

THE HOLY SPIRIT

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Chapter 1

The Third Person of the Godhead

John 14:16, 17, 26

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever — 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.

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.

As we study the New Testament we will see that each member of the Godhead has a specific part to play in our salvation. According to the great commission that Jesus gave in Matthew

28:19, He told His disciples that when believers are baptized, it should be done in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

The reason that is done is because all three Persons of the Godhead are involved in our salvation and the whole of heaven is concerned about our salvation.

In our study of the Bible, we discover God the Father's part in the plan of salvation. For example, we read in John 3:17 that God sent His Son not to condemn us but to save us:

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Then, in John 6:38, Jesus said:

For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

In Galatians 4:4-5 Paul says:

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

So the Father is the Director of the plan of salvation.

The Son, Jesus Christ, is the Saviour of all men. In Luke 2:11, the angel, speaking to the shepherds, announced to them:

Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

In John 4:42, Jesus is referred to as the Saviour of the world:

They said to the woman, “We no longer believe

just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world.”

Paul writes in 1 Timothy 4:10 describing Jesus as the Saviour of all men:

...(And for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, and especially of those who believe.

Christ, and in His doing, dying, and resurrection has reconciled us to God; He has redeemed us; He has rewritten our history, so that in Christ every one of us can come to God boldly without fear, with full assurance, because there in Christ we stand accepted in the Beloved.

Let us direct our thoughts and our attention to the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead, and look at the part He has to play in our salvation. The Holy Spirit is “The Communicator.” Throughout Scripture, His function is as the active

Agent of God in our salvation and He is also the active Agent in other things. While the Father sent Jesus into this world in order that there might be a gospel to be preached, God sends the Holy Spirit to make this gospel real in our experience. That is the work of the Holy Spirit.

We will look at two aspects of the Holy Spirit. The first one to consider is the personhood of the Holy Spirit; then we will do an overview of His activity, especially in the area of our salvation. The reason we want to examine the personhood of the Holy Spirit is because there are some who do not believe that the Holy Spirit is a Person. The error of treating the Holy Spirit in an impersonal way may be traced back to about the Third Century A.D. Unfortunately, this has not been brought to an end. Back in the Third Century, the theory was advanced that the Holy Spirit is an influence; He is the revelation of the Divine power, but He is not a Person. Unfortunately, this is still being taught and believed by some today. Therefore, we must go to Scripture.

Both the Old and the New Testament speak of the Holy Spirit not as a mere “Something,” but as a Divine “Someone.” I believe that most of us — I hope all of us — believe in the Holy Spirit as a Person, but we need some evidence. In Romans 8:27, the Apostle Paul speaks about the mind of the Holy Spirit:

And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.

In Romans 15:30, Paul talks about the love of the Holy Spirit:

I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.

The Holy Spirit has a mind and He’s capable of loving.

In the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit played a very important part in the early Christian church.

We read in Acts 8:29 that the Holy Spirit spoke to Philip and an “influence” doesn’t speak:

The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

In Acts 16:6-7, we are told that the Holy Spirit restrained and constrained the Apostle Paul:

Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.

None of these things are possible without a personality. A “force,” an “influence” cannot do that.

When we further examine the Scriptures, especially the New Testament, we discover that the Holy Spirit can search. 1 Corinthians 2:10:

...But God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

He can cry. Galatians 4:6:

Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

He can pray. Romans 8:26:

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

He can testify. John 15:26-27:

When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

He can teach. John 14:26:

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.

He can lead people into truth. Romans 8:14:

...Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

None of these make sense if we describe the Holy Spirit and limit Him only as an influence or a power. So the Bible is clear that the Holy Spirit is a Person and, because He is a Person, the Bible says that He can be grieved. Ephesians 4:30:

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

He can be blasphemed. He can be insulted. Mark 3:29:

But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.

And that is, of course, the unpardonable sin.

When we are dealing with the Holy Spirit, we are dealing with a Person, a Person that God has sent to make real, in our experience, the truth as it is in Christ.

The Activities of the Holy Spirit

Let us go through some texts to show the activity of the Holy Spirit. Twelve is the number of the Christian church, and we will study 12 main activities of the Holy Spirit. As we look at these texts, we will see clearly the very important part that the Holy Spirit plays in our salvation.

1. At the very beginning of the Bible, in Genesis 1:1-2, we discover that the Holy Spirit was active in the work of creation:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Here right in the very first chapter of the Bible in Genesis, the second verse, we are told that the Holy Spirit was active in the creation of this world.

2. Now let us see what part He had in the plan of salvation. In our list of activities, we see that He was active in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Luke 1:31, Mary has been approached by the angel and told that she is going to have a baby:

You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.

It is puzzling to her because she is a virgin, so she asks, “How can this happen?” And this is what the angel says in Luke 1:35:

The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”

To explain how it all happened, we read in Philippians 2:6 that Jesus was equal with God:

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped....

But He did something: He emptied Himself; He gave up His very life to the Father, the Chairman, the Director of the plan of salvation.

The Father took the life of Christ, now totally emptied of self, which means He gave up all His Divine rights, all His Divine prerogatives, voluntarily. He handed Himself over to the Father. The Father took the life of Christ and handed it over to the Holy Spirit who was the active Agent of God. The Holy Spirit brought Christ down — this is a mystery — and planted that Divine life into the

womb of Mary. There in that womb humanity and Divinity were united, and Christ now became qualified to be the Saviour of all human beings.

3. The Holy Spirit was active in the incarnation, but that's not all. He played an active part in the mission of Christ on this earth. Having taken our humanity, Christ could do nothing of Himself. He had to be totally controlled by the Spirit. There are texts that clearly bring this out. In Luke 4, Jesus returns back to his home town of Nazareth. Outwardly, He was no different from any other human being. He looked just like one of them. He was the son of a carpenter. He comes home and the people have heard about Him. The news has spread to Nazareth, so He comes to church, to the synagogue, and they place in His hands a scroll of the book of Isaiah. He opens it and He reads. Luke 4:18-19:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he [the Spirit] has anointed me [has set me aside] to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of

sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

All this Christ accomplished, but it was the Holy Spirit that worked in Him. This is important because that same Spirit that fulfilled God's mission in Christ is made available to us, the very same Spirit. Verse 14 is an example of this. The same chapter, Luke 4, deals with the three temptations of Jesus Christ, which, in a nutshell, sum up all the temptations that come to man. Three basic statements sum up the temptations that come to each one of us. They are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life and these three temptations of Jesus fit into those categories. Luke 4:14 tells us what happened after Jesus had gained the victory over those temptations:

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.

Jesus did not conquer the Devil in His own

strength; it was through the power of the Spirit.

4. The Holy Spirit is the One who inspired the writers of this book. In 2 Peter 1:21, we read:

For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

That same Spirit that moved the writers of this book, the Holy Bible, must also illuminate us when we study Scripture. It is important that ministers get training, that they understand the original languages, that they get background material, the Old and New Testament, but, when we come to the Word of God, whether we are trained or not trained, whether we are a ministers or laypeople, there is one Person who can guide us into truth. A knowledge of Greek and Hebrew is not enough. It is a useful tool, but it is the Spirit that must guide us into truth. It is a tragedy that the Christian church, the scholars, are moving to a method where they depend on the human rationale to discover truth. Human reason is important but it must be

subject to the Word of God. We may be living in the Scientific Age, and the Computer Age, but God knew about science and computers long before we were born, before we were created. He knows much more than we know. Wait until we get to heaven; we'll be like dwarfs before the angels and other people. Remember, the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible writers and He must illuminate us.

5. In John 16:8, we are told that the Holy Spirit convicts people of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment:

When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment....

We cannot emphasize enough that it is not the work of man to convict people; it is the work of the Holy Spirit. Our job is witnessing. It is the Holy Spirit that convicts them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

6. He attracts people to the gospel. He not only

convicts people but He draws people to the work of Jesus Christ. In the very first book of the Bible, we read that He was active in creation; now, in the very last book, in Revelation 22:17, we read:

The Spirit and the bride [the bride is the people of God being used by the Holy Spirit] say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

God has given us the responsibility of witnessing the gospel. We witness and we tell people, “Come and accept the gift,” but it is the Holy Spirit that goes right deep into their conscience and says, “Don’t be a fool; don’t reject this invitation.” He is the One who draws people to Jesus Christ. That is His work and that is why witnessing is not left to the believer. It is left to the Holy Spirit to do His work in and through us.

7. To those who accept the gospel, those who accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, the

Holy Spirit internalizes that salvation. In other words, He brings about the new birth. The life that we received at our birth, our natural life, is the life of the flesh. It stands condemned; flesh and blood cannot inherit heaven. It does not qualify for heaven. That is why Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:3-8:

In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”

“How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!”

Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of

the Spirit.”

“You must be born again. You must be born of the Spirit.” The new birth is produced by the Holy Spirit.

8. He leads us into all truth. He is the One that guides into truth. We must not rely on our unaided human minds, wonderful as they may be. We have to depend on Scripture. In John 15:26-27, Jesus repeats what He said in John 14:26:

When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father [the Father is still the Chairman], the Spirit of truth [notice He is called the Spirit of Truth] who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

The Holy Spirit does not reveal things about Himself. The work of the Holy Spirit is to testify of Jesus Christ. He is to make the gospel real to our experience. Verse 27:

And you also must testify, for you have been

with me from the beginning.

9. This is a very important statement because there are some who say that we don't believe in sanctification. We are very strong believers in sanctification but we must be clear that sanctification is not a means of salvation. That is a heresy. Sanctification is the inevitable fruits of justification. It's not an option. The means of sanctification is not screwing up our will power and trying to be good. The means of sanctification is the Holy Spirit. We cannot produce something that is impossible. We could not save ourselves because we are sinners and we cannot produce righteousness by trying. All we can produce is self-righteousness, which in God's eyes is filthy rags.

One of three texts which clearly point out that the Holy Spirit is the means of our sanctification is 2 Thessalonians 2:13. Two of them are from the Apostle Paul who believes in sanctification. What He condemns is when we make sanctification meritorious. Sanctification is the fruits of

justification. Never does it make any contribution towards justification. We are saved by grace alone through faith. That is why we need to study the book of Galatians, because Galatians is God's righteous indignation on the Judaizers who were adding works to justification by faith. This text shows the means of sanctification, the Holy Spirit. 2 Thessalonians 2:13:

But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord [talking to believers who have accepted Christ], because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

Notice, the Holy Spirit is the active Agent of God in our sanctification. In 1 Peter 1:2, Peter says the same thing. Here he is addressing the Christians of the Middle East, and in verse 2 he says:

...Who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the

sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

Here it is pointed out that one of the works of the Holy Spirit is to sanctify the believers who have been washed by the blood of Jesus Christ. How does He do it, and what part do we have to play? The third text which answers that question is 2 Corinthians 3:17:

Now the Lord is the Spirit...

In other words, Christ today is represented by the Holy Spirit. Christ Himself is in heaven, but the Spirit is here. We are living in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

And then he explains what kind of freedom is meant here. He's not talking about political or economic freedom. Look at verse 18 [2

Corinthians 3:18]:

And we, who with unveiled faces all [believers, all of us] reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

When Moses came down from the mountain and spoke to the Jews, they asked him to put a veil between them and him because the glory of God was too much for them to bear. But Paul tells us in Corinthians that, when we come to Christ, this veil is removed because there is no barrier between a holy God and sinful man in Jesus Christ. So, with open, unveiled faces we come boldly to God, "reflecting the Lord's glory." When we look in a mirror we see ourselves. We use the law as a mirror, and we see filth. But when we look at the mirror of Christ — when we look at ourselves in Christ — we don't see filth. We see righteousness, blamelessness, because that is what we are in Christ.

At Jesus' baptism, when the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus and God spoke to Jesus from heaven, He said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Luke 3:21-22:

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

Desire of Ages, by Ellen G. White, page 113, says, "This includes all humanity." That's good news, because, in Christ, God is well pleased with us. In Him, we stand complete and perfect. As we look at ourselves, not through the law as the mirror, but through the mirror of Jesus Christ, as we behold Jesus Christ and what He has accomplished for the human race, something takes place within us. As we behold the glory of the Lord, we "reflect the Lord's glory," and "are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." There is a

transformation of our characters to reflect the love and character of our Lord Jesus Christ but notice the last part. It is the Spirit that reproduces the character of Christ in us. We can't do it; all we can do is hypocrisy. We are shams without the Holy Spirit.

10. He bestows spiritual gifts upon the church. One very clear text is Ephesians 4:7:

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

When Christ went up to heaven, He bestowed gifts upon the church — making some Apostles, some prophets, some teachers and pastors — for the building up of the church. 1 Corinthians 12:7 tells us that the gifts of the Spirit are for the profit of the whole body:

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

The church is the body of Christ and each

member of the body needs each other to grow and be established. That is the work of the Holy Spirit.

11. It is also a very important truth that it is the Holy Spirit who works in believers to witness Jesus Christ. Many say, “I don’t have the ability to witness like others.” But many are by nature introverts who have fought against a call to the ministry for that very same reason. The thought of standing behind a pulpit and looking at those staring eyes is horrifying to many. The only reason anyone can do it is because they believe the calling is from God. God gives us the courage to face others. In Luke 24:48-49, Jesus had given a commission to the disciples who had the same problem that we have. He knew that they were not capable of fulfilling that commission, of taking that gospel to a hostile world. So in verses 48 and 49 He says:

You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.

By “power from on high” Jesus did not mean some “influence,” because in Acts 1:8 we read,

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

12. The Holy Spirit is always with us to the end of the world to comfort and to help us in this wicked world of ours, in our witnessing, in our Christian living, and in the things that we have to face as believers. John 14:16:

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever — the Spirit of truth.

The word that Jesus used for “Counselor” (or “Comforter” in some translations) is *parakletos*, which means more than a Comforter. It means somebody who is by your side or in you to be your Helper, to be your Guide, to be your Comforter, to

be everything to you. So it's more than a Comforter. And Jesus said, "I will send you the Holy Spirit to be by your side, to be your parakletos, to be in you, to guide you, to help you, to strengthen you, to direct you and to comfort you."

We human beings depend on each other for comfort, for being upheld. There will come a time when we will have no other human being to help us. We need to learn to depend on the Holy Spirit for that comfort. Our Pastor may forsake us, our church may forsake us, our Conference President may forsake us, but the Holy Spirit will never forsake us. That is why we need to know that He will be by our side.

John 14:17-18:

...The Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him [He's not something visible; He's a Person, but He's a Spirit and He dwells in you] nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

A better translation is, “I will not leave you helpless. I will be with you until I come and take you home, which is still future.”

So from the beginning of the plan of salvation to the end, all three Members of the Godhead are involved. God doesn't say, “I have saved you in Christ, now I leave the rest to you.” It's from beginning to end the work of God. We are simply tools, instruments in His hands. In Christ, God saved us. Through the Holy Spirit that salvation is internalized. The crying need of the church is to experience the power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

The church today stands challenged. The great pagan philosopher Neitzche, who was the son of a Lutheran Pastor, gave up Christianity and became an atheist. He was one of the greatest philosophers, and addressing the Christian church He said, “If you expect me to believe in your Redeemer, you Christians will have to look a lot

more redeemed.” It is only as we allow the Holy Spirit to dwell in us and to control us as we walk in the Spirit that that will power be manifested. Without that all they will see is the “fair showing of the flesh,” which is worthless.

It is my prayer in Jesus’ name that we will walk in the Spirit and will allow the third Person of the Godhead to accomplish and finish the work He has been assigned to do in our lives.

Chapter 2

Once Saved, Always Saved

Hebrews 10:35-39

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, “He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.” But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.

In the holy history of our Lord Jesus Christ — His birth, life, death, and resurrection — God obtained salvation full and complete for all men in Jesus Christ. But his objective — universal salvation, which was obtained in Christ — has to be made effective in each one of us individually. This is the first work of the Holy Spirit, which

Christ summed up in John 16:7-11:

But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

His first work is in the world. He has a mission in the world and we will discover what part we play and what part the Holy Spirit plays in this mission.

In John 16:7, Jesus said to the disciples:

But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

We must analyze this passage to discover why it was necessary for Christ to go away and for Him to send us the Comforter. The actual Greek word for comforter is parakletos, which means one who is at the side of someone, helping, directing, guiding, and strengthening. Just before Jesus left for His heavenly home, He gave the disciples a commission which was, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.” But Jesus realized that the disciples could not do it in their own strength.

In Luke 24:48-49 we are told why Christ had to go away and then send the Comforter:

You are witnesses of these things....

The disciples were eyewitnesses of the holy history of Jesus Christ.

You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power

from on high.

These disciples needed a power that was outside of themselves and Jesus said, “Wait. Don’t begin until you receive this power.”

In Acts 1:8 we read these words also spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ. This is what Jesus said to the disciples just before He ascended into heaven:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Jesus is saying in verse 8 that, even though it is the mission of the Holy Spirit to win the world to Christ, the Holy Spirit works through the believers.

In John 14:12, Jesus made this statement to the disciples:

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even

greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

We know from the words of Jesus Christ in John 16:7, that the reason Jesus went to the Father was that He might send us the Holy Spirit, the parakletos, the One who will work in us, encourage us, comfort us, counsel us, and direct us:

But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

In other words, the work of soul winning is always the work of the Holy Spirit. May we never forget that the Holy Spirit works through believers. Jesus said, “You will be My witnesses.” Our job is to witness; our job is to proclaim the gospel, not to convince people. That is God’s job. No matter how well we give our Bible studies, no matter how carefully we analyze our presentation that it may be logical and intellectual, without the Spirit we will not convince a single soul. That’s not our

work. Our work is through the foolishness of preaching; God will convince them through the Holy Spirit.

We must not take upon ourselves that which is not ours to do. God has not asked us to convince anybody, God has asked us simply to witness. But the question is, “What are we going to witness?” because, as we read the passage, it becomes clear that we do the witnessing, the Holy Spirit does the convicting. But the Holy Spirit cannot convict them of what He needs to convict them if we don’t give them that which He is supposed to convict them of. In other words, we must be sure that in our witnessing, we must witness that which the Holy Spirit is supposed to convict them of. That is why Jesus, in verse 8, explains in a nutshell to the disciples what the Holy Spirit will convict the world of.

So our witnessing must be in the context of John 16:8:

When he [the Holy Spirit] comes, he will

convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment....

Christ told the disciples that when the Holy Spirit comes He will convince them of three things: of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. If the Holy Spirit is to do that through us, we need to be clear on what Christ meant by the words sin, righteousness, and judgment. Christ does not leave us in darkness. In John 16:9-11 He takes each of these words and He spells it out for us.

The first word is in verse 9. The Holy Spirit will convince the world of sin:

...in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me...

Notice that He did not give sin the common definition that we give. John 16:9 says:

...in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me...

Let's look at what Jesus meant by that statement in the light of the gospel. We know from Scripture that Jesus came to save sinners. In 1 Timothy 1:15, Paul says:

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the worst.

All of us are sinners. Romans 3:23:

...For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God....

Romans 3:10:

As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one....”

Jesus saved us from all sins. Therefore, according to the New Testament, in the light of the gospel, God's unconditional good news, all mankind has already been redeemed, even forgiven, from all sins. Some have difficulty with

that.

One text sums it up: 2 Corinthians 5:18-19. This is a very clear statement made by the Apostle Paul. Verse 18:

All this is from God, who reconciled [past tense, He has already reconciled] us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ...

That is the message of the gospel that we are supposed to witness. Go tell the world; stop running away from God. He has already reconciled them to Himself through Jesus Christ. In the next verse, 2 Corinthians 5:19, we find the message that we are supposed to preach:

...that God was reconciling [not the elect but] the world [the human race] to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

Every sin that we have committed and every

sin that we will commit to our dying day has been taken care of in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the only sin by which man is lost is the sin of unbelief. That is one sin that God cannot forgive because unbelief is the willful rejection of salvation, the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, in this context, in the New Testament it is very clear that the only reason that man will be deprived of heaven is not because they are bad, not because they are sinners, but because they have willfully rejected Jesus Christ. This is what Jesus was trying to tell the disciples. “Men are lost because they do not believe in Me.” You see, the Jews divided the human race into two camps. They said the Jews were God’s people. They were righteous because God gave them the covenant and that the Gentiles were sinners. But the Gospel says this is not true. Both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin. Romans 3:9:

What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under

sin.

But in Jesus Christ we have a gift, and that gift is the righteousness of God which qualifies each one of us for heaven.

Listen to the words of Jesus Himself in Mark 16:15-16. This is Jesus speaking:

He said to them [the disciples], “Go into all the world [Notice: “Go into all the world;” go to all of the human race, to every group, language, and people] and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be [guaranteed] saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

He is condemned because He does not believe.

Twice we find in this chapter the same truth. In John 3:18 and 36, Jesus is little more specific than He was in Mark:

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but

whoever does not believe stands condemned already [then Jesus explains why condemnation comes] because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life [not future tense, but present continuous tense], but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.

In other words, the only reason man is lost is because He has rejected the gift of Jesus Christ. Our job is to witness the gospel. Our job is to tell the world, to every creature, that they have already been reconciled through Jesus Christ. That's our message. The Holy Spirit will come and convict them. This is truth. And you may witness it in the worst of words; your message may be illogical, it may be in very poor grammar — it doesn't matter. God doesn't depend on our eloquence; He depends on the Holy Spirit to convince them and the Holy Spirit will convince them.

But God will not force them. God is love and

every creature who hears the gospel will make a choice. For example, in Romans 11:20, where Paul is discussing the Jews, the Jews wanted to know why they are lost, why are the branches off from the olive tree, from Israel? Paul tells them it is because of unbelief:

Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid.

In Hebrews 3:18-19, the writer of Hebrews tells the Jews of the Exodus that they didn't enter the promised land, approximately two million of them, almost everyone from the age of 20 upwards who left Egypt, because of unbelief:

And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

Then, in Hebrews 4:1-2, he goes on to say that we who have believed the gospel have entered into

God's rest:

Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.

The only sin that is unpardonable is the sin of unbelief and, just like faith is a willful submission to the truth as it is in Christ, unbelief is a willful rejection to the truth that is in Christ. Here is where Christianity and Islam part company, because the word "Islam" means submission. Islam says we must submit to the will of God, which is keeping His rules. That's why it's a very legalistic religion. Christianity also demands submission, but our submission is to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our Saviour. We have salvation in Him, not in what we do. What we do is the fruits of salvation, which is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

Because of this we will look at a very important text. There are many Christians who are confused about what we call the unpardonable sin. Here it is in Matthew 12:30-32. This is Jesus, again talking to the Jews. Listen to what He says to them:

He who is not with me is against me...

We are either for Christ or we are against Him and when this gospel goes into all the world for a witness, it will divide the human race into only two camps. Denominationalism will go. There will be one faith, one baptism, one truth. The two camps are believers on one side, and unbelievers on the other, those who are with Christ, for Christ, and those who are against Him. The rest of verse 30:

...and he who does not gather with me scatters.

The unbeliever wants to destroy the Christian church, because that is the work of the devil; the believer wants to bring people in. In light of this, Jesus says in Matthew 12:31:

And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men...

The reason is because, on the cross, Jesus Christ paid the price for all manner of sin and blasphemy.

...but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

Verse 32:

Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

Jesus is talking to Jews who were against Him, but probation had not yet closed. But after Jesus left, and the Holy Spirit took over at Pentecost, and convinced the same Jews that this Messiah, this man that they crucified, was the Messiah, and that if they rejected that, that would no longer be

blasphemy against the Son of God, it would be blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

Remember, the Holy Spirit convinces the world that they are lost, not because they are bad, or that they are saved, not because they are good but because they are without Christ. They are saved because they have accepted the gift of salvation in Christ.

The Holy Spirit also convicts the world of righteousness. John 16:10:

...in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ...

Jesus gives us a clue what He meant in John 16:28:

I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.

Christ was not sent here by the Father on a holiday. He was sent here on a mission. And that mission is described in many places, such as John 3:17:

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

In Galatians 4:4-5, we read these words from the pen of the Apostle Paul:

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

God sent Jesus to do a work; He had a mission to accomplish and God said to Jesus, “You are not to return back to Me until You have finished the work that I have given You to do.”

In John 17:3-4, we read these words:

Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.

On the cross, John 19:30, Jesus said, “It is finished.” That is one of the seven words that Jesus spoke on the cross:

When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

The fact that Jesus went to the Father simply means that God has already provided righteousness for all men in Jesus Christ. It is a finished work. The proof is that Jesus went to the Father. When Jesus rose from the dead, John 20:17, Mary held Him and Jesus said to Mary, “Please don’t hold onto Me because I have not yet ascended to My Father and to your Father, to My God and to your God”:

Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have

not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

The significance of all that was that Jesus had to get the green light that His work was finished. He went to His Father, and the Father said, “Son, I am well pleased, I am satisfied with what You have done. I give You full authority to take these sinners to heaven.” So Jesus came back, and in Mathew 28:18-20:

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Jesus said to His disciples, “All authority is given unto Me. I have now the legal, lawful right to take these people to heaven. I have satisfied the

demands of God's law. I have obtained righteousness, the righteousness of God, for them. Go into all the world and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And then teach them to observe everything I have commanded you.”

Christ going to the Father simply means that the work is finished. In John 5:24, we read the words of Christ:

I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me...

We believe that God sent Jesus Christ here to save us and that Jesus fulfilled that mission. Here is what Jesus says for those who believe that:

...has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

“You already have eternal life and will not be condemned; you already have crossed over from death to life.” That’s the good news!

But the problem is not everyone will accept the gift, so the Holy Spirit has to convict the world of something else and we find that in John 16:11:

...and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

Now that is a loaded statement, so let me, in a nutshell, try and explain what Christ was saying. When you read the account of creation in Genesis 1, especially verses 26-28, you will discover that when God created this world with all the animals, vegetation, birds, cattle, everything, He turned round to Adam and said, “Please have dominion. I have created this for you and your children. I have created this world for you.” Genesis 1:26-28:

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

That is why we are guilty for polluting this world of ours. God never gave this world to misuse it. When Adam sinned, he handed this world, everything in it, including the human race, over to Satan. We know that because, in Luke 4, Satan takes Jesus to a high mountain and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world and Satan says in Luke 4:6:

I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to.

Jesus didn't question Satan. In fact, in John

14:30a, Jesus calls Satan the prince or lord of this world:

I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming.

But something happened on the cross. Not only did Jesus save us from sin, but He did something else: He bought us back. 1 Peter 1:18-19:

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

Another excellent text is Revelation 12:10. This is the Good News of the Gospel:

Then I heard a loud voice [this is the loud cry, the loud voice that the world needs to hear] in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the

authority of his Christ...”

The word “now” refers to the cross. On the cross, Jesus became the lawful owner of this world and the second half of verse 10 tells us about Satan:

“...For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.”

Since the cross, no longer is Satan the lawful, legal owner of this world. It belongs to Christ; He is the rightful Owner of this world. He bought this world back for two reasons:

1. To redeem us.

2. To restore it.

He is going to do both. He has done one; He is going to do the second one. He has redeemed us, and He’s going to restore it but we will be part of that restoration only if we accept the gift, if we

receive the gift. If we refuse the gift, then there is a judgment for us. In other words, when we stand before the judgment seat of God and we are an unbeliever, we can't blame Adam, we can't even blame our sinful nature, we can't blame God, we can't blame anybody except ourselves, because God will say, "I gave you salvation as a gift at infinite cost to Me, but a free gift to you. And you would not; you refused, not once, not twice, a thousand times I came to you from every angle, and you refused and refused. And, therefore, I have to leave you desolate."

This is the abomination of desolation. It's the deliberate, willful, ultimate rejection of Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 2:3, we are told what happens if we deliberately, willfully reject the gift:

...How shall we escape [the wrath of God, the judgment] if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him [the disciples].

In Hebrews 10:14 we have the good news of the gospel:

...Because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy [those who have accepted Jesus Christ].

But now look at Hebrews 10:26:

If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left,...

The word “sin” here has the same meaning as John 16:9, of unbelief. “If you willfully reject Jesus Christ after you have heard that His sacrifice has saved you, there remains no more sacrifice for sins.” Now please remember, the writer is speaking to Jews, and the Jews were depending on the sacrifice of bulls and sheep and goats. Paul is saying, “Those sacrifices cannot save you. There is only one sacrifice. If you reject that, after you have discovered the truth, after you have been convicted of the truth by the Holy Spirit, then there

is nothing left for you but (verse 27):

...but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

Verse 29:

How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?

(“Trampled under foot” is a Hebrew expression meaning to treat something as dirt.) The Holy Spirit has convicted them through our witnessing and they have refused Him. Nothing is left but judgment.

Eighty percent of the world is non-Christian. Nine hundred million people — approximately one fifth of the world population — is Islam. In 1970, there were just over one million Muslims in the

U.S.A. In 1980, it had increased to two million. Ten years later, in 1990, the total Islamic population in the U.S.A. alone, was just under five million. We have a challenge; they need the gospel.

Our job is not to convince them. We can never convince a Muslim. I have tried it. I worked 18 years in a country where 50 percent were Islamic. But the Holy Spirit will do the convincing. Our job is to preach the gospel.

Let the Holy Spirit do the convincing. It is my prayer that we will take our mission seriously. The prophecy in Revelation 14, the everlasting gospel, must go to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Jesus said in Matthew 24:14:

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

“Then the end will come” because every human being will have to make a choice — either for

Christ or against Christ.

When Christ comes He will divide the human race into two camps — only two camps. He calls them the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:33:

He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

In verse 41, this is what He will say to the goats, those who wilfully reject Jesus Christ:

Then he will say to those on his left, “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire [fire that will consume them; the result will be eternal] prepared for the devil and his angels.”

In other words, “The fire that will consume was not prepared for you, but because you insisted on rejecting my Son, you insisted on joining the camp of Satan, I have no choice but to include you in that fire.”

It is my prayer that nobody reading this will be

in that fire but it is my greater prayer that all of us will witness the gospel to a perishing world so that the Holy Spirit can do His mission on this earth.

Chapter 3

The Spirit in Mission

John 16:7-11

But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

We learned that convicting or convincing people is not our work but it is the work of the Holy Spirit. Our job is to witness, and let Him do His part and 1 Corinthians 2:9-14 shows us this very clearly:

However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no

ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him” — but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom [no human philosophy here] but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The Spirit is here to guide us, to convict people. When the Spirit has completed His mission of convincing the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment and has accomplished this work, every

person who has been convicted has to make a choice, either for Christ, which the Bible describes as faith, or against Christ, which the Bible describes as unbelief.

If the person refuses to accept the gift of salvation, the Holy Spirit doesn't leave Him, He comes back again and again until that person finally and ultimately says to the Holy Spirit, "Leave me alone!" But we must be concerned for those of us and others who have said, "yes." When we respond positively to the convictions of the Holy Spirit and submit by faith to the truth as it is in Christ, something very important takes place. The Bible calls it regeneration or the new birth.

In dealing with the Spirit in the believer, the starting point is what the Bible calls the "new birth" experience. Faith is submitting to the truth as it is in Christ and the truth as it is in Christ is two major facts: our life which stood condemned came to an end on the cross; we died. That is what baptism is all about. It's a funeral service. In exchange we accept the life of Christ which is

brought to us by the Holy Spirit.

The clearest explanation of justification by faith is found in Galatians 2:19-20. There were two accusations that were made by the Judaizers against the message Paul preached. One was: “Paul, if God justifies sinners because they believe, something that the law doesn’t do, then isn’t God being a minister of sin?” The other thing that they accused Paul of: “If you tell people that God justifies bad people, then aren’t you condoning sin by saying, ‘Look, God has justified you while you were bad. What reason is there for you to lead a good life?’ Therefore you’re also making Christ the minister of sin.”

Paul, to both these accusations gives a very emphatic “No!” because justification by faith is more than a mental assent to truth. It is our identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Listen to Galatians 2:19-20a:

For through the law I died to the law so that I

might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

The law condemned Paul because he was a sinner and the law had dominion over him until he died. Paul could say, “I have died. The law killed me but I did not remain in the grave because I rose up with Christ that I might live unto God. How did I die with Christ? When did I die with Christ? I am crucified with Christ, that’s when I died to the law, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me.”

In other words, justification by faith is simply saying, “Not I — because I’m dead on the cross — but Christ and now Christ lives in me.” Remember, if Christ’s Spirit is not in you, if you have not experienced the new birth, even though your name may be in the church books, you are none of His. Christ lives in us through the Holy Spirit. The rest of verse 20:

The life I live in the body [in my mortal body], I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and

gave himself for me.

In other words, when the Spirit worked with us before we were converted, He worked with us from the outside. He convicted us through the avenues of our minds. He convicted us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. But the moment we said, “Yes,” the Holy Spirit now came to dwell in us, and we became the temple of God. That’s the first thing that takes place in conversion.

It must be made clear that unless we experience that conversion, justification simply becomes a theory. Justification by faith also involves an experience that comes through the new birth.

Remember, our justification is always in Christ, but that justification has to be made effective, and it’s made effective when we say “yes” to the Lord, and the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in us. There are two more texts that clearly say what happens if we do not have that experience. In John 3, Nicodemus, who was trying to earn salvation by his works of the law, came to Jesus at night, and

Jesus said something very important to him in John 3:3:

In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”

“No matter how hard you try to be good, no matter if you’re a leader in the church (and Nicodemus was a member of the Sanhedrin), unless you’re born from above, you don’t belong to My kingdom.” In Romans 8:9 Paul says:

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

Nicodemus, of course, failed to understand what Christ was saying and said, “Do you expect me to be born again after I’m an old man?” He had misunderstood Christ, so Christ answered in verse 5 of John 3:

Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.”

The Greek reads “born out of water.” The water represents our burial with Christ, which is baptism, and our coming up into the newness of life is the new birth experience.

The starting point of the Christian experience is important, so we will read 1 Peter 1:22-23:

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth...

Notice, when you surrender to the gospel by faith you have purified the soul. In other words, you have said good-bye to the old life, to the old self life. And all this is done...

...so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

In other words, the new life is a life of love and

the greatest evidence, said Jesus, is when you love each other. Verse 23:

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed [or perishable life], but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

We have received the eternal life of Christ in the new birth experience in exchange for our old life, which by faith we have surrendered to the cross. That is why the Apostle Paul tells us that we Christians are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Notice what Paul says to the Corinthians who were not behaving like Christians. They were fighting among themselves; there was jealousy, division, and no love. And Paul tells them, “You are not behaving as temples of God.” In 1 Corinthians 3:16 Paul says:

Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?

Turn in the same book to chapter 6 and look at verse 19:

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;....

Christ has bought you; you belong to Him.

The Holy Spirit comes and dwells in us to make real in our experience what is already ours in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit does not add one iota to what is ours in Christ. In Christ, we stand perfect and complete. There is nothing that we can add to it. We cannot even improve on it, because, Paul says in Ephesians 2:6, in Christ we are already sitting in heavenly places:

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,....

So the Holy Spirit doesn't come to add to that, but He comes to make it real in our experience. He comes to restore the image of God which was damaged by sin, and to reproduce in us the character of Christ that the world may see that we

are His children.

When God created man, His original plan was that man should be the temple of God. When Adam sinned, He pushed God out of His life and so His children were all born spiritually dead. Christ came here not only to restore our ticket to heaven; He did not only come to save us, but He also came to restore the damage that sin did to the image of God in man. And the starting point is the new birth. God comes and dwells in us and we, once again, become the temple of God.

Now comes the process of restoring that image of God in man and the Bible calls that the process of “sanctification.” That is the work of the Holy Spirit. Yes, we cooperate, but God doesn’t say to you, “Christ saved you; He justified you; He redeemed you; now He leaves the rest to you.” No, from beginning to end, it is the work of God.

Let’s look at 2 Thessalonians 2:13:

But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

Remember that sanctification is part and process of the redemption that God planned for each one of us. Now in 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 we read:

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Notice that “Christ in you” is synonymous with “the Spirit in you” and Paul is saying that where Christ is, the Spirit is, because He’s the representative of Christ.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty — liberty from anxiety, liberty from insecurity, liberty from guilt, liberty from condemnation, but there is also liberty from sin. Verse 18:

And we [we who have received the Spirit], who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

“Unveiled faces” means that we can come to God boldly without fear; there is no more curtain between us and God. We can come directly to God in Christ. In doing so, we begin to reflect the Lord's glory. It is the Holy Spirit's work!

Now, let us go to 1 Thessalonians 5:23 to see how much He changes us and how much of us He wants to affect. Notice that when God begins a work He doesn't do a half job. See how Paul refers to God here, because the very first thing God does in the wonderful truth of justification by faith is to give you peace:

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christians are no longer worried, “Am I going to make it to heaven?” Yes, we will struggle in our Christian life. We will have ups and downs. But one thing we must have is peace with God, because, in Christ, we have been accepted. Here is God’s plan for the people He has given peace to.

What does he mean by “through and through”? God wants to affect every part of us. He wants the total being, not just part of us. Christianity is a seven-days-a-week religion. It is not something that is put on for Sabbaths. He wants total commitment, and He wants total control.

There is a special message that God has given us as a people which we call the Sanctuary Message. When we look at the sanctuary, we see it is in three parts: the court yard, which is visible to all; the holy place; and the most holy place. As we study the sanctuary, we see that it is pointing to the humanity of Christ, because He was made flesh and dwelt among us. Christ redeemed us in that humanity, and, when we accept Christ and become

part of His body, that truth also now applies to us. We become the temple of God. The courtyard is the body, which is visible to all. The “soul” or the mind — where we have our will, where we make decisions — is like in the holy place. And the spirit is where the Holy Spirit dwells, the innermost part of me, which is the most holy place in this temple where God dwells.

Just as God cleansed the temple in Christ, He wants to cleanse this temple so that we might reflect His glory. And He works from inside outwards. Legalism works only from the outside. That’s all it’s concerned about; the inside is still rotten. But the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in us, and He begins the process of sanctification and when He works in us, He works in us completely, until the whole man is a reflection of His Son, Jesus Christ.

But all that time He gives us peace, even though we are struggling, and even though we are having failure. The Holy Spirit does not use compulsion. He is able to walk in us, and live in

us, in direct proportion as we cooperate with Him. And that takes time; that takes growth. That is why we need to also learn what the Bible teaches concerning walking in the Spirit.

But we must realize that when the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in us, He wants all of us. What we need to emphasize is that the Holy Spirit wants to guide and to control the whole being so that we no longer live independently of God, because that is where man went wrong; he turned his back to God.

There are at least four areas where He wants to guide and control us.

1. He wants to give you liberty. He wants to liberate us from this life of self which has produced havoc in this world, and He wants to reproduce in us the loving character of His Son Jesus Christ. In 2 Peter 1:2-8, notice how Peter also begins:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

God always begins with peace; He does not begin with victory and, if we don't have that peace, we might as well forget the victory, because our motivation for victory will always be wrong. Our motivation for victory must be because we already have peace. Now we want to live for Jesus Christ. Verse 3:

...His divine power has given us everything we need for life [that's eternal life] and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

Everything in terms of our salvation has already been obtained for us in Jesus Christ, and because of this, in verse 4 we read:

Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature [that's the new birth experience] and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

Having said this, now He says this is now what must happen after we have experienced all this. Verses 5-8:

For this very reason [we have peace now, hope, assurance, and we have become partakers of the Divine Nature], make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love [from brotherly love, we go to unselfish love]. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God wants us to be fruitful. He wants the world to see that the gospel is more than raising our hands and saying, “Hallelujah, I’m saved!” He wants to see fruits in our lives.

2. He guides us into all truth. In John 16:13, Jesus is speaking to the disciples. Remember what

He said to the disciples before He left:

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

In the same way, the Holy Spirit, who inspired the writers of this Book, must also illuminate our minds as we read the Book. It does not matter how much we may know the original languages, or all the rules of hermeneutics (which is the science of the interpretation of Biblical writings), if we do not depend on the Spirit to guide us into truth, we will be in trouble.

There are some wonderful volumes, excellent material by Kittle, a famous theologian, and yet he was one of the men who encouraged Hitler to do what he did with the Jews. How can a man who knew so much make that distinction between Jew and Gentile and encourage Hitler to do what He did? We must be guided by the Holy Spirit because head knowledge is not enough. The Spirit

guides us into truth. Even though we don't have all the tools that the ministers have, we cannot say that we can't study the Bible. In Africa there are some elders who could not read and write, who gave me ideas of truth that I could not get myself. I thank God that these were men of God who did not depend on their natural ability or on their education, important as they may be. We must depend on the Spirit to guide us into truth. That is one of His jobs.

3. Romans 8 is dealing with life in the Spirit and verse 26 tells us that one of the functions of the Spirit is to make our prayers meaningful:

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

4. Finally, the Spirit is the One who gives us power to witness. We may be an introvert, shy, and feel that we are not capable, but Acts 1:8 says that, when we receive the Spirit, we will receive

power and we will be God's witnesses to the uttermost ends of the earth:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

So the Christian life is not simply trying to do our best. The Christian life is a life in the Spirit. We are born-again Christians. The Spirit has come and dwells in us and He has come to dwell in us so that the world may see the power of the gospel now reproduced in us to the glory of God.

It is my prayer that all of us will allow the Holy Spirit who dwells in us to control us, to guide us, and to use us to finish the work of preaching and witnessing to the world the good news of salvation. The time has come when we need to witness the gospel. The time has come when we cannot simply say, "Thank God, I have assurance of salvation." We must rise up and let the world see Christ in us, the hope of glory. May God bless us that now we

may now begin to walk in the Spirit and allow Him to reproduce in us the character of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. What the world needs to see is Christ manifested in the body, the church.

Chapter 4

The Spirit in the Believer

Romans 8:9-17

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes

you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

In this chapter we will deal with the Holy Spirit’s work to make real in our experience what is already ours in Jesus Christ. He is to communicate the life of Jesus Christ in and through us, that the world may see Christ in us and realize that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

The answer to the question of how He does it is as we walk in the Spirit. Here is where there is a difference between salvation in Jesus Christ and Christian living. Salvation is entirely the work of God, with no contribution on our part. All we do is simply put up our hands and say, “Thank you, God, for this wonderful gift of salvation.” But when it comes to Christian living, that does involve my

cooperation. It doesn't take place automatically. If it did, it would make less headaches for us, but it doesn't.

There are wonderful breadmaking machines which automatically make your bread. All you do is put the ingredients in and press a button that says "Start." There is a computer that does everything automatically. But that doesn't work with the Spirit. We can't just simply press a button and say, "Holy Spirit, do your job," because God created us to work with Him, to be partners with Him in the plan of salvation when it comes to Christian living. When we are talking about salvation, it's a free gift. When we are talking about Christian living, it involves our cooperation. But Christian living is not the gospel; it is the fruits of the gospel and we must not confuse the two.

To understand walking in the Spirit, first of all we must make it clear that a Christian is capable not of one, but of two walks because, when we accept Christ, no change takes place in our human nature. It is exactly as it was before our

conversion. But through the new birth experience, we have become partakers of the Divine Nature and, therefore, it is possible for born-again Christians to walk either in the flesh or in the Spirit. When the Bible talks about a “carnal” Christian — a Christian who’s walking in the flesh —the word “carnal” is never used in the New Testament for the unbeliever. It uses the word “natural” for the unbeliever.

We have three kinds of people in the Bible: the natural man, the carnal Christian, and the spiritual Christian. The natural man is the unbeliever. The carnal Christian and the spiritual Christian are both born-again Christians, but they are walking two different ways: in the flesh or in the Spirit.

To answer the question of what it means to walk in the flesh or to walk in the Spirit, we will look at what God has intended should take place in the life of the believer. In Romans 8:3, we see that the good news of the gospel is that Jesus has condemned the law of sin on the cross but the reason why is in verse 4. Here are both verses:

For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us [but there is a condition], who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

We do not fulfil the law by screwing up our willpower and by promising ourselves to be good. We experience the righteousness of Christ as we walk in the Spirit. It is His job to reproduce in us the character of Christ, not our job. But our part in Christian living is to walk in the Spirit. Now we still have not answered the question, “What does it mean to walk in the flesh and walk in the Spirit?”

First, we need to know what the “flesh” is. When the Bible uses the word “flesh” in the New Testament, it primarily refers to man’s human nature as it is in its fallen condition. The word flesh was never used for Adam before the fall.

What is fallen human nature like? When God created Adam and Eve, He placed in their human nature certain drives, appetite, sex, feelings — all these were God-given. But when Adam sinned, something took place. Before he sinned, these drives were controlled by the love that God had instilled in Adam's nature. Love was controlling him, so that none of these drives went haywire; they were under control. But the moment Adam sinned, the love disappeared and selfishness took its place. The selfless love that he had made a U-turn towards self and these natural drives that God had created in mankind became lusts. They went out of control.

So walking in the flesh simply means allowing those out-of-control drives to be under the control of the Holy Spirit. A Christian who is dominated or controlled by his nature, by his feelings, by his various drives, is walking in the flesh. The New Testament puts those drives into three categories. They are found in 1 John 2. These are the three basic drives that control the carnal Christian and they also control the natural man. But the

difference is that the natural man does not have the Holy Spirit dwelling in Him, whereas the carnal Christian does and, therefore, should be walking in a different way than he is. 1 John 2:15 states:

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

In other words, he's not demonstrating the love of God. In verse 16, he explains what he means by the love of the world:

For everything in the world [these are the three basic drives] — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world.

“The cravings of sinful man” — in some translations, “the lust of the flesh” — are those inward drives. “The lust of the eyes” means what we see, we want. That's why I detest window shopping. I don't even like to look at catalogues

because they put in me desires of wanting something I did not know of before. And then there's "the boasting of what he has and does" ("the pride of life," in some translations). We always want to be number one. Human nature is always trying to ascend, whether it's economically, politically, academically; we're always trying to rise up as number one. To walk in the flesh is to allow the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life to control us so that, when people see us, they do not see Christ in us; they see us as if we were no different from the people who are unconverted. This was the problem with the Corinthian Christians. In 1 Corinthians, we see that a carnal Christian is a born-again Christian, but he's a disgrace to Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote his letter to the Corinthians approximately 10 years after he had converted the Corinthians. He was the one who evangelized the Corinthian church and now, 10 years later he's writing this letter and, in chapter three, he's rebuking them. But, first of all, notice verse 16. He's talking to born again, regenerated Christians:

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

These are born-again Christians. In verses 1-3 we see their problem:

Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly [notice the two groups and how he defines the word “worldly” or “carnal”] — mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?

They are born-again Christians but they are babies in Christ. Now there is no problem in verse one, because it is dealing with the time when Paul was first in Corinth:

Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly — mere infants in Christ.

In other words, “When I first came to you, I had to treat you as babies in Christ.” There is no problem there. The problem is verse two:

I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.

It’s one thing to change baby diapers at the age of three months; it’s another thing when you have to change diapers at the age of 10 years. That’s the problem. There was no spiritual growth in the Corinthian church. They may have grown numerically, but spiritually they were still carnal.

The evidence of carnality is found in verse 3:

You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?

In other words, the behavior of a carnal Christian is no different than the behavior of the natural man: envy, division, strife, writing nasty

letters without putting your name on it. That's carnality; that's not Christianity, because the Bible says if you disagree with someone, go and see him. Don't write letters without signing them. We need to be able to face each other and say, "Can we sit down? I disagree with what this church has done — brought in a man who has done terrible things." We learn to sit down and discuss.

When we have carnality or worldliness, there is no unity in the church. There is division, there is strife, and the name of Jesus Christ is brought down. It doesn't matter how much truth we have, if we are walking in the flesh, we are no longer attractive to outsiders. There is nothing they want to come for. The day we learn to walk in the Spirit, there will be love; there will be unity. We may not agree in everything, but we'll sit down like Christians and talk together and discuss, because it is not a theory that will convince the world.

A famous pagan philosopher, who was the son of a Lutheran Pastor and who became an atheist,

made the statement, “If you expect me to believe in your God, you Christians, you will have to look a lot more redeemed.” When he saw some of the top theologians of Germany giving permission to Hitler to wipe out the Jews, he said, “This is not Christianity. I don’t want any of it.” And when they see gossiping and fighting and jealousy in our midst, then we are no longer one body, we are divided, there is division. The church is one body but we can’t produce unity by promotional programs. We need to walk in the Spirit.

To walk in the Spirit means that we allow the Holy Spirit to control us. For us to realize that, we need to understand the human makeup and how God works in us. It is important that we know how we are made by God and how we are to function. A mechanic can’t fix a car unless he knows how it works. A doctor can’t heal us unless he knows how the human body works. A psychiatrist cannot help us unless he knows how the human mind works. Christians cannot walk in the Spirit unless they know how they were made and how they are to function.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Paul tells us what God's purpose is, and what is involved in that purpose:

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through [completely, entirely; now he explains what he means by “through and through”]. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When we look at man as a spiritual person, there are three elements: spirit, soul, and body. These three are very much in harmony with the sanctuary. The sanctuary revealed how God would redeem us in the humanity of Christ. In John 1:14a we read that,

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

In Hebrews 10:5, we read that God gave Christ a body in which to perform the will of God which

is our salvation:

Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me;....”

And just as we are made of three elements, so was the sanctuary. It had a Courtyard, it was exposed to everybody, you could walk into the courtyard. It had a Holy Place, where the priest functioned daily and got instructions from God through the Urim and Thummim, and there was the Most Holy Place, which was the dwelling place of God.

The spirit of man is where God dwells. The Holy Spirit dwells in our spirit. The mind — the soul, the seat of the will — is like the Holy Place, where it gets directions and makes decisions. The body is like the Courtyard, visible to all. Remember that there was no back door in the Most Holy Place. God could not enter the Courtyard through the priest. He could not enter the Courtyard through the back door. He had to go

through the Holy Place, which is representing the human will.

Let us look at some texts to show that man has three parts. Zechariah 12:1 says that God formed the spirit in man:

This is the word of the Lord concerning Israel. The Lord, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the spirit of man within him, declares....

It is God who created the spirit. This is what makes us different from animals. Animals have a soul and they have a body. But human beings have something additional. We are not only physical beings, we are not only social beings, we are also spiritual beings. We have a spirit. That is why, even in the most primitive societies, anthropologists have discovered, man is trying to worship something. It may be a stone; it may be some image, but he's always worshipping. Even in humanism, even in Communism, there is a worship, the worship of self.

Let us read 1 Corinthians 2:11 and hear what Paul says:

For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

Man knows what is in him, God knows what is in Him. That's why Paul goes on to say in this passage that we can only understand God's mind when the Holy Spirit guides us into all truth, because He knows what is of God.

Now this spirit in man must not be confused with the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:16 tells us about that where the word "spirit" appears twice in this verse:

The Spirit [capital S, meaning the Holy Spirit Himself] himself testifies with our spirit [the human spirit] that we are God's children.

The human spirit is primarily our conscience. It is in our spirit that the Holy Spirit convicts us of what is right, what is wrong, which way to go, what is truth, what is error. It is in our conscience that He does that.

Now the “soul” is a word that refers to the life principle in man and which makes us what we are. That is why the word “soul” is often translated in the New Testament by the word “person.” For example, in Acts 2:41 it says that the church added to itself 3,000 persons:

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about 3,000 were added to their number that day.

The Greek word is “soul.” The same is found in Acts 7:14:

After this, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and his whole family, 75 [“souls”] in all.

In Romans 13:1 Paul is saying to Christians,

Everyone [every “soul”] must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

The word “soul” here means let every person surrender his will to do what is right, as outlined by the government: pay your tax; obey the speed limit, and so on.

In Mark 14:34a Jesus said:

“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them.

He simply means, “I am very sorrowful.” So the word “soul” is translated by the personal pronoun.

Let’s study about the body. It is the instrument which performs that which the will decides. In other words, the body is the instrument that gives

expression to the decisions of the will. What I decide, my body fulfills. So if my mind says, “I want ice cream,” the mind will say to the body, “Go to the fridge and get it.” And my body says, “Yes, sir.” But I can’t blame the body; the body is a slave to the will. It does what the will says. It’s an instrument. A breadmaking machine is a slave to me. I press a button, and I decide whether I want French bread or whole wheat bread, and I have another button to decide when I start. I have another button which decides when I want the bread to be ready. So if I want to get up at six in the morning and have the smell of fresh, baked bread — which is not good for you, but which smells good and tastes good — I press a button and get the time I want. Wonderful machine! What the will decides, the body says, “Yes, sir.”

Now the problem is if you try to lead the Christian life simply by using the will, you will experience Romans 7, and you will say [verses 15-25],

I do not understand what I do. For what I want

to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do — this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God — through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

The reason is that, in sinful man, the flesh is stronger than the will, because Romans 7 tells us

that in our human body, our human nature, in our members, we have a law, which he calls the law of sin, which is in my members. Whereas the human will is not a law. It's a force, yes, but not a law. The word "law" means a constant, unending force. The mind is a force but it is changeable, it fluctuates. I can be strong in the will today; I can be weak tomorrow. I can choose one thing today, and I can choose another thing tomorrow. It's a human problem. The mind is changeable. It's weak sometimes; it's strong at other times.

It is possible by using my will to defy the law of sin, but never to conquer it. There are times when I can keep that flesh under control for a season, but never permanently. That's our problem, and the moment you try to live the Christian life by willpower you will end up in a Romans 7 experience. The trouble is that those who have very strong will power have more success. They have strong controlling wills, each one saying, "This is how it must be done!"

But the Christian walk is not using your will

power to control the body. It is surrendering the will to the Spirit Who dwells in you and letting Him control you. In Romans 8:2, notice that the word law appears twice there:

...because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

Notice that only in Christ is the law of sin dealt with. God deal with it by the law of the Spirit and that same Spirit that was dwelling in Christ is now dwelling here in us! As we walk as Christ walked, as we allow the Holy Spirit to control us, then only can the Holy Spirit reproduce in us the life of Christ.

It is important to know the context of Galatians 5. Paul is saying to the Galatians, “Don’t go back to legalism; don’t go back and try to save yourself by willpower. You are free in Christ. Then in verses 13 and 14 he says:

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But

do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

“Don’t use that freedom to enjoy sin. God set you free. There is no more condemnation for you. But please, don’t use that freedom to enjoy the lusts of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life but by love serve one another. If you allow yourselves to walk in the flesh, you will bite and devour one another. Take heed that you do not consume one another” (verse 15):

If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

If we walk in the flesh, we will end up fighting like cats and dogs.

This is his counsel in verse 16:

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Every Christian has two forces in him or her, two drives, two natures: the fleshly nature and the spiritual nature. Paul says in verse 17 that these two natures can never be partners. They are enemies, they contradict each other:

For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

Many Christians have failed to understand this text, because they read verse 17 without reading verse 16 and I can guarantee you, if you read verse 17 without reading verse 16, you will misinterpret verse 17. When we read verse 17, it seems to say that we cannot do what we want and what we want to do is God's will, but Paul is not saying that. He is saying that if we walk in the Spirit, sinful drives will still be in us but we will not do it; we will not obey the flesh because we are walking in the Spirit and what we will not do is what the flesh desires. But if we read verse 17 without verse 16, it seems

that we will not do what the Spirit desires but what the flesh desires because the flesh cannot do what the Spirit desires. But Paul is saying, “If you walk in the Spirit, you will keep the flesh subdued, you will keep it down.”

Now look at verse 18:

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

Paul is saying to be under law means that we have to live the good life in our own power. The law comes to us and says, “I want you to obey me.” But if we walk in the Spirit, we are not under that system, we are under grace, and under grace, we let the Spirit walk in us.

Then, in verses 19 to 21, Paul explains what the flesh produces and all will agree with me that what the flesh produces is what we don’t want:

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;

idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But when we allow the Spirit to control us, then we produce the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-26):

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

When Paul talks about the Spirit, he uses the word “fruit,” because the Spirit does the work; we bear the fruit. And the fruit is joy, love, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, no backbiting, no fighting, no accusing each other. But we can’t

do it by promoting, we can't do it; by bribery, by incentives. We do it as we walk in the Spirit.

There is a warning that should be given. When we allow the Spirit to walk in us, to control us, it does mean depriving the flesh of its desires and the result is suffering. When a person is deprived of something he wants, it does mean suffering. The flesh is always trying to find a way to get what it wants. There are two natures in us, both wanting to control the mind, which is the battleground. The flesh says, "I want my will." The Spirit says, "No. I want my will." If your will says "yes" to the flesh, you are grieving the Spirit. If your will says "yes" to the Spirit, you're depriving the flesh of what it wants and it gets angry at you. There's no way out. It involves suffering.

In Hebrews 2, Christ is not asking us to endure anything that He did not go through. Verse 18:

Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

When Christ was tempted, He suffered because He allowed the Spirit to control Him. So the Spirit said “No!” to the flesh and so His flesh was deprived of what it wanted. The worst time was in Gethsemane. Three times His flesh cried to the Father, “Father, if it is possible, remove the cup,” because nobody wants to die, especially the second death. The Spirit said, “No!” and Jesus responded, “Not My will, but Thy will be done,” and He suffered in the flesh.

Hebrews 4:15 tells us that He was tempted in all points like us:

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin.

He was tempted daily, hourly, every minute to take hold of His Divine power and use it for His own benefit and He said, “No!” Whatever He did, He did through the Spirit, so He could say, “The

works that I do, it is not I, but God who dwells in Me through the Spirit, He is the One who did the works in Me.” John 14:10:

Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

Then 1 Peter 4:1 tells us where He suffered:

Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.

The attitude or mind of Christ is a mind that is totally surrendered to the Spirit. It is possible for us to cease from sin not by willpower but by walking in the Spirit.

In Christ, two opposite forces met: the flesh, which He assumed at the incarnation, and the Spirit, which dwelt in Him. Both of them are a law: the law of the flesh and the law of the Spirit,

two constant forces, opposite forces which met in Jesus Christ. Jesus walked in the Spirit. In Luke 4:14, referring to the temptations of Christ, it says that He returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit:

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.

We will find that the Spirit, because He was given free reign in the life of Christ, conquered, subdued, overcame the flesh, and proved to the human race that the law of the Spirit is greater, stronger than the law of sin in my body.

And that same Spirit, therefore, the same law of the Spirit, is dwelling in us, and when we allow that Spirit to control us, we will live above sin. The Bible says so. It doesn't say, "If you walk in the Spirit, you may not fulfill all of the desires of the flesh" or "some of the desires of the flesh." It says, "You will not fulfill the desires of the flesh." Romans 13:14 says:

Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

We have a God that is far greater than the law of sin that is in our members. We can believe that because the Bible says so. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us as we walk in the Spirit and when the Bible says “the righteousness of the law,” it doesn’t mean people who are mechanically keeping rules — that is legalism — but people who are manifesting the love of Christ because love is the fulfillment of the law.

When the earth sees such a people, when the earth is filled with the glory of Jesus Christ, then the world, even the scientific world, will have to confess that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. There will be no more excuse for rejecting Jesus Christ.

It is my prayer that you will be willing to suffer in the flesh, to deny self, to take up your cross and

surrender your will to Jesus Christ. That is the right action of the will. It is to surrender the will daily to Jesus Christ and the only way you can do that is by walking constantly, keeping your mind in constant contact with God. Two ways: by communicating with Him in your thoughts and by letting Him communicate with you through the study of the Bible.

Chapter 5

In the Life of the Church

1 Corinthians 12:4-31

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body ? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t

need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts.

In our study of the Holy Spirit, we have considered the mission of the Holy Spirit to the world. We have looked at the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer, especially as we cooperate with Him by walking in the Spirit. But the work of the Holy Spirit does not stop there; it also includes the whole church. In this chapter, we will examine the Spirit of God in the church.

When we by faith accept Jesus Christ by obeying the gospel, the Holy Spirit takes us and baptizes us into the body of Christ. Then we become one body in Jesus Christ. In 1 Corinthians 12:13, the Apostle Paul tells us:

For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

The famous 20th Century martyr under Hitler was Dietrich Boenhoffer. He made this statement in his book, *Life Together*:

When God's Son took on flesh, He truly and bodily took, out of pure grace, our being, our nature, ourselves. This was the eternal council of the Triune God. Now we are in Him. Where He is, there we are, too, in the incarnation, on the cross, and in His resurrection. We belong to Him because we are in Him. That is why the Scriptures call us [we believers] the body of Christ.

The words "Body of Christ" is the key metaphor used in the New Testament to describe the Christian church. But before we can understand the work of the Holy Spirit in that body, we need to realize that, when we become part of that body, we also become part of each other.

In 1 Corinthians 12:12 we read:

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.

Romans 12:5 says:

...So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

The New Testament tells us that the Christian church is a closely knit body of men and women of all walks of life, from all cultures, who are joined together by the Holy Spirit, or by the control of the Holy Spirit, with no distinction.

In 1 Corinthians 12:25-27, we read the conclusion that Paul comes to as he discusses the Christian church as the body of Christ. If the church is really functioning as it should, Paul says:

...So that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers [it does not say that all the other members are happy], every part suffers with it; if one part is honored [it does not say all the other members are jealous], every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Galatians 3:26-28 says:

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:17 that when we take the Lord's supper:

Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

And that loaf, that bread, represents the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Salvation is really an exodus, an exodus from "in Adam," which is our natural position by birth, to "in Christ" which is our new status by faith and baptism. Baptism is putting on Christ. That means, when we belong to Adam, we live under the principle of self, because Adam passed on to us a nature that is egocentric. So we live for self; the

world lives for self, because that is the basis of our sinful nature. But when we become Christians, we die to that. We say good-bye to Adam, because we cannot belong to Adam and Christ at the same time; they belong to two opposite camps. We cannot belong to both.

A German came to the U.S.A. some years ago. He became a millionaire as a photographer in New York. He wrote to the Emperor Willem in Germany requesting an audience, referring to himself as a German-American. The Emperor wrote back saying, “Germans I know, and Americans I know, but I don’t know any German-Americans. If you were a German, and you became an American, you are no longer a German.” In the same way, when you become a Christian, you are no longer an Adamite. You are no longer of this world. You belong to the kingdom of heaven.

Both these kingdoms are run by different systems. The kingdom of this world is controlled by self: “I do what pleases me.” The lust of the

flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life: these are the three basic drives of our world that we live in. 1 John 2:16:

For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world.

But when you become a Christian, you have crucified the flesh with all its desires and you have made Christ the head of your life. Galatians 5:24:

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

We have seen so far that the Christian church is the body of Christ. We know that every body has a head. Ephesians 5:23 tells us who is the head of the church:

For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which

he is the Savior.

Note that it does not say that the husband is the dictator of the wife. Christ must be our example. We find this same thing in Colossians 1:16-18:

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

So Christ is our Head. The church, to which all of us belong, is the body of Christ and, because we are one body, we are members of each other.

In 1 Corinthians 12, in Romans 12, and other passages, Paul uses the human body as a model. As an example of the model, let us say that my stomach is empty and the stomach wants food. So the stomach sends a message to the head and says,

“I am hungry!” Now the stomach needs help to get food. So the mind says to the legs, “Take this body to the fridge.” Now if the legs replied, “I’m not hungry; if the stomach is hungry and wants food, let him go himself,” there would be a problem. But the legs are a slave to the head. They don’t ask questions. They say “Yes!” and they go.

When the eyes look in the fridge, they see two things. They see an apple, and they see a chocolate bar. And the flesh says to the mind, “I want that chocolate bar.” And the Spirit says, “No. Give him the apple.” But what the mind decides takes place. The mind says to the hand, “Get the apple; I’ll listen to the Spirit,” and the hands obey. “Now, feed the stomach,” and the hands do that and the body grows in harmony.

But if my body was not functioning that way, I could not survive; it would be impossible. It is exactly the same way with the Christian church. When we accept Christ, the Holy Spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ, but He doesn’t stop there. He then decides what function we will have in that

body and according to what He has chosen He gives that individual the gifts to fulfill that function.

Beginning with 1 Corinthians 12:3-7, we see the work of the Holy Spirit:

Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit. [Notice, He’s the active agent.] There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. [One Head. The Spirit is the Representative of Christ.] There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. [The word “men” is a generic term for mankind, so it includes women.] Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

In other words, God gives every believer gifts so that the whole body may be blessed.

We read further in 1 Corinthians 12:14-18:

Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. [Nor can the hand say to the foot, “You don’t belong to the body.”] And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

Every part of our body has different functions, but they all belong to the same body. Romans 12:5-8 explains this further:

So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying [which means

proclaiming], let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

Every member has a function.

Peter presents the same idea in 1 Peter 4:10-11:

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

We must use our gifts.

When God calls us to speak before others, He

gives us the grace because that is one of the functions of the Holy Spirit. We don't have to depend on our natural ability. He gives every believer one or more gifts because the church should function as a body.

We are told some of the gifts of the Spirit in Ephesians 4:11:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ...

But to find the purpose of these gifts, we will look at verse 12 (through 16):

...to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of

men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

It is impossible for any individual in the church to fully reflect Jesus Christ because we are never the total body. It takes the whole church, united together by the Spirit to reflect Jesus Christ and when the character of our Lord is reflected in the church then Christ will come.

To explain how this can take place, we will use the human body as a model as Paul does. Remember that the Holy Spirit represents Christ, so the Head of this body is not only living in heaven, He is living in us through the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:9-10 tells us that the Spirit dwelling in us is synonymous with Christ dwelling in us:

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in

you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.

Remember that the Head is not far away; He is in us through the Holy Spirit.

Next, for the Holy Spirit to control and to fulfill His purpose in the body — the church — each individual who is a part of the body, who belongs to the body of Christ, has to have some very important relationship between them and the Holy Spirit. First, we have to acknowledge that the Spirit is the head and that we are the slaves. An example of this is found in Philippians 1:1a. In many places Paul introduces himself as the slave of Jesus Christ:

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

The word “servants” is in the Greek *doulos*, which really means slaves. Paul is saying, “We are slaves of Jesus Christ.”

So we have to be slaves of God; we have to acknowledge that there is only one head in this body: it is the Holy Spirit and what He says, we do. There are some things He tells you to do that you don't want to do, but we don't argue with the Holy Spirit, just as the members of the body don't argue with the head. Sometimes God will ask us to do menial jobs. Are we willing to do it? Is our boss the hands, the self, or the Holy Spirit?

For the Holy Spirit to function and produce in a church perfect unity and perfect performance as a body, there has to be a linkage between every believer and the head, Jesus Christ, just as my body is connected to the head by nerves. Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:17:

...Pray continually....

He did not mean to go on your knees 24 hours a day. He meant that we should keep a living connection to the Head so that there is communication.

We do this in two ways: by prayer, which is us keeping in touch with God, and by Bible study, which is God keeping in touch with you, because, very often, God will reveal His will to you through the Word of God.

Then in verse 19 Paul says:

Do not put out the Spirit's fire;

Let Him control you. If the nerves between my hand and my head are disconnected — if the nerves in my spinal column are disconnected from the head and the rest of the body — my hand becomes paralyzed. It is still alive, but it is useless to the body and useless to anybody else. It's a hindrance, because the body has to drag along that hand that is useless. There are too many members that are paralyzed. They are useless to the church and a hindrance so that the body cannot grow.

That is why we must learn that as Christians we have only one Head, Jesus Christ, and we are His

slaves. We simply do what He tells us and we keep a living connection with Him. When that happens, we will grow as a church. There will be no jealousy, no backbiting, no accusations, but we will grow in Christ until we begin to reflect the head. Christ revealed the Father to the world and now He wants the body to reveal God. When that happens, then the world will recognize that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. This is the crying need of the church today, because when people come in, and they see us fighting with jealousy and envy they say, “I want nothing to do with the church.”

It is my prayer that we will learn to walk in the Spirit; we will learn to be submissive to the Head; we will learn to have a living connection with the Head so that, as a church, we grow as a body. It is my prayer that we have the same care for each other; that there is no schism in this church, that there is no jealousy between the churches. We are one body and the world desperately needs to see this. It is my prayer that we will be willing to deny self, take up the cross, and allow Jesus to work in

and through us and unite us that we will be one just
as Jesus and the Father are One.

Chapter 6

The Fruit of the Spirit – Agape

Galatians 5:19-23

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

It is God's desire that we learn to walk in the Spirit and, when that happens, we are told that we will begin bearing the fruit of the Spirit, of which love is at the head of the list. The word Paul used here is agape, God's unconditional love. We will

first study that primary, main, dominant fruit of the Spirit, which is this love.

There are two facts we should look at in Galatians 5:19 and 22. When it comes to the flesh or sinful nature, Paul uses the word “acts” (or “works”) and he uses it in the plural form, because, when we walk in the flesh, the works of the flesh is something that we produce. But when we walk in the Spirit, we do not produce works, we “bear fruit,” that is, the Holy Spirit produces the works. Notice that “the fruit of the Spirit” is in the singular because all the other items that are mentioned — like joy, peace, patience — are simply ramifications of that one word, love. Unconditional love is the basis of all other fruit of the Spirit. An example of this is the words of Jesus Christ, where we will discover that Jesus taught the very same thing that Paul is expressing in His epistle to the Galatians. In John 15:1-8 we read these words:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that

bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

Jesus is saying to believers who stand justified before God: “You are clean.” Then He tells them what He wants them to do. Continuing in verse 4:

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

In other words, we cannot produce the fruits of the Spirit. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. Our job from beginning to end is faith, which is abiding in Christ. Verses 5 through 8:

I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked

up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples [or my witnesses].

At one time we lived in a nice house with a beautiful creek and there was an apple tree right in the yard. It had beautiful leaves. It had lush leaves, but it had no fruit. Somebody told me it was because it was not pruned, so I went to the library and read up on pruning because I could not afford to hire somebody and I did the job myself. I was a bit heavy handed and I cut off quite a bit of the tree and the next year it bore no fruit but the following year it bore some fruit. When God prunes us it is not because he hates us but because he wants us to bear much fruit.

In 1 John 4:7-12, we see, again, that the source of the fruit is the Holy Spirit; it is God, not us.

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been

born of God and knows God.

When we manifest the fruit of this love, God's unconditional love, it is proof of two things: first, that we are born of God — that we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us — and next, that we know God.

Then in verse 8 He adds:

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

That is why this fruit is the dominant fruit of the Holy Spirit, because God is love. Verse 9:

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

There we have the gospel. Verse 10:

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice

for our sins.

Here John is trying to show us the love of God which contradicts human love. Human love is reciprocal. In other words, “I love you only when you first love me.” But God’s love is the opposite. We don’t love Him because we want Him to love us. We love Him because:

1. He first loved us, and
2. He saved us.

In other words, our love towards God is a heart response to His love and His saving gift in Jesus Christ, which is a complete contradiction to human love. That’s why John has to remind his hearers that we do not love God because we want Him to love us in exchange and, yet, we hear so much of that in Christianity. We teach our children that: “Johnny, if you don’t love Jesus, He will not love you.” I don’t know where we got that from, but it is not from Scripture. God takes the initiative, God is the One who first loved the world. He loved us even when we were sinners, when we were

enemies, and He redeemed us in Jesus Christ. Our love towards God is a heart response of gratitude to something He has already done.

Verse 11:

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Here John saying that God loved us unconditionally. He loved us while we were sinners, when we were enemies, when we were ungodly. He loved us. And He wants us to love each other unconditionally, folks. We may disagree with each other. We may not like some of the things that we do, but we love each other because God is now dwelling in us, and we know Him, we know His love, and we want now to reflect His love.

Verse 12:

No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made

complete in us.

We read in the gospel of John, chapter one, that the word was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14):

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Then, in chapter 14, we have Philip saying to Jesus, “Show us God” and Jesus said, “He that has seen Me has seen the Father.” John 14:8-9:

Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

But that was 2,000 years ago. Jesus is in

heaven today, and what Jesus wants the world to know, if they have seen us, they must see Him. That is the primary purpose of the first gift of the Holy Spirit, that we might reflect the love of God.

When this is done, when God's love dominates our lives, the result is that all the other fruit that Paul mentions in Galatians 5 is the evidence. When God's unconditional love is reproduced in us, this is the essence of true Christianity. When Jesus said to the disciples Matthew 5:48, "Be perfect," He made that statement in the context of God's love:

Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

In Colossians 3:14 we see what Paul says about that love:

And over all these virtues [the first goal that we must have in life] put on love [agape], which binds them all together in perfect unity.

A professor of systematic theology asked me the question, “What is your definition of perfection?” We went to Matthew 5:48, and I said, “Perfection to me is reflecting the unconditional love of God.” If we read Matthew 5:48 where Jesus said, “Be perfect” out of context, we come up with all kinds of conclusions. Read that text in its context beginning with Matthew 5:43 where Jesus describes the love taught by the Pharisees, which was human love (Matthew 5:43-48):

You have heard that it was said, “Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

They taught, “Love your neighbors and hate your enemies” but Jesus turned to His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount and He said, “I want you to love your enemies. I want you to pray for those who spitefully use you. I want you to love those who hate you that you may be like your Father who is in heaven.” Then He describes the love of the Father: “He brings the rain on the good and the bad; He brings the sunshine on the righteous and the wicked.” Then He concludes, “Christians, love like this so that you may reflect My Father and give evidence that you are the children of God. Love without discrimination.” That is what He is saying. That’s perfection. It is not going about with a holy, sanctimonious look. Perfection is when we reflect the character of our Father. Where there is no love, no matter how mechanical you may be about doing the right things, you are not reflecting God. The Pharisees could do that.

In Romans 13:10 Paul says:

Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

It is possible for us to mechanically make rules about the law, keep those rules, and bluff ourselves that we are keeping the Ten Commandments. If we are to keep the Ten Commandments, we need an ingredient called agape and we cannot generate that. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 13:

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

It is the most excellent gift of the Holy Spirit, and it is the fruit of the Spirit in your life that reveals it.

To understand this word *agape*, a definition is given by a very famous Greek scholar by the name of Trench. Listen to how he defines this word:

“Agape is a new word....”

The reason he says this is because that word in its noun form can hardly be found in the secular Greek that existed in the days of the New Testament; it is not there. So the disciples use this word in its noun form to give it a very special meaning.

“Agape is a new word to describe a new quality of love. It is a new attitude towards others that is contrary to human love and which is born only within the Christian fellowship and impossible without the Christian dynamics. This is what makes Christians different from every other human being.”

God’s love, this agape, and human love, contradict each other in at least two ways:

1. Human love is always conditional. We do not know how to naturally love our enemies. We may pretend to love them; we may shake hands

with them; we may smile at them, but, inside, we hate them. That's human love, but God demonstrated His love towards us (Romans 5:8) that while we were still sinners, Jesus died for us:

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

It was not an outward show, it was a demonstration of a heart having only unconditional love. When that fruit is produced in us, we will love those that hate us. It's going to be a miracle, but it will be there because God's love is not based on certain conditions. It is unconditional, therefore, He can love the bad people and He can love the people who are spitting on Him. Christ can say to God (Luke 23:34a):

Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.

At that time they had chosen to be controlled by Satan.

2. Human love is changeable. Here are some statistics on marriage: 52 percent of marriages in this country end up in divorce; there are one million marriages that break up here every year. What is going to happen if we keep on this way? But God's love is changeless. He could tell the Jews in Jeremiah 31:3:

The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness."

He could tell the Christians through Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:8a:

Love never fails.

"My love for you never fails." Agape never fails. We read in John 13:1b that Jesus, loving His own, loved them to the very end:

Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

On the cross Jesus was experiencing the terrible agony of God-abandonment. That meant that He could no longer see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him a resurrection and, in this terrible state, the Devil came to Him three times and said, “Come down and save yourself.” But Jesus loved us more than Himself and, therefore, He refused to come down, because He loved us to the very end. We did not deserve it, but that is what happened.

When this love is manifested in the Christian church, it means that pastors can retire, because agape is the fruit of righteousness by faith. Righteousness by faith is not simply a theory; it is a truth that transforms men and women. That is why, in the New Testament, faith and love are inseparable. If you have genuine faith, it will always — there is no option here — it will always manifest itself in love.

Someone asked me the question, “What do you do with somebody who disagrees with you in

theology in your church?” I said, “I respect them for what they believe. I wish they would respect me for what I believe.” We need to learn to respect each other. Because I am not God, I have no right to condemn somebody who does not see eye to eye with me. Now I do believe that we have to be united with the fundamentals, otherwise the church will disintegrate, but we need to learn to respect each other, and leave the judgment to God. But we must be absolutely clear that love and faith are inseparable in the New Testament.

In Galatians 5:6 Paul says:

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value [because this was the issue in Galatia]. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

So if there is somebody in the church who is not doing exactly as you are doing, you have no right to condemn. If a woman walks into the church with earrings, we have no right to condemn her. We are to leave it in God’s hands. God

changes the heart first. There are worse things that we do than that. We need to learn to respect and accept each other and let God do the transformation of the character. That is not our work; that's God's work. When we try to do it, it is legalism, and we want no part of legalism in the church.

Next we read in Ephesians 1:15:

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints....

Jesus welcomed publicans and sinners. The Pharisees murmured and grumbled, but those very publicans and sinners became Christians and turned the world upside down. So we need to realize that the love of God must be reflected towards all our people; love for all the saints.

We cannot separate faith from love. If we have faith and not love, then we don't have faith. It is as simple as that. Paul says in Colossians 1:4:

...Because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints....

This is the evidence of true Christianity, of true righteousness by faith.

These are all in Paul's introductions where he is praising them for manifesting the fruit of God's unconditional love. 1 Thessalonians 1:3:

We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is joined together; faith and love are inseparable. 1 Thessalonians 3:6:

But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love [Paul used the word "agape"]. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see

you.

That wonderful work of love that they were manifesting was sending their offerings, food, and material to the Jews in Jerusalem who were suffering because of persecution. Gentile Christians helping Jewish Christians: that is agape, because those two groups were enemies in the days of Paul.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:3 we read:

We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love [“agape”] every one of you has for each other is increasing.

As their faith increased, their love increased, because the two are related. We cannot separate them.

One more text that shows this is Philemon verse 5:

...Because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints.

Notice: love and faith; we cannot separate the two.

Now let me, in a nutshell, explain how this works in practical terms. Our part in sanctification is bearing fruit and we need to know the steps.

1. God Takes the Initiative. In legalism, we take the initiative but, in the Gospel, God takes the initiative. He comes down to us through the gospel message. It may come through the radio, through reading a book, through a preacher, through the witnessing of Christians, but God takes the initiative. He comes to us, not with good advice, but with good news. He tells us that, “While you were a sinner and my enemy, I so loved you that I reconciled you to Myself by the death of My Son.” (Romans 5:10):

For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son,

how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

When Jesus came to this world as a human being, the angels said to the shepherds (Luke 2:10b):

“I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.”

So, first, God comes to us with good news, based on His unconditional love which was, of course, fulfilled in His Son, Jesus Christ. John 3:16:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

2. The Response of Faith. There are two things that we can do with that Gospel, because it's a gift. It's a gift that we don't deserve. It's a gift because of God's love. We can either accept it, or reject it. Thus our response to the gospel is faith.

God comes with His wonderful good news of salvation, not something that He will do in me, but what He has already done in Jesus Christ and He says, “Please, don’t refuse this. It’s your only hope. There is no other sacrifice that can take away your sins, only this One.” And I say to God, “Thank you, I accept your gift.” That’s my response. It is faith and Jesus tells us in John 5:25 the moment we do that, the moment we believe that good news, we have passed from death to life, from condemnation to justification:

I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.

We now stand before God as if we had never sinned. We stand before God, not as we are in ourselves, but as we are in Jesus Christ. The first result is not victorious living, it is peace with God and that is what God wants to give me first.

3. The New Birth. God sends His Spirit to dwell with us and with the Spirit comes the

assurance of salvation. Romans 8:14:

...Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Notice that we who have experienced the new birth are no longer enemies of God, we are His sons and daughters. Romans 8:15:

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear [We were afraid of God because we were sinners, but no longer!], but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”

Romans 8:16:

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.

Romans 8:17:

Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we

share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Remember, we may have to suffer in this world, but we are God's children.

4. The Spirit's Gift of Agape. When the Spirit comes and dwells in us, not only does He bring peace to us, which we need desperately, but He brings that ingredient which Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 13 as the most excellent gift of the Spirit, which is God's unconditional love. He brings that gift that it may be shed abroad, to our neighbors, to our fellow believers, and to everybody else. That is what Romans 5:5 is talking about:

And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

The love of God is shed abroad through the Holy Spirit that dwells in us.

In summary:

1. God comes to us with the Gospel.
2. We respond by faith.
3. The Holy Spirit comes and dwells in us.
4. This love that now dwells in our hearts is shed abroad.

When that happens, we are now walking in love and we are manifesting that love.

Good things happen to a Christian who has experienced the above four steps. As already mentioned, when we allow that love of Christ, which comes to us through the Holy Spirit, to control us, because we are walking in the Spirit, because we are abiding in Christ, we are actually walking in love. Here are three texts. 1 Corinthians 16:14:

Do everything in love [agape].

Ephesians 5:2:

...And live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Colossians 3:14:

And over all these virtues put on love [agape], which binds them all together in perfect unity.