

THE SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH

The Spirit Glorifies Jesus

Questions for Personal Study

Begin by reading John 16.12-15. What is the Spirit's role?
What does glorify mean? What does it mean that the Spirit "glorifies" Jesus?
The Spirit undermine our need for sin by glorifying Jesus - how?
When we sin, how are we not resting in & enjoying all we have in Jesus?
How does this work on a day to day basis? Read 2 Cor. 3.15-18.
What does this say about how we change, and what is the Spirit's role?

Questions for Study in Community

Is God's love to you in Jesus objective or subjective?
What is the difference? Should it be one or the other?
How as a community can you invite the Spirit's work of glorifying Jesus?
How can you stay centered on the gospel together?
Are you in discipleship or journey groups yet? Why not?!

Questions for Staying on Mission

What are your Super Bowl plans?
How will you be good news together in your neighborhood this week?
How are you doing at living your Identities together?
How will you live your Identities together this year?
Are you experiencing opportunities to share the gospel? With whom?

Practical Thoughts on the Spirit Glorifying Jesus

Charles Spurgeon taught often on the greatness of Jesus and the power of the gospel. Here he reflects on his own personal experience of the gospel in his own life, bringing the joy of sonship home to him again and again: "God's people do not always know the greatness of his love to them. Sometimes, however, it is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which he has given to us. Some of us know at times what it is to be almost too happy to live! The love of God has been so overpoweringly experienced by us on some occasions, that we have almost had to ask for a stay of the delight because we could not endure any more. If the glory had not been veiled a little, we should have died of excess of happiness." May the Spirit do the same throughout our church!

THE SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH

The Spirit Glorifies Jesus

You Are Responsible!

For the first time in their almost 3 years with Jesus, the disciples are beginning to see that Jesus has not just selected them to be with him but also to carry on his work after he leaves them. This is *not* what they signed up for. Jesus seemed to them to be the hottest act in town, and by being with them they had so much! He brought them new purpose, new hope, and an exciting ride in the center of attention. But the game is changing, and now Jesus is putting them in charge and responsible for the continuing of his ministry.

Think about yourself for a moment. Are you in the same place as these disciples? Have you received from Jesus without recognizing that you have been entrusted with his ministry? Have you been a church attender who mostly receives and is ministered to? Have you found yourself simply attending week after week, absorbing, and not pouring it back out?

This is the context into which Jesus promises to send His Spirit to his church. The Spirit doesn't come to help the church put on good programs, or to make the Sunday show more slick. The Spirit comes to carry on the work of Jesus, and the promise of the Spirit is to anyone who is ready and willing to walk in obedience to Jesus. The Spirit wants to empower us to love one another like Jesus has loved us, and to make disciples of Jesus even as we learn what it means to be a disciple. The Spirit is the God's empowering presence!

The Spirit Brings Us to Faith

Last week we looked extensively at the Spirit's role in bringing us to faith in Jesus. The Spirit's job is to help us see our need for Jesus as Savior. There are basically 3 kinds of people. First, there are those who avoid religion altogether. Perhaps they think of themselves as spiritual, but not a part of an organized religion. Second, there are those who are religious, attend some sort of church, and actively participate in the beliefs and practices of that religion. The Spirit's first job is to show both groups of people that they are guilty of the exact same thing: rejecting Jesus as Savior. The non-religious are avoiding Jesus by running from him; the religious are avoiding Jesus by being good and putting

together a moral record that they hope earns them God's favor. Both groups are guilty of sin, singular: they don't accept God's free offer of grace through Jesus Christ.

Only once the Spirit has brought us to that place of really seeing our sin can we repent and believe in Jesus, and find our salvation in him. We find salvation in Jesus when we stop trying to justify ourselves and rest in deep trust that his perfect life and sacrificial death are what make us right with God. As that begins to happen, we also begin to see that the salvation that God offers is not just personal; it also has cosmic dimensions. God is not just saving me, he is redeeming the world, putting an end to the death and decay, and restoring creation to its original intent. All this Jesus does in his life, death, and resurrection. So the Spirit's first work is to bring us to see all that in a real way, and that is how we first become a genuine Christian. The Spirit causes us to see and believe in Jesus.

The Spirit Grows Us in Faith

The most interesting statement Jesus makes regarding the person and work of the Spirit comes in John 16.12-15. Right after explaining how the Spirit brings conviction and leads us to faith in Jesus, Jesus explains the continuing and ongoing work of the Spirit in the lives of those who believe in him. Surprisingly, the way the Spirit first brought us to Jesus is directly connected to how the Spirit continues to work in us: the Spirit makes much of Jesus!

In John 16.14 Jesus says of the Spirit, "He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine." Jesus is the master of saying a ton in a few short words, and in this little saying summarizes almost everything it means for us to grow as Christians!

We first become Christians by seeing how bankrupt we are and all that we can freely have in Jesus. The Spirit shows us that we avoid God by being irreligious and religious, and then shows us that the only way to be right with God is by faith in Jesus' righteousness in our place. We get his work credit to our account. The way we continue to grow is to see more and more clearly and to be so overwhelmed by all that we have in Jesus so that we are increasingly satisfied in his love to us and as a result live a life of humility, courage, and joy.

Think about it like this. When the young rebellious son in the Prodigal Son story first begins his trip home, he prepares a great speech to give to the father that he offended and shamed by his leaving. He plans to tell his dad that he

doesn't expect to be taken back in as a son; rather, he is simply asking to be taken in as a hired hand. When we first come to faith in Christ, we are just like this son. Though we understand the dynamic of the gospel - "I am accepted by God because of Jesus' performance" - our hearts continue to operate on a very different dynamic - "I will be accepted by God if I obey and serve him."

Objective Love and Subjective Love

The Spirit's job is to take the objective reality of our Father's love for us and make it real to us. Sinclair Ferguson says it like this: "If it is a fact that God has adopted us into his family, then the Spirit must come and assure us that this is true. The Spirit must enable us to live in the enjoyment of such a rich spiritual blessing. God sends his Spirit into our hearts bringing us the deep spiritual and psychological security that rests on the objective fact that our sins are forgiven and we completely belong to the Lord."

Every day, when you first wake up, your identity is absolutely secure as an adopted, cherished, beloved child of God - but your heart doesn't believe that. By default, you believe you'll have to earn it today - with God, your spouse, your teachers, your boss. Your heart naturally believes you'll be accepted and loved based on how well your day goes. You are a son, but you are going to act like an servant, and you'll treat everyone else in the same way.

For example - why are you so defensive when someone confronts? Why do you feel you need to defend yourself? The answer is simple - your heart is still acting like the opinions of others define you. You are still living like a servant, even though you are a son. You're not enjoying all you have in Jesus.

Charles Spurgeon preached a sermon on the prodigal son story, focusing in on the father's kiss and embrace of his wayward son. He said that this kiss is like the work of the Holy Spirit: "The Father kissed his son much to make him quite certain that it was all real. The prodigal, in receiving these many kisses, might say to himself, 'All this love must be true, for a little while ago I heard the hogs grunt and now I hear nothing but the kisses from my dear Father's lips.' So the Father gave him another kiss, for there was no better way of convincing him that the first was real than by repeating it; and if there lingered any doubt about the second, the father gave him yet a third."

The Holy Spirit is the kiss of the Father. The Spirit comes to convince you again and again that you are beloved and adopted because of Jesus. He glorifies Jesus and declares to you all you have been given in Him!