**What We Believe**

**Session 4: Christian Living**

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The Bible teaches the Holy Spirit

* unites Christians
* empowers Christians.
* teaches and directs Christians.
* indwells Christians.
* gives Christians spiritual gifts for use in ministry

The New Testament includes passages about the Holy Spirit coming upon people in a way similar to passages in the Old Testament (e.g., Lk. 1:15, 41, 67; 2:25, 27; Mt. 10:20, Mk. 13:11, Lk. 12:12; Acts 11:28).

But the New Testament also teaches that the relationship between Holy Spirit and followers of Jesus Christ will be signficantly different from that described in the Old Testament. There are three ways that this takes place:

* The Holy Spirit is given to those who have faith in Jesus Christ.
* This giving of the Holy Spirit to believers is permanent.
* The Holy Spirit transforms believers to become more Christlike.

Part of the importance of the Holy Spirit is that this reminds us that our beliefs are not just propositional, but also experiential reality. When we believe, something is supposed to happen to us that we experience and this experience in some way will continue. We believe the propositions to be true and, if they are true and we truly believe them, we will experience what these propositions say we should experience.

The importance of our Holy Spirit experience also creates problems. The biggest question is: How do we know what is from the Holy Spirit? This leads to other questions. Should we just accept what someone says is from the Spirit as being from the Spirit? If we believe something is from the Spirit in our own lives, do we really know? What if one person says the Spirit is telling them something that is opposite of what the someone else says the Spirit said?

Thank God (literally) that in addition to the Holy Spirit we have the unchanging Word of God. How do the Bible and the Holy Spirit work together in the life of believers?

This also places a high value on not only the Bible, but also the right interpretation of the Bible. How does the same problem arise even if we believe in the authority of the Bible and the Holy Spirit?

How has the church approached the question of right interpretation?

* One leader in the church
* A group of leaders in the church
* The church collectively
* Everyone with the Holy Spirit can interpret Scripture on his or her own

Each of these approaches have been beneficial and detrimental to the church. As we think about this question, let us do so keeping mind that the Holy Spirit teaches AND unites. He indwells individual believers and has indwelt individuall believers in the past AND He indwells the church and has indwelt the church throughout history. How does this help us how we should and should not arrive at right interpretation of Scripture?

**What our experience of the Holy Spirit looks and feels like**

The more general we keep things, the more ambiguous the meaning. Some Christians like it that way. They do not mind talking about being Spirit-filled, righteous, Christlike, loving, etc. as long as they can define what this means.

The New Testament, especially in Paul’s letters, tell us much more of what living in the Spirit looks like and feels like – with much more specificity than many people think. Not surprisingly, much of the focus is on what this looks and feels like in the church.

**Ephesians 4-6**

In 4:1-3, what are some of the characteristics of living in the Spirit?

What is the goal/purpose in verse 3?

In 4:11-16, Paul gives us the process that helps the church grow. (Eph. 2:22 shows that this is the work of the Spirit.) What is that process?

Verse 11 – What does Jesus give the church?

Verse 12a – What is the main job for the church leaders?

Verse 12b – What is the main job of church members?

Verse 13 – What is the goal?

Verse 14 – What will this prevent?

Verse 15 – What will this resullt in?

Verse 16 – What is the ultimate evidence of this maturity?

In 4:25-32 – Paul is even more specific here in what living in the Spirit looks like. What does he say?

If we are not doing or “feeling” these things, what does this mean?

5:1-2 – Paul takes a break to remind us of his main point. What is it?

In verses 3-21, Paul returns again to more specifics of what this looks like. What are they?

From 5:22-6:9, Paul does not move outside the church as some people think. He is moving inside the home, which for believers is part of the church. Everything he has said about how we should treat fellow believers in the church should apply to how we treat one fellow believers in our homes. The focus on God’s love and mutual submission is still here. Paul is helping them know what this looks like in the home. How do these different people show in their household relationships that they are living in the Spirit?

Husband

Wife

Parent

Child

Master

Household slave

Ephesians is Paul’s most extensive teaching on what living in the Spirit looks like. However, there are other significant writings in Romans and Galatians that help us see more.

Romans 12 presents the process of spiritual maturity in a different way, but ultimately leading to the same expressions.

12:1 Where does the process begin?

12:2a What does this prevent?

12:2b What does it allow?

12:2c What will result?

12:3 What wil result in each Christian’s life?

12:4-6 Why is what results in verse 5 so important to God’s overall design for the church?

12:7-8 This is an important reminder about what Holy Spirit unity is and what it is not. This also reminds us of the purpose of spiritual gifts.

In verses 7-21, Paul again lists several specific things the Spirit will lead us to do and/or feel. What are they?

Galatians 5 is another chapter where there is a concentration of verses that tell us what living by the Spirit looks like. In fact, Paul contrasts the two ways of living. How is each described?

Living by the flesh

Living by the Spirit

Which world would you rather live in?

In verses 25-26, Paul ends with three things that people living by the Spirit do not do?

When people talk about Christian living, they often separate the activities from the source of the activities. Christian activities separated from the source are simply empty ritualism or legalism. There are stages in our Christian lives when we do things without understanding why or how, but these are not meant to be permanent. They are stages to helping us understand the work of the Spirit in our lives.

Next week, we will discuss some more specific activities that Christians can and should do to grow in the faith and to fulfill their kingdom purpose in the world.