

Record of Sermons delivered during the month of August 2016

(added progressively after each Sunday)

Delivered Sunday 7 August 2016

Back to Basics:

The Holy Spirit (1b): His Work

Review of last week.

The Holy Spirit His Work (what He does) – continued

As we should expect. Just as the Holy Spirit has been at work in the 'written Word', we find the Holy Spirit at work in the 'incarnate Word'. In other words the Word of God, the second Person in the Trinity, taking flesh – which is what incarnation means.

Here is Gabriel, announcing to Mary that she is going to have a child. “I can't have a child! I'm not married.”

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you. The power of the highest will overshadow you. So that child who will be born of you shall be called, the Son of God.”

Jesus comes into the womb of Mary by the conception of the Holy Spirit. Which we can never understand. What a marvellous miracle that was!

The Holy Spirit conceived in the womb of a virgin, (whose name was Mary), the Son of God.

We talked about His two Natures, some weeks ago: He's completely God and He's completely human. But He's only one Person because of this amazing miracle. This hypostatic union, of two natures in the womb of a Galilean girl. That's the work of the Holy Spirit.

Of course, her husband to be, Joseph, is absolutely shocked to find His betrothed pregnant. So God has to send a message in a dream: “Joseph. The child which is with your wife to be, is conceived by the Holy Spirit.” So you see you can't separate the Holy Spirit from Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ would never have been in the world, without the Ministry of the Holy Spirit. You can never separate them.

When our Lord's Ministry begins, His public Ministry, when He's thirty years old, He is baptised. As He comes from the water, He sees the heavens torn open, and the Holy Spirit descending on Him: as a dove. (The full meaning of that we haven't time to explain.) But it's to show to us that the whole of our Lord's public Ministry was done in the power and energy of the Holy Spirit. None of the teaching of Christ. None of His miracles. Nothing about Him would have been done or said, without the Ministry of the Holy Spirit. You can't separate the Spirit from Christ.

Immediately after His baptism, we read in Mark 1:12, that the Holy spirit drove Him into

the wilderness. There is the Holy Spirit, blowing Him along as it were. Moving Him, because God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit, although they are three distinct Persons in one God-head, They're not three separate Persons. You can't separate them one from the other.

It was in the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus lived and preached. So we read that Jesus came in the power of the Holy Spirit to preach in Galilee. He stands up to speak in the Synagogue. He takes the Scriptures, the Word of the Holy Spirit and He reads the following passage: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach."

That's why Peter is able to say, later on, when he is preaching, that Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit.

Everything He did and taught He did in the energy and power of the Holy Spirit. John tells us that God did not give the Spirit in a measured way to Christ. He had the Spirit in a measureless manner!

At last Our Lord came to die. Have we ever thought long and hard about the death of our Lord Jesus Christ? How could a man who was God, (man none the less) go to the cross? Face that terrible cross, become sin and bear our sin? What almighty power held Him up and sustained Him through that terrible suffering, by which even the face of His Father was hidden from Him?

The Bible says: 'through the eternal Spirit, He offered Himself to God'. It was the Holy Spirit, still sustaining Him at the cross.

One day they come that Sunday morning to the tomb and it's empty. The Lord is seen, and He's alive. And He's alive in the power of an endless life! Who raised Him from the grave? Who did it? It was the Spirit of God. Romans 8:11 tells us that. It was the Spirit of Holiness, who therefore announced to the world, in a way that can never be contradicted, that this Person really is the Son of God.

This is what the Holy Spirit does!

The Bible talks about the Holy Spirit and creation; the Holy Spirit and Scripture; and the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ. These are the great themes! The great force and majesty and teaching of the Word of God?

Finally we recognise that the Holy Spirit is the agent of the new creation in Christ. One creation has already been made, you see it all around you. The Holy Spirit was the agent in making that.

A new creation is in the making. And we are those who believe that we are the 'first fruits' of that creation. (The 'first fruits' were that small sheaf of corn which was taken and waved before God as a guarantee that the rest of the harvest was going to come.) We are the 'first fruits' says the Scripture. God has started making His new creation. We are the guarantee that the rest is going to come. The whole universe is going to be remade in glory and purity, with Christ at the centre of it.

But there are already people being remade. There is a new creation going on. Now!

Who is doing it? Who is bringing it to pass? The Holy Spirit!

Here are gospel preachers. Christ has gone back to heaven, the Church is still on the earth. The Holy Spirit speaks to a prayer meeting: "Separate me Barnabas and Paul for the work which I have appointed them."

Then we read: 'being sent out by the Holy Spirit they went.'" How is it that now some 2000 years after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, there are still men who are 'raised up' to preach Christ? Who is it who raises them up? Who put the fire in their bones? Who give them the ability they've got? The Holy Spirit!

Then something strange happens as they preach. It happened already in the first Century. Here's Paul: A fairly ugly fellow apparently from what we know of him. But he was a very intelligent man. People are asking him, "Paul, give us a really intelligent discourse." But he talks about about Christ's cross. Paul worked miracles, many times. But he preaches about Christ's cross.

The mockers and the cynics and the opponents as they hear this man preach and speak about Christ's cross are convinced by what he says. He hasn't offered them any proof. He hasn't offered them any evidence. He hasn't offered them any scientific discoveries. He hasn't appealed to archaeology. He hasn't flattened them with his Greek rhetoric. He's preached Christ!

And they're convinced. They're so convinced that the word that comes out of his mouth they receive as the Word of God. What is this strange influence which accompanies gospel preaching? The Holy Spirit is not an influence, but He works influentially. And the Holy Spirit works with the word of God, as people, whom God has raised up, preach it. It convinces people. Convinces them, because of the work of the Holy Spirit. And their faith does not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. That is the work of the holy Spirit. The great work of the Holy Spirit is still to be done.

He is the author of the 'new birth'. Here is poor Nicodemus: "I believe You've come from God."

"You can't even 'see' spiritual things until you're 'born again'."

"But how can one be born again when you're old?"

"Nicodemus, you came into the world by a physical birth and flesh is flesh. You go into the spiritual world by a spiritual birth. That which is of the Spiritual world is Spirit. You've got to have a spiritual, radical, transformation.

Who does this? Who brings this about? The wind blows where it wills. You don't know where it comes from, or where it's going to. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.

We don't know who the last person to be 'born again' was and we don't know who the next one will be. But the Spirit is at work in the world. Here is a person whose mind is completely blinded and prejudiced against spiritual things. (smack) God opens it! Completely opposed to the gospel. God conquers him. God the Holy Spirit.

Working through the Scriptures. Bringing people safely to Christ.

Corinthians 12:13. This transformation of men and women: initially separated from God, they become joined to Christ. From being right outside the spiritual dimension they come into the spiritual dimension. This great miracle is called the baptism by the Holy Spirit.

For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body. Whether Jews or Greeks, whether slave or free and have all been made to drink of the one Spirit.

That is the baptism of the Spirit, by which the Holy Spirit cleanses and renews the entire person. Bringing them out of darkness into light. From the power of Satan to God. From their lost-ness to Christ. Opens their eyes and changes their natures. Making them Christians and keeps them that way. That's the Baptism of the Holy Spirit! Nothing else!!!

How come this man, who's been indifferent to spiritual things, suddenly sees his need? How come this woman who thinks that Christianity is a waste of time, is suddenly sure that it is true? How come these people begin to ache inside and see their need of a Saviour?

"When He is come," says Jesus, speaking of the Holy Spirit. "He will convince the world of sin, because they do not believe in me".

Here is someone who is convinced now, that it is a terrible crime, not to come to Jesus Christ. Who convinced him of sin and of righteousness, "because I go to my Father." Now there's no perfect life on earth to be seen anywhere. If there were a perfect life being lived next to me by my next door neighbour, I could easily conclude that my life is imperfect. But everybody's life is imperfect. Everybody's! So why is it that the person begins to ache, that his life is imperfect? Jesus isn't here any more, He's gone to the Father. Who convinces people that their lives are a mess? The Holy Spirit, of **sin** because they did not believe in Me. Of **righteousness** because I go to the Father. And of **judgement** because the prince of this world is judged.

Here is the person who is convinced, that evil is on the losing side. Now, how on earth could you ever come to that conclusion. Evil seems to prospering everywhere [just watch ABC TV]. Getting bigger and greater and more powerful. Yet this person sees that evil is losing! Because the Devil is damned. Who convinced him of that? The Holy Spirit. That's what He does.

He reveals Christ. "He shall glorify me." "He shall bear witness to me." "He will take the things that are mine and reveal them to you".

Wherever people are dancing at the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Trusting Him. Serving Him. Following Him. Admiring Him. Loving Him, and living under His Lordship, that is the work of the Holy Spirit.

We find in the Acts of the Apostles, wherever someone is filled with the Spirit, then the first thing he does he speaks about Christ.

The proof that you're filled with the Spirit is that your eyes are fixed on Jesus Christ. You can't get Him out of your sight. That's the work of the Holy Spirit. That's what He is doing today. People are brought to call Jesus Christ, "Lord". Have you thought about that? 2000 years ago He was put to death on a Roman Cross and there are people who call Him, "Lord". They give Him the highest Name of all. Who convinces them that Jesus Christ is Lord?

No man can say that Jesus Christ is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit. Says the Scripture.

Then such people find each other. They join Churches. They love each other. They have a sense of belonging to each other. They feel that at last they've found their proper family. Where does that come from? Maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one Spirit. Precisely because we are animated and indwelt by the same Spirit that we accept each other in the way that we do.

Then in those groups of Christians called Churches, God raises up exemplary Christians who are capable of teaching them the Word of God and helping them regulate their Christian lives. Who raises up these people who shepherd the congregation and rule it under God's rule?

When Paul talks to the Ephesian, Elders, he talks about the flock of God over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. The Holy Spirit raises up office bearers.

How is it that every Christian (no exceptions) has something about him or her which can be used to strengthen every other Christian in the Church. You do you know. Some Spiritual gifts; some working of the Spirit; some manifestation of the Spirit ; something that God has given you, which can be used for the building up, strengthening and encouraging of the whole Church. Where did those gifts come from? They're so diverse, so different, But they don't split the Church! They come from the Holy Spirit, because the Scripture says, these words: *There are diversity of gifts but the same Spirit There are differences of ministry, but the same Lord. There are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.*

That's who the Holy Spirit is and what He does.

[2363]

May this continuing understand of the basics of Christianity be so for all the saints gathered here today.

Sunday 14 August 2016

Sermon delivered by the Moderator (no record available)

Delivered Sunday 21 August 2016

Back to Basics:

The Holy Spirit and the Individual Christian (2a)

Review of last week.

Who sends the Holy Spirit into the heart of the individual Christian?

The Lord Jesus Christ does. He's still at work.

From where does the Lord Jesus Christ send the Holy Spirit?

From God the Father, into the heart of every person whom God has loved as long as He's been God.

At some time in their life: some while they're children; some while they're teenagers; and some even in old age. The Lord Jesus Christ, who's in heaven, sends the Holy Spirit into their hearts from the Father.

Then when the Holy Spirit comes into the life of the man or the woman or the boy or the girl, ten things happen. (We mention five this week and 5 next week)

1. He brings about the 'new birth'. A young man said, "I can't understand it. I've been in a Christian home all these years. I listened to all those gospel sermons: it never meant anything to me, and then one day I could see it for myself." That's the 'new birth'.

It's like starting a new life. You came into this world, through a natural birth. You go into the Spiritual world through a Spiritual birth. Jesus said that!

For the natural birth, it has to be physical, for you to come into a physical world. To go into a Spiritual world, it has to be a Spiritual birth. Who can bring about a Spiritual birth? Can you? Only the Holy Spirit!

People are brought into the Spiritual world, into the Spiritual dimension, to see Spiritual things and to experience Spiritual things, by a Spiritual birth. Which Jesus called, "being born again" or "born from above".

"That which is of the flesh is flesh; and that which is of the Spirit is Spirit. Don't be surprised if I said to you, you must be born again."

The new birth isn't a result of your parents wanting you to be born again. (Read John 12:13 later.) And the new birth isn't a result of you wanting to be born again. The new birth isn't the result of your friends wanting you to be born again. The new birth is the result of God wanting you to be born again. "They were not born of blood (inheritance) or the will of flesh or the will of man, but of God."

God the Holy Spirit Himself brings people into the spiritual dimension Into the Spiritual world. You can't even see (perceive): the kingdom of God; the Spiritual world, without that work of the Holy Spirit. Which we call the new birth.

Isn't it wonderful to know that even today, the Lord Jesus Christ is still sending

the Holy Spirit from the Father into the heart of elect people!

2. The Holy Spirit, having come into our lives; into our affections; into our intelligence; into our emotions, into everything that we are, He actually lives within us. Jesus said to His disciples, "He is with you and He shall be IN you." And the mark of a true Christian, is that the Holy Spirit dwells in him. "If any man does not have the Spirit of Christ", says the Bible, "it is because he has not come to Him."

Now many of you in your unconverted days, as you mixed with Christians, you said to yourself, "There's something about them!" But you couldn't put your finger on it. And many are aware that they had something, but you didn't actually have any words or language to tell you what it was. Many with a more philosophical mind, may have said, "Well there's a certain spirit about them". Well now we're getting near the truth: That's what makes Christians. Christians are the work of the Holy Spirit.

When He has brought us into the Spiritual realm, he does not leave us. He lives inside us. He 'indwells' us. To the point where even our bodies, are called in the New Testament, (1 Corinthians 3 and 6) "Even our bodies are called the temple, (or as it is in the Greek language) the shrine of the Holy Spirit. (Temple – big building; Holy of Holies; Shrine: Paul uses this word to describe our bodies). That's where the presence of God is!

That's why, of course, when Christians come together, as in a Worship Service, often we feel the presence of God in a way that we never feel it otherwise. It's like some Churches in India, where there are no lights and every Christian brings a little oil lamp with him, thus, when everyone's together, there is then a lot of light. We have a particular sense of the presence of God when we are together, because each one of us, is a 'born again', Christian, indwelt by God. We have, in a sense brought Him to you.

3. He assures the believer that he is God's child: "Because you are sons," says the Bible. "God has sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father". What this means in practice is this: You're reading the Bible one day, you come to a passage which describes a Christian and you say to yourself, "That's me!" It's like there's a voice inside you, and you're aware that the Bible is not just talking generally about what Christians are like, but there's a voice inside you saying, "That's me!" That's the inward witness of the Holy Spirit. That's the voice of God saying, "Abba, Father."

Before you were a (born again) Christian, when people around you prayed to God as their Father, it didn't mean anything to you. But now you're a Christian, when there's a time of prayer and people speak to God as their Father you think that he (or she) is speaking for me. You have this inward conviction that God is your Father. That's how we know, says John, in 1 John 3 and 4, that we are His children, because He's given to us of His Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is at work! [Some types of Christian practice, define just how and in what form the presence of the Holy Spirit in a life must show itself. But] the

very fact you are a Christian; the very fact that there is a different spirit about you; and that you recognise yourself when you read about Christians in the Bible, demonstrates and proves the work of the Spirit in your life.

4. He sanctifies the believer. When Paul writes to the Ephesians in Chapter 4 of his letter, he talks about lying. Now Christians shouldn't do this. He talks about stealing, and he says that Christians shouldn't do this either, in fact they should do the opposite they should give to those who are in need and for themselves, work to earn their money. He talks about swearing and any type of words which don't help the person you're speaking to. And he says you had better cut that out too. Don't grieve the Holy Spirit!

He says sin grieves the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit is inside us He is the 'Holy' Spirit and holy means being set apart for God. And where there is 'the' Holy Spirit, there is always a 'holy' Spirit. So little by little the person becomes characterised by a Holy 'Spirit'. Progressively, the Christian drops this, to please God, and adopts that. He kills off this and he puts that in its place. Progressively he leaves his sins. In reality his life is changing from this to that. Fortunately he's been put right with God by the work of Jesus Christ. He's got Christ's righteousness on his account, otherwise he would never be saved. But actually in the reality of his life Sunday morning to Saturday night, he's ceasing to be more and more what he used to be, and is becoming more and more as he should be. That is a fact.

Sometimes the graph of progress is an up and down affair. And as we know sometimes the graph goes up and up and then plummets down again. We repent of those falls and we're responsible for them. But in the grace of God when we look over years of the graph, we see that despite the ups and downs (and some terrible falls) the line today is a lot higher than when we started. That is the work of God. He is setting us apart for Himself. He strengthens us inside, as the Spirit works through the Scriptures, and He's changing us to look less and less like the world to more and more to be like the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. That's the work of the Spirit.

Consider this. Can you name some habits which plagued you when you were first converted? Which in the mercy of God they don't today. Is that any credit to you? No! It's the work of the Holy Spirit.

Can you think of some places where you longed to go years ago? But now when you look at it you wonder why on earth you ever wanted to go there. It doesn't appeal to you at all. You feel that if you went there today you'd be tainted. It's not a problem to you any more. Is that any credit to you? Who changed your character. Who changed your affections and your desires?

Perhaps you had some ambition that was so precious to you that you felt that you could die for it. But today you're completely mystified as to why you felt so strongly about such a worthless thing. That's sanctification.

Then there are things that you now find pleasure in, which even at the start of your Christian life you found hard to stomach.

Is it possible that a Christian here, doesn't like praying? No. As a Christian you've begun to like praying. But now you like it more than you did a year ago. Certainly more than three years ago!

You see more in the Bible and love it more than you ever did. That's sanctification. All the work of the 'in-dwelling' Spirit!

5. We've already started on number five. It's this question of prayer: It isn't something we recite. Not a performance. It's a matter of the heart and the person himself has to be *in* it. All real prayer is *in* the Holy Spirit. We're told in Scripture that we all have access through the same Lord Jesus Christ, by one Spirit, to the Father. So any time you've ever prayed and your heart has been in it, that's been the work of the Holy Spirit. Marvellous thing isn't it?

Sometimes you've prayed in a circumstance, where the world can not imagine that anyone would want to pray. Some of you have lost your faith for a period and you've actually gone to God and you've said that you can't believe it any more. How is that possible? It's not logical! But the work of the Holy Spirit is so real in the *heart* of the believer, that sometimes when his *head* goes haywire, the Holy Spirit continues to do His work. Nobody in the world could ever understand that someone who doesn't believe in God, for a time, would ever go to God and tell Him that he doesn't believe in Him. But you can, because you've got Spiritual sense from the Holy Spirit.

Some of you will open a Bible and dis-believe what you read. But you keep reading. And here you are again once more in the presence of the Bible.

He helps the believer to pray: sometimes you very much want to pray for fellow Christians. Sometimes they're people you've never met and never likely to meet. Christians in prison; or in far off countries. But you pray for them, because you love them. Where does that love come from? For someone from a different language, a different culture, who you're never likely to meet. But you really do feel a sense of oneness and want to pray for him. Where does that love come from?

When Paul writes to the Romans, most of whom he had never met, he says, strive for me in your prayers. And one of the reasons he wants them to strive for him is the love of the Spirit. The Spirit give us a love for other Christians which moves us to pray for them. That's the work of the Holy Spirit.

Have you ever, in prayer, wanted something and yet you've not be able to exactly say what you want. You've wanted something very, very deeply, but you couldn't express it properly, in any words that you know. It just came out as a sort of groan. It was like an ache, deep down in your heart. But you just went to God with the ache. You believed and knew that God heard. Many Christians who are ill have this experience. Christians who are persecuted, hated and forsaken have this experience. So do Christians who are for a time confused. Ordinary Christians every day may have it also. An ache, that they cannot put into words, but you should go confidently to God with it, nevertheless.

Romans 8:26-27: 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 through wordless groans.* ²⁷ *And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people **in accordance with the will of God.***

This then is also the work of the Holy Spirit. God doesn't need your words, because true prayer is the Holy Spirit, stirring up **God's own desires** in a believing heart.

[2296]

May this continuing understanding of the basics of Christianity be so for all the saints gathered here today.

Next week points 6 to 10.

Next week points 6 to 10.

Delivered Sunday 28 August 2016

Back to Basics:

The Holy Spirit and the Individual Christian (b)

Review of last week.

6. The Holy Spirit enables us to understand the Bible.

Reminding ourselves of the Spiritual world: we only enter through God's gift of the new (or Spiritual) birth. The Apostle Paul says that the natural man, the unconverted man, doesn't perceive the things of the Spirit of God. Because he can't, says Paul, it's foolishness to him! Because they are Spiritually discerned. The Bible is a Spiritual Book. You can have 10 doctorates and still not understand the Bible. You can have a massive IQ and still not understand the Bible. But the ordinary Christian who may well have been 'written off' at school, can understand the Bible and find pleasure in it. Understand it and see Christ there! How do we understand that? Because it's a Spiritual Book, part of the Spiritual world and if you're going to understand a spiritual book, the handbook of this spiritual world, you have to have spiritual sense. The only Person who gives us 'spiritual sense' is the Holy Spirit Himself. Which is why you can not and must not and dare not separate the Bible from prayer.

7. The Holy Spirit gives to the believer, spiritual experiences.

A person, a Christian, when reading the Bible is so filled with a sense of wonderment, he just stops and sits down or goes off for a walk, and just admires God. This is what Paul means when he says, "We are the true circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit". What Jesus means when he says, "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him, must worship Him in Spirit and in truth."

A Christian comes into a particular Church. He's never been there before. Ever! He looks around and there's not a single face that he recognises, not one. But

when the hymns are sung; when the prayers are made and the preaching is preached, he feels none the less a sense of oneness with the people around him. That's the work of the Holy Spirit. This is why, at the end of a Service, we say, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

Sometimes people think about the cross, and they feel like their heart has been invaded with running water so that they seem to overflow with a sense of love of God. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, says Paul to the Romans (5:5). This is by the Holy Spirit.

Again sometimes we are filled with joy! Yes! Because, "the kingdom of God is not food or drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).

A Christian, terminally ill, may look to the grave and beyond and is filled with 'hope'. As Paul tells us, in the two texts mentioned (Rom 15:13 & Gal 5:5), that 'hope' comes from where? From who? From Him!

Sometimes we're permitted to have a look into the spiritual world. That final world. The ultimate world. By God Himself.

8. Jesus says to His disciples, "Go into all the world, make disciples of all Nations, baptise them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teach them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you." How can we go into a world that doesn't believe? How can we bring anybody to believe? People ask for proof. We can't give any. They ask for 'signs and wonders' and we've got none to give. They want visible, visible, visible things and we worship an invisible God. All we've got is a 'book' in our hands and love in our hearts.

How can we do the work of evangelism! How can we do it?

"Don't go", said Jesus, to the disciples, "until the promise of the Father comes. For when the Holy Spirit comes", He says, "He'll make you witnesses." Not just here, not just there, but to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Any time you've spoken up for Jesus Christ. Every time you've said, "No!" when the world says, "Yes". Every time you've spoken out that the invisible (spiritual) world is a reality, when every body else said, "It was a fable". That was the work of the Holy Spirit!

There's no hope for Christian witness without the Holy Spirit's blessing. You can't win anybody with religious entertainment. You can't win any body with anything except spiritual means. Spirit-ual means!

9. Number nine. We've already had eight prime works of the Holy Spirit. Do some people practically ignore all the others for this one? Yes, like them all, it is important, but it's not unique. It is there in the New Testament: How is it that you, yes you, have got some gift about you; some thing that you're good at; some flair; some initiative you can take, that can be of benefit to the whole Christian Church, here in the local congregation, where God has placed you? How is it that there is some thing about you that if He took you away, this

local Church would be poorer? How is it that you've got something to contribute? You!

How is it that some people, when they speak, their words are wise and we all stop to listen, because we all know we're learning wisdom? Other people when they speak: we all stop to listen, because there are things, that we don't know but they seem to understand. It's like a word of knowledge.

How is it that when we don't know where to turn, we know that there are some people, that we know, will help.

There's certain administration to be done. Many are hopeless at it, but some have a real gift for it.

We could go on, the list is endless. There's three lists in the New Testament: 1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12 and Ephesians 4. "There are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit!" The same spirit distributes liberally. Everything that you're good at: that glorifies Jesus Christ in the local Church, and builds Christians up in their faith, with any form of practical encouragement and help to them. Anything about you that helps them along the Christian Way, is a gift. Who gave it? The Holy Spirit did.

10. That's the Holy Spirit's work. But He's going to go on working until we go on and arrive in heaven. We've been born again. When a child is born, he receives certain things from his parents. Some children are born into families knowing that he will have a marvellous inheritance.

We've been born, and every one of us who is born again will receive an incorruptible inheritance. It's coming from the hand of the Father, to us. The Spirit, as Ephesians 1:13-14 tells us, is the down payment, or pledge, or guarantee, or earnest, that you will enter into that inheritance.

The Greek word is 'down payment'. God gives you the down payment as a pledge that all the rest will follow. Have you received the Holy Spirit? Have you? As we've been listening about Him today (and last week), have you been able to recognise His work in your life. Have you perhaps had to say, "Well I didn't know that was the the work of the Holy Spirit, but I'm glad to hear it, because that tallies up and ties in with my experience." Then you have received the pledge. Doubt no more! You're going to heaven. Because God has given you the pledge, the guarantee, the down payment, the earnest. You will certainly arrive there.

Until you arrive there, God the Son is preparing the place that God the Holy Spirit is preparing you for – that very place. So that you are being changed from glory to glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Cor 3:18)

Jesus Christ will come back, and when He does most of us will be dead. Not all! There will be some Christians alive when He comes back.

How will our Lord Jesus Christ raise the dead? How is any work of God done? Who is always the 'agent' for the work of God?

Here is a Christian who's been horribly martyred, and his body's been burned. Who will find the 'seed' from which the whole plant will grow into the wonderful resurrection body? Who knows where all these Christians are in unmarked graves? Who will raise them from the grave and turn them into the likeness of Christ?

Who was the agent in the first creation? The Holy Spirit. Who was the agent by which the dust of the earth was made into the first living soul, Adam? The Holy Spirit! And who is God's agent by which the dust of believers will be the means and the basis, by which God will make this glorious resurrection body? Which will be wonderfully different, and infinitely different from their present body, but none the less will have a certain continuity with it. Who is the agent who will do that?

So you see the Holy Spirit's work is not finished, when we die. He is also the one who will raise us from the dead. As we are told in Romans 8:11.

Ah, the work of the Holy Spirit is very, very wonderful . Very wonderful.

Reviewing some of our 10 points:

- #3. Would you have more assurance?
- #4. More sanctification?
- #5. Pray better?
- #6. Understand the Bible better than you do?
- #7. Have legitimate religious experiences?
- #8. Help in witnessing?
- #9. Power to serve God in the local Church and beyond?
- #10. Want to be truly prepared for heaven?

You need more of the work of the Holy Spirit!

So we end this message by stopping all human words and listening to our Lord Jesus Christ. Luke 11:9-13

⁹ 'So I say to you: ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

¹¹ 'Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'

May this continuing understand of the basics of Christianity be so for all the saints gathered here today.

Next week Justification by Faith