakening of the 1700s, the Welsh Revival of 1904 and other periods of significant spiritual advance the church has emphasized the person and work of the Holy Spirit. It is unclear if the emphasis on the Holy Spirit led to the spiritual advances or if the revivals led to an emphasis on the Holy Spirit.

The one thing that is clear is that when important spiritual things are happening, the Holy Spirit is in the middle of it.

We are not alone. Because we are in Christ, we have been indwelt by the Holy Spirit who establishes, educates, empowers and equips us for Christian life and ministry. The Apostle Paul told the Galatians, “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” I chose that as our memory verse for the week because I think that is a helpful concept for appropriating the work of the Holy Spirit to our lives. Imagine the work of the Holy Spirit in your life like taking a walk in Hong Kong. You have never been to Hong Kong before, but that is okay because the Holy Spirit knows the way. But one thing you want to make sure you do is keep in step with him. You don’t want to fall behind because you may get lost or not get to your destination. But if you keep in step with the Spirit, you will be established, educated, empowered and equipped for the life and work that God has called you to.