

One Church: One Spirit

Ephesians 4:1 through Ephesians 4:6 (NKJV)

¹I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, ²with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, ³endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴*There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

Series Introduction:

What does God have in store for Greater Friendship? What does God want to accomplish through Greater Friendship?

I cannot tell you that I have a vision for us just yet. Right now, I do know this: we won't get anywhere divided.

So this seven week series is designed to draw all of us in. We want to cross barriers. We want our hearts on one accord. We want to create singleness of purpose and unity of spirit. We must become One Church in Jesus Christ.

In Ephesians 4 Paul tells the believers about seven things that are unique in the church. We will examine each one in hopes that they will turn all of our heads in the same direction and cause our eyes to all behold the same glory of God.

Last week we began with One Church: One Body. In that message, we were encouraged to acknowledge the head. We were also encouraged to accept one another. Lastly, we were told to find our place in the body. This week, we will talk about One Church: One Spirit.

Introduction

Do you know the Holy Spirit? There is a story in Acts 19 where certain believers didn't know the Spirit existed. I'm sure that we have all been in church enough to have heard that there is a Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost as he is also called. One story or one experience can't define the person of the Holy Spirit just like one episode in our lives can't define our lives. Unfortunately, when we don't know much about the Holy Spirit, we may create our own doctrine which may be terribly false and misrepresent him to those around us.

This is not a new practice. Even in Bible times people lied on the Holy Spirit like they did in Corinth. Do you know that people actually tried to say the Holy Spirit told them to

curse Jesus? There are also people who believe the power of the Holy Spirit can be mimicked, copied, bought and sold. In Acts 8 there is a story of Simon the sorcerer who offered Peter money after he saw people receive the Holy Spirit.

So who is this Holy Spirit? Is he the Holy Ghost that mysteriously shows up some Sundays and causes people to shout? Is he the one that makes people speak in tongues like we see on television? Is he the one that makes people dance? Is he the one who is only speaking to a few people and telling them to go down to the car lot and lay hands on the car they want? Who is this Holy Spirit and is there more than one of them?

Paul says there is “**one Spirit**”. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is one of the most important in the body of Christ because of the role he plays in our faith, life, and service to God. It’s impossible for me to cover all of the doctrine of the Spirit in one sermon. So today I would like to lay a foundation of understanding for us. We will focus on three key concepts about the Holy Spirit: His Purpose, His Presence, and His Power. Then we will conclude for the day.

His Purpose

The Holy Spirit is present just like God the Father and God the Son throughout the Bible from start to finish. He was at creation according to Genesis. He inspired the prophets according to 2 Peter 1:21. He was present with God the Father and God the Son at Jesus’ baptism. And of course he was the guest of honor at the day of Pentecost. He has performed many functions throughout the ages but he has a very specific ministry to the church. The best way to understand the purpose of the Holy Spirit is to start with the introduction he is given by Jesus.

As Jesus is on this way to the garden of Gethsemane he tells his disciples he is leaving soon. But he also tells them someone else is coming to take his place among the disciples. That person is the Comforter, Holy Spirit.

John 14:15 through John 14:17 (NKJV)

¹⁵“If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—¹⁷the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

For the church, the Holy Spirit is another Helper. Jesus was our first Helper and Comforter because he helped us to get back to the Father. Today, the Holy Spirit continues this ministry to the church. He aids us in Godly living and service.

He is also the Spirit of truth. He reveals to us divine truth and later we will see that he guides us into all truth.

John 14:25 through John 14:26 (NKJV)

²⁵“These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

The Holy Spirit is our teacher. He teaches us spiritual things. He teaches us how to operate in the spirit. He teaches us how to comprehend spiritual concepts and ways of the spirit. Without him we cannot comprehend the things of the spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:13 through 1 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV)

¹³These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

Faith in God and Christianity cannot be discerned with head knowledge. Our faith cannot be rationalized and it cannot be contained in man’s limited understanding. Without the Holy Spirit, the things we do, the words we speak, and the ways of our faith are foolishness.

The Holy Spirit is also like a storehouse of knowledge. He is able to bring back to our remembrance whatever has been taught to us. In any given moment, we may need to be used by God to minister truth to others. The Holy Spirit is able to resource us with the word so we can be effective in our ministry efforts. Jesus even told his disciples in one episode that they didn’t have to worry about what they would say because the Spirit would give them the words to say in that moment.

John 15:26 through John 15:27 (NKJV)

²⁶“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. ²⁷And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit includes truth from God and the testimony of the Son. The Holy Spirit will never have us act outside of the character of God or Jesus. He will not lead us to act outside of the will of God.

The disciples knew what Jesus was like. They knew what Jesus stood for. They knew what Jesus was sent to do. So when the Holy Spirit came, they could clearly identify his ministry because he was leading them to do like Jesus did.

John 16:7 through John 16:11 (NKJV)

⁷Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. ⁸And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹of sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; ¹¹of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

The Holy Spirit is the power of conviction that leads people to repentance. He is the revealer of our eternal condition. He shows unbelievers how far they are from God and invites them to salvation in Jesus.

He is the standard of righteousness by which we must live. Jesus is not here for us to watch him and model him. So as we look at the example of Jesus in the scriptures, the Holy Spirit guides us and directs us to righteousness.

The Holy Spirit is also the standard for judgment. His holiness and his truth are so apparent that his very presence condemns the evil in our world.

John 16:12 through John 16:15 (NKJV)

¹²"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. ¹³However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. ¹⁴He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. ¹⁵All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.

The Holy Spirit guides us into all truth. **He doesn't speak on his own agenda separate from God the Father or God the Son.** He will not be contrary to the Godhead because he speaks to us on behalf of the Godhead.

He is our prophetic leader who reveals to us things that are to come. He is our praise instructor who glorifies the Son before us. The Holy Spirit declares the majesty and sovereignty of God to us. Jesus gives us a framework to help us understand the purpose for why the Spirit was sent to us. He is our comforter. He is our daily guide. He is the source of our understanding of spiritual things. He is the grounds of our truth and our very present help.

His Presence

1 Corinthians 6:19 through 1 Corinthians 6:20 (NKJV)

¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

If we have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives, the Holy Spirit of God resides within us. Just as God dwelled between the cherubim in the holiest of holies in the Old Testament temple, we too have a holy place within us where the Holy Spirit dwells.

Through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, we are never left comfortless. We are never alone. Because of the Holy Spirit the scriptures are fulfilled where Jesus says he will never leave us nor forsake us. His character, his person, his essence, is always with us in every moment of our lives.

We must therefore consider our ways. What do I mean? There are some places we need to stop taking the Holy Spirit. There are some things we need to stop doing with the Holy Spirit.

We need to stop creeping late at night and taking the Holy Spirit with us. We need to stop visiting the wrong house when people's husbands or wives are at work. We need to stop taking the Holy Spirit to the root workers and palm readers. We need to stop taking the Holy Spirit to the liquor store. We need to stop making the Holy Spirit listen to our gossip. We need to stop having the Holy Spirit stand by and watch while we steal from people.

He is right there with you when you lie on people. He is right there when you hate other people. He is right there and he knows what you did, when you did it, how you did it and who you did it with.

Consider your ways. The Holy Spirit isn't just **at** church. We **are** the church.

The ever present Holy Spirit makes our faith transcend beyond the confines of this building. The Holy Spirit doesn't just dwell at 606 Brown Street. He also resides here at the corner of Domecia and Manuel.

He resides there at James Jackson. He lives at Eucllyde Chisholm. His address is at Calvonna Myers. His residence is at Zora Turner. You can visit him at Luke Stewart. If you are looking for him, he can be found at Gwen Brown.

If you want to hang out with him, you might catch him at Matthew Miller. He likes to go fishing with England Briskey. He teaches pre-schoolers with Deborah Ellington. You may be able to find him running errands and blessing people with Mary Kimbrough. He's looking out for Sis. Perry. He's keeping Sis. Love. He's giving strength back to Sis. Wyatt. He's blessing Sis. Wheat.

He goes to work with us. He's at school with us. He rides in the car with us. He goes to the movies with us. He grocery shops with us. He pays bills with us. He watches over us when we are asleep and he heals us when we are sick. Our bodies and our spirits belong to God. We must therefore choose to glorify God in our bodies. We must lift him up and display his holiness in our daily living.

His power

The Holy Spirit has an unlimited source of power. Just as God the Father is all powerful, so is God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. His power is not an earthly power. It is a heavenly and divine power that he makes available to us here on earth. The miraculous power of the Holy Spirit is at work in every stage of our spiritual lives.

He has power to save.

1 Corinthians 12:3 (NKJV)

³Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

Our acknowledgement of Jesus as Lord happens as a result of the drawing power of the Holy Spirit. Without his revelation we wouldn't be able to confess that Jesus is Lord. Never forget, John said to as many as believed on Jesus, he gave them power to become the sons of God. That power is the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1:13 through Ephesians 1:14 (NKJV)

¹³In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

How do you know that you are saved and will be delivered to heaven? According to Ephesians 1, the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives seals us and is the guarantee of our eternal inheritance.

He has power to sanctify.

1 John 5:6 through 1 John 5:8 (NKJV)

⁶This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. ⁷For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. ⁸And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.

John says that Jesus came by water and blood. He came by the water of his birth as he was cleansed and washed for several days according to the Jewish customs. He also came by the water of baptism unto repentance that John performed. The Spirit was there to bear witness of his baptism.

Jesus also came by the cleansing blood of his sacrifice. His blood has the power to wash our sins away. John says in the earth, there are three that agree or are the same: the water that cleanses, the blood that cleanses, and the Spirit that cleanses.

The Holy Spirit has the power to cleanse us from sin. He empowers us to overcome the sins that so easily beset us. If we are going to be holy, if we are going to be sanctified or set aside, we are going to have to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit. We cannot fix ourselves. We cannot solve our eternal problem in our own strength.

If we could do it ourselves, then we didn't need a savior. God sent Jesus because we couldn't save ourselves. Jesus sent the Spirit because we needed divine power to live a life of holiness and sanctification.

He gives the power to serve.

Acts 1:4 through Acts 1:8 (NKJV)

⁴And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," *He said*, "you have heard from Me; ⁵for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ⁶Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and

you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

We have one source of miraculous power. It is the Holy Spirit. He didn't give us miraculous power just so we could have good church services. The power isn't just for good sermons and great songs. The power was given for us to serve the Lord. We are not serving the Lord from our comfortable pews.

We were given power to be witnesses. We are told to be witnesses, but we can't save anyone from spiritual death. We can't deliver anyone from hell. That is a work of the Holy Spirit's power. When we tell our story the Holy Spirit extends an invitation for the hearers to come to be saved. Sometimes people say yes and give their lives to God. Other times they say no or not yet because they enjoy darkness more than the light.

The presence of the Holy Spirit in our witness is like a hammer: it either draws a person or drives a person. When he convicts a person they may be driven away and reject his offer. But there are others who receive the same offer and are drawn out of the world and into the body of Christ.

When we exhibit the fruit of the Spirit, we display the power of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:22 through Galatians 5:23 (NKJV)

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

All of these fruit displayed in our lives can be used in service to others. They are a direct result of the power from the Holy Spirit at work in us.

1 Corinthians 12:7 through 1 Corinthians 12:11 (NKJV)

⁷But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*: ⁸for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

The Holy Spirit gives us power to do ministry. He empowers us with abilities that are beyond the limits of our humanity. He empowers us to increase the body of Christ. He empowers us to facilitate the body of Christ. He empowers us to meet the needs within the body of Christ. He empowers us to become like Christ.

There is only one church. There is only one body and there is only one Spirit.

The same spirit that brooded over the waters in Genesis is in us. The same spirit that revealed dreams to Joseph is in us. The same spirit that empowered Samson is on us. The same spirit that caused Saul to prophesy is on us. The same spirit that inspired the prophets is on us. The same spirit that impregnated Mary is in us. The same spirit that bore witness that Jesus is the son of God is within us. The same spirit that revealed to Peter that Jesus was the Christ is within us. The same spirit that raised Jesus from the grave is within us.

The same spirit that brought us up from the cotton fields is within us. The same spirit that worked in Dr. King to give us equality is within us. The same spirit that empowered our fathers to endure hardships is within us.

There is one spirit.

Conclusion:

There is one spirit in the church. Yet he manifests himself in many gifts and fruit of the spirit. He was sent from the Father to the church for a purpose. We are blessed to have his abiding presence in our lives. His very presence challenges us to consider our ways because he knows all about the things we do.

There are also many problems we are facing in these dark days that make us think it's gonna' take a miracle to turn things around. Perhaps our change won't be coming from some other source. Perhaps God is waiting for us to access the miraculous power that is already within us to bring about a change.

One church needs one spirit. We need to be able to bear witness with each other. We need to be able to trust the Holy Spirit within each other. We need to be able to minister to each other and serve one another. We must rely on one spirit to bind us together in singleness of heart and unity of purpose.