

### David McClister – Lessons on the Holy Spirit – Lesson 3

Once again, let me begin by expressing my deep gratitude for the invitation to be with you this weekend, and especially this morning. I want to thank the elders for the invitation to present the series of lessons and thank you for your interest in them. And as always, my prayer is that the things we studied together from the Word of God will be helpful to us, help us to live our lives and glorify God, in everything that we do.

We talked yesterday about how the Old Testament ends, with a picture of not only the world in sin, but Israel as well. That Israel was dead, the world had become dead, or to say that in a different way, everyone had gone into the kingdom of the enemy, everyone had been taken captive by Satan. Or to say that another way, we were all in exile, like Adam away from God, living outside of the life that is in God. And so God promised, and we tried to emphasize yesterday that God promised over and over and over again, that the day would come when he would gather his people back to himself, when he would destroy the enemy kingdom, along with the enemy king, just like he did in the Exodus. And he would bring his people back to himself, that those who were dead would live again.

And God would do that through the Messiah and the Messiah's provision of the Spirit, because it is the spirit that makes life. And so we noted at the end of our study yesterday, that the group, the church, certainly does have this depiction in the New Testament that it is the dwelling of God in the Spirit, Paul says, that's what the church is that we are a temple of God, and we are dwelling of God in the Spirit. Paul said to the Corinthian church, that you, "you" plural, the Corinthian church, are a temple of the Holy Spirit that dwells in you. And Peter said that the spirit of glory dwells or rests upon us.

But our question today is, is the individual part of that as well? Does every individual Christian share in that dwelling of God's Spirit? And I suggested to you at the end of our lesson yesterday that the answer to that question is yes. And we want to talk this morning about how that happens, and what the Bible says about it. I think it's very clear in Acts, chapter two and verse 38, Peter said, "Repent and let each one of you be baptized for the remission of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." And there is no qualification to that statement. And I don't believe that Peter meant that, well, some of you will get it, and the whole group will kind of be benefited from that. I think what Peter is saying there is that whoever gets baptized receives God's Spirit. And it is the gift of the Holy Spirit, not in the sense that the Spirit will give you a gift, I know the word "of" can mean a lot

of things. But I think when we combine that statement with the other biblical evidence, we'll look at today, that what Peter meant was is that every one of God's people gets God's Spirit. And our thesis for this morning is that in the Messianic time, the Spirit of God dwells in every true child of God. It is what Paul referred to in Romans chapter eight in the scripture that was just read in our hearing a moment ago, as having the spirit. He said there "if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, He does not belong to Him." Two things I'd like to point out about that verse very quickly. First of all, you will notice the singular pronouns there. Now, some people might say, well, look there in verse nine, "you are not in the flesh, if the Spirit dwells in you" those are plural words, and Paul's talking about the group there. But no, Paul's talking about what happens to every individual in the group. Because in verse 9, "if anyone (singular), does not have the Spirit of Christ, He (singular) does not belong to Him." And the second point I'd like to make about that verse very quickly as I want you to just let that verse sink in. Paul said, if you don't have the Spirit of Christ, you're not a Christian. You do not belong to the Lord if you don't have that. And that's the plain sense of what he says there. And so, we need to let this text say what it says to us and see if we can put together a biblical picture this morning of how it is that all of this works.

I believe that it is done through the word of Christ, that this is how God puts His Spirit into me and into you. And the moment that we become Christians, when we are baptized into Christ Jesus, we begin to follow the word of Christ, we begin to follow the gospel, the pattern of living that Jesus himself laid down and taught. And it is that word of Jesus Christ, the Word about him, the Word about who he is, and what he has done, that then begins its work in us. And I want to make the point this morning that when we say that the Spirit dwells in us through the Word, that this is not the same thing as knowing the Word. Now, I will assert and allege that you can't have the Spirit, if you don't know the Word of God. This idea that, well, I don't know anything about the Bible, but I am full of the Holy Spirit is, is not what the Bible says at all. You've got to have a knowledge of the word for the Spirit to be in you. But I will also assert that you can know a lot about the Bible and not have the Spirit in you. I've known a lot of people in my lifetime, who know a lot about the Bible, who can quote verses from the Bible just as well as you and I can, but they are not spiritual people. They do not live the Christian lifestyle, because knowing the Bible is not enough to have the Spirit dwelling in us. It's like what Paul described, even though he doesn't mention the spirit here, he talks about those "who are holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power." And I want to suggest you that we can do that, that we can read the Bible, we can know the Bible, but we have to let that word do what it's supposed to do. And if we don't let it do its job, then we will have denied the power, and the Spirit will not be living in us.

So how is it that the Spirit dwells in us through the word of Christ? And I'm trying to suggest to you it's not an intellectual exercise. It's not just that, well, I know the Bible. Well, it's because God's word is powerful. God's word is creative. If I were to say this morning, it is snowing outside. What happens? Nothing. But if God were to say it is snowing outside, what would happen? It would snow. Because when God says things, they happen. That's how God created the universe. Genesis chapter one, "And God said." God did not have to get his hands dirty. He didn't have to touch things. All God had to do was speak and it happened. And in Isaiah, chapter 55, we have the classical biblical statement about this. God says in Isaiah 55, starting in verse 10, "as the rain in the snow come down from heaven, and they do not return there without watering the earth and making it barren sprout and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater." Look, listen to the analogy that God is using. When the rain comes down, things happen, that rain causes life to come, it causes things to grow, "so will my word be which goes forth from my mouth, it will not return to me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter, for which I sent it." The context there was the Babylonian captivity of Israel, and everybody was wondering, how are we going to ever get out of here and God's response is because I said you will. All I have to do is say that you will, and you will. And that's true, not only of the Babylonian captivity, but of God's Word always. God's word is powerful and creative. And so do you remember from our study yesterday, that God made a promise in Ezekiel 36, he said that "I will give you a new heart. And I will put a new spirit within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh." I want you to keep that in mind for just a moment, God said, I will remove the old one and put a new one in. "I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes. And you will be careful to observe My ordinances." And again, I would ask you to remember that yesterday we talked about how spirit, mind, heart, will, that those are all biblical terms for basically the same thing. And so, notice you have that here in Ezekiel 36, I will put a new heart in you. I will put a new spirit in you. How's that, what's that going to be like God? God said, I will put my spirit in you. And so, God is going to make Israel and make his people new on the inside. And I'm so glad that Brother Kenny mentioned this in his talk this morning because it has everything to do with what we're talking about here. In Jeremiah 31, in verse 33, the verse that Kenny read, God said, "I will put my law within them, and on their heart, I will write it." And that is the same language that we hear there in that Ezekiel passage, "I will give you a new heart, I will put my Spirit within you." And so how does God make this Spirit inside of us? How does he put his Spirit inside of us by writing his word on our hearts. Paul says in Second Corinthians three and verse three, that "it is manifested that you are a letter of Christ cared for by us, written

not with ink, but with the Spirit of the Living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts."

And this is the point at which you and I have to be open. You know, there's this thing that Jesus used to say, He that has ears to hear, let him hear. And hearing in the Bible is not just sound waves bouncing off of your eardrums, it means you take it in. It's what James described in James chapter one, as receiving the word that is implanted, it has to get into my heart and into your heart. Or to use parallel terminology from the Bible. It has to get into my mind, into my will, into my character, into my inner being, I have to let God write his word inside of me. And what that does, is it creates a new mind, and a new heart, and a new character inside of me and inside of you. Because God's word is creative. That's what God's Word does, it makes things. And so, when we allow that word to sink into our hearts, not like the people in the parable of the sower, who had the hard heart, like the rocky ground, or whose hearts was full of all kinds of garbage that the word of God has to compete with. We're talking about, as Luke said, in his version, letting it fall deep into a good and honest heart. When we do that, this word creates in us a new mind, a new heart, and a new character. Paul said in Titus three in verse five that "he saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing by the Holy Spirit."

We asked the question yesterday, how do you get fixed on the inside because the problem with every one of us is that the spirit that is within us has been corrupted. We have taken in so much junk and garbage and sinful things from the world, that it has changed the way that we think it has changed our hearts. It has changed our minds and our spirits. And the question is, how can I get it clean again, what can be done to fix it? Paul says in Titus three and verse five, that there is a "renewing by the Holy Spirit," which I think is the same thing or parallel to what Paul is talking about in Ephesians 4:23, that you'd be "renewed in the spirit of your mind," be renewed in the spirit that is your mind. That's how I become new again, by letting God's word come into my heart and into my mind deeply. Let it take root there, let it get implanted, so that it begins to grow and do its creative work of changing my mind, changing my heart, and changing my character.

This is a process, not an event. This is not something that's going to happen to you in an afternoon. It's not something that's going to happen in a weekend, it's not going to happen in a month. It will take a while. Now, I don't believe that it will take you all of the rest of your

life. But sometime between your hearing of the Word and the end of your life, the goal is that you will have created within you, by the Word of God, a new mind, a new heart, and a new spirit. Paul refers to it in Romans chapter 12, and verse two, as a transformation, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Remember, that was the same thing that Paul said back there in Ephesians 4:23, renewed in the spirit, that is your mind here, he says be transformed by the renewing of your mind. The word "transformed" in Greek is the Greek word from which we get our English word metamorphosis. It's what happens when a caterpillar turns into a butterfly. That's what Paul is talking about here, that there is going to be a change that takes place in you and me, and you will still be you at the end of that process. But you will be a different you. You will be a changed you. You will be a better you - a new you not like the old one that you used to be. And we are transformed. Therefore, as our minds are renewed by the word of God, he, remember back in Ezekiel, God said that "I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." In other words, I'm going to give you a soft heart. That's what this does. You see, I've already got a spirit in me. And so do you. We talked about that in our first lesson yesterday, every person has a spirit within them. But the problem is, is that it's become corrupted. How do I get that out of me? Well, that's what this Word of God does. That is, I take in this word of God. And again, it's not going to happen in an afternoon or a weekend. But the more I take it in, the more I learn it, the more it gets into my heart and into my mind, it becomes the way that I think it becomes the way that I make decisions. It becomes the way that I approach every person and everything in life. And that determines how I'm going to act and speak and do all of these things. And so, when I let that word grow inside of me, and remember Peter said in First Peter, take in the Word of God, like a baby takes in milk, let it grow so that you may grow to salvation. And that's why what we're doing here is so very important. When Christians gather every week to hear the Word of God and study the Word of God in Bible classes, that is increasing that which makes this new thing inside of us. Paul said there in Romans chapter eight and verse 13, "if you are living according to the flesh, you must die. But if by the Spirit you are putting to death, the deeds of the body, you will live." You see, as this spirit grows as this mindset, this attitude, this new heart grows inside me, and inside of you, it puts to death, the old spirit that was living within us.

Most of you, if not all of you remember back when you were first Christians, and you remember how difficult that was because you are trying to learn the way of the Lord. But you had these old thoughts and these old habits going on at the same time. And what was going on is that that old spirit was dying and the new spirit was growing, and they fight each other. Paul says that in Galatians, five, right that the "flesh and the spirit are at war with

another." You can't follow both. You've got to put to death the deeds of the flesh. Let the Spirit of God crucify the old person that you were, so that you become new.

And so, I would suggest to you this morning, brethren, that the Holy Spirit dwells in us, by creating a new spirit within us. And that new spirit that it creates in us is one that is just like itself, that it is a copy of itself. It is like God's own Spirit. Because what do we have in the word? We have the mind of God, in the Word of God, we have the revelation of what kind of God he is, His holiness, His righteousness, his kindness, his goodness, all of those things, his love. And when I allow God's word to dwell in me, it creates that kind of spirit in me and in you. Because that's what the Word of God does, it creates. And so, this spirit that is created in us is a copy. If we can use that word, I don't know if that's the best word to use, but it is a copy of God's Spirit. It is a copy of the Spirit of Christ. The brother read a moment ago, Romans chapter eight, verses nine through 11, if you want to go there, in your Bible, if you still have that, that's great. But I want you to notice some things, something really interesting going on. In this text, Paul says, in verse nine, "you're not in the flesh, but you are in the Spirit." Now, Paul is talking about two ways of living, there are two modes of existence. You can either live according to your flesh, and let your body tell you how to live, or you can allow the Spirit to do that. But you're not going to do both. So, you are not in the flesh. You don't live this fleshly life, but you live according to the Spirit, if indeed, the Spirit of God dwells in you.

We talked yesterday about how everybody lives their lives from the inside out. Why do people who use foul language use foul language? Because that's what's inside of them. Why do adulterers commit adultery? Because that's what's inside of them. We live according to what is inside of us. And if God Spirit is inside of us, we will live like that. We will live lives that are like the life of Jesus, and the righteousness of God himself. But notice what Paul does, then he says there that if the Spirit of God dwells in you, then the next sentence, "but if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, He does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, even though the body is dead, because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness." Now, is Paul talking about three different things here, having the Spirit of God in me, having the Spirit of Christ in me and having Christ? No, those are the same things, Paul is just simply using three different expressions to talk about the same thing. And the beauty of this passage is that, if you can understand one of those phrases, you can understand all the other three. My guess is that the easiest one to understand is the last one. What does it mean to have Christ in me? Well, that's an attempt to say in Greek and in English, something that we don't really have a word for. But have you ever had somebody

tell you, I can see your father in you. I can see your mother in you. Well, God would be praised if people would say, I can see Christ in you, right? And what they would mean by that is I see his mannerisms. I see his goals. I see his love. I see in you the way that he talked to people, I see you making the same kinds of decisions that he made to have Christ in us. Paul said in Ephesians three and verse 17, that "Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." Where does Christ dwell in me? He dwells in my heart, or, again to use the parallel biblical language, He dwells in my spirit. In Colossians, one verse 27, Paul says, "To whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." I don't know about you, but that is that's one of those verses that I think about all the time. That's one of those verses where all of Christianity is expressed in seven words, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Where does my hope lie? Why is it that I have the hope of being glorified with my Savior in heaven? Paul says, it all comes down to having Christ in you. That's what you've got to have to have the hope of glory. Paul says in Galatians two in verse 20, a familiar verse to us that "I've been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." Well, that's exactly the same thing as having the Spirit of Christ within us. As a matter of fact, those two terms are so interchangeable that Paul makes the difficult statement in Second Corinthians three and verse 17, "that the Lord is the Spirit." Because of the relationship between the Father, the Son and the Spirit, that that it's almost as if you can interchange them, Paul says. Or that's the same thing as having the Spirit of God dwelling in us. That this is the same thing as having the mind of Christ. Remember, in Philippians, chapter two and verse five, have this mind have this attitude in you. It's the same thing as having his spirit in me having him in me. Perhaps the clearest statement in all the Bible about this is First Corinthians six and verse 17, "the one who joins himself to the Lord." And what does that mean, Join yourself to the Lord? Well, that's a disciple. That's a person who says, Jesus, I'm going to be with you. I'm your disciple. And I'm going to live like you did. And that means baptism, right? That form of doctrine that Paul talks about there in Romans six that we have joined Jesus in his dying, his burial, in his resurrection. And not only just in baptism, but for the rest of my life, I'm going to live that kind of life, dead to sin and alive to God. The one who has joined himself to the Lord Paul says, is "one spirit with him." That there is a communion of spirits that there is a fellowship of spirits because his spirit has now come to be my spirit. His Spirit has come to dwell in me and in you, or, again to use Paul's alternate language, his mind is in me and in you, his heart is in me and is in you. It is a spirit of humility. It is a spirit of love. It is, as one author has put it, a cross-shaped or a cruciform Spirit. Paul says there in Romans chapter eight, in verse 16, the "Spirit himself testifies with our spirit, that we are children of God." Hopefully, that that makes a little sense, right? That my spirit and the spirit of God have now become mirror images of each other as it were. Copies. That I have a copy of the Spirit of God dwelling in me and so my

Spirit testifies with His Spirit, that I am a child of God, and if children, heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs of Christ, if we suffer with Him, so that we may be glorified with Him. That's what the Spirit does. It creates this copy of the living of Jesus in us. It is a spirit, ultimately, and primarily, of love.

Paul said in Romans 15:13 I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers. The love of the Spirit, what is that? It is the love that characterizes the spirit. In Galatians five, Paul said the fruit of the Spirit is first thing on the list, Love. If you have this spirit of Christ in you, the Spirit of God in you, you will become a person of love. Colossians one, verse eight, "he has informed us of your love, in the spirit." Love in the spirit, what's that? That's love that he is showing because he has the Spirit of Christ in him.

Paul said in Second Corinthians six and verse six that it is in purity and knowledge and patience and kindness in the Holy Spirit and in genuine love. If you have the spirit, you are a person who works and speaks in kindness in genuine love. That's what this Spirit does for us.

And so, the New Testament exhortation is: get filled up with it. Fill yourselves up with it. And that begins by filling yourself up with the word of God. But as I said before, and I want to emphasize not just knowing it, not just being able to recite a memory verse, but having it written in your heart. I'm sure you've had this experience, I can say that I have as well. That when I'm faced with a decision, the first thing that comes to my head is a scripture. When I have to do something, the first thing that comes to my mind is a verse from the Bible. Because it's written in my heart. I don't have to look it up someplace. It's in me. And because it's in me, I know what to think or what to do or what to say, doesn't mean I always do it perfectly, but it's there. And so, we need to fill ourselves up with it and that's what worship is supposed to be. That when we are filled up with this, that it pours out of us. And one of the ways it pours out of us is in worship. Paul said in Ephesians five and verse 18, "don't get drunk with wine, that's dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit." And he goes on in that famous text to talk about singing and speaking to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. When I am filled up with the Spirit of Christ my heart wants to praise God.



Paul said in Philippians three and verse three, "that we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God." We worship in the Spirit of God. It's not that the Spirit, you know, comes from outside and overtakes me or something like that. It's that when I have the Spirit of Christ in me, it wants to praise God. That's what Jesus was talking about, I think, or partly, in John seven, verse 38. He said, "that he who believes in me from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water." That it will not only fill you up, but that it will pour out of you. And remember, John said, now he said this, concerning the Holy Spirit that had not yet been given because he had not yet been glorified, but that's what was going to happen that he would fill up his people with this spirit and it would cause them to worship and it would cause them to praise God.

And so, that, I would suggest to you, my friends and brethren, is how the Spirit dwells within us. By taking this word within us, taking it deeply within us, and allowing it to create a new heart, a new mind and a new spirit within us, and to be filled up with it so that we become people of love and people who praise our God.