

[IN GOD'S IMAGE 60 - THE HOLY SPIRIT – SPIRITUAL GUIDE]

We have been looking at the role of the Holy Spirit as we live our new life according to the Spirit.

- ◆ Today we are going to continue to discuss the role of the Spirit as “teacher” as He instructs us on what it means to become God’s “holy people” as we live our new life.
- ◆ Last time we looked at the role the Spirit plays in the beginning of the sanctification process.

There are two aspects to the sanctifying work of the Spirit.

- ◆ The first aspect has to do with our calling, that special privilege of being called in this age and being set apart for God’s holy purposes.
- ◆ In the same way items in the tabernacle or temple of old were sanctified or set apart for God’s Holy purpose, so now as part of the New Covenant, the living stones that will make up this new temple in which God will dwell are set apart for His holy purpose.
- ◆ The ceremony of the “laying on of hands” at baptism is to signify this special status of being set apart as one of God’s holy people (Acts 8:14-18).
- ◆ We then spent quite a bit of time in Luke 15 discussing the heavenly celebrations at the return of the prodigal son.
- ◆ A new son of God has been born into God’s spiritual family.
- ◆ The birth of this new son is the culmination of the combined work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit over many millennia to fulfil their purpose of “making man in their image.”
- ◆ That’s why there is such a celebration in heaven over “one sinner who repents.”
- ◆ However this new son is not the finished product and that will not happen until he stands glorified in God’s presence.

This is where we move onto the second aspect of the sanctifying work of the Spirit, teaching the newly adopted child to live their new life according to the Spirit.

- ◆ A recap of what has transpired in the life of a new believer should give us an indication of what this process of sanctification is all about.
- ◆ The new believer has been personally chosen to be a firstfruit by God the Father, embraced by the Holy Spirit to become a living stone in God’s temple (1 Peter 2:4-5).
- ◆ He has repented and repudiated his old life lived according to the dictates of the “flesh” (Acts 2:37-38; Romans 8:5).
- ◆ He has been justified and made righteous through His acceptance of Jesus as His personal Savior.
- ◆ He has been forgiven and adopted into God’s spiritual family as a son of God (Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 4:4-7).
- ◆ He is a new creation born of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- ◆ The Holy Spirit along with the Father and the Son have come and made their home in him (John 14:23).
- ◆ All of these together confirm his salvation is a reality.
- ◆ All this has come about without any contribution on our part. Our salvation has come about purely by the grace of God.

Having been through this redeeming process, what would you expect the mindset of this new son of God to be?

- ◆ After experiencing the liberating grace of God, would it be appropriate to immediately drop back into his old sinful lifestyle or would he rather be motivated to adopt the lifestyle of his new reality?
- ◆ Think back for a moment to the parable of the prodigal son.
- ◆ After being astounded by the loving reaction of his father, does the son now turn around and commit the same mistakes all over again?
- ◆ It would be a callous and heartless way for the son to act after having experienced such forgiving love from his father.
- ◆ No, this time around, chastened by the bitter events of his past life and now having experienced the embracing love of his father, one would imagine he would try to be a better son and try his best to emulate the loving nature of his father.
- ◆ “I want to be part of my father’s loving community!”
- ◆ This is precisely the position God wants us to be in where we have made this decision not based on fear or coercion, but purely in response to the grace and love God has extended to us.
- ◆ The grace of God is a powerful force and has the ability to change one’s nature.

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- ◆ **Titus 2:11-14** For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.
- ◆ Now notice the miraculous change of nature brought about by “the grace of God.”
- ◆ **V.12** It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.
- ◆ It was the power of the father’s grace in the story of the prodigal son that brought about the son’s transformation.
- ◆ **V.13** while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.
- ◆ A Christian’s response to our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, “who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness,” is to cooperate with this process of purification.
- ◆ We should be “eager to do what is good.”
- ◆ Although we are God’s children already considered holy and righteous by our inclusion with Christ, God’s intention is to develop His divine nature of love within us.
- ◆ It is the Holy Spirit dwelling in us that brings about this transformation.
- ◆ **2 Corinthians 3:17-18** But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
- ◆ God is about more than just offering salvation. He is creating a community of people, His holy people who reflect his divine nature and character within whom He can dwell.
- ◆ It is a nature already at work in the community that is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God has His being in community, and the glue that binds this holy family together is the love that God is.
- ◆ His purpose from the beginning has been to share and extend this loving community with His creation, inviting them to be living stones in which He plans to live and share His divine life (1 Peter 2:5).
- ◆ But we have to understand this aspect of sanctification is a process the Holy Spirit leads us through as the last part of this verse confirms.

And the ideal beginning point in moving us into this holy relationship is, as we have learned with the parable of the prodigal, to experience the grace of God in a tangible way.

- ◆ **1 John 4:19** We love because he first loved us.
- ◆ Unfortunately this is not where everyone begins. Too often in the history of Christianity the beginning point is not “love” but “fear”!
- ◆ Fear of going to hell; fear of not being good enough; fear of not being one of those predestined for salvation; fear of not being raptured and so on it goes.
- ◆ Hopefully, even if this has been our experience, somewhere along the journey we mature to the point where we do respond in kind to the grace and love God has shown us and we do begin to “love because he first loved us.”
- ◆ And if we are sincere in our walk this will happen.
- ◆ Because unlike temples erected by human hands, this temple is being assembled of living stones constructed by God’s own hands.
- ◆ The Father has entrusted the construction of this temple into the capable hands of Jesus and the Holy Spirit (John 5:22; John 16:13-15).
- ◆ They will ensure a holy people who reflect the life of the Trinity are presented to the Father as a dwelling place in which He can dwell (Revelation 21:3).

To go back to God’s purpose outlined in Leviticus 26:12, the emphasis now with this aspect of the sanctification process shifts to the second part of the verse, “I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.”

- ◆ Sanctification is the work of God moving us from a life living “according to the flesh” to one of now living “according to the Spirit” (Romans 8:1-8).
- ◆ He is in effect teaching us as His adopted sons to live as God’s children.

Let’s now talk about how the Spirit goes about teaching us to take on God’s nature and live as God’s holy children.

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- ◆ The major life-changing event that has happened to us is the coming of God in the form of the Holy Spirit to live in us.
 - ◆ We may look the same on the outside, but inside is where the major transformation has taken place.
 - ◆ It is important to understand this as children of the New Covenant.
 - ◆ 1) It is the Spirit that has given us our new life in Christ.
 - ◆ ***Titus 3:5 He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.***
 - ◆ ***2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!***
 - ◆ 2) With our new life as part of the new creation comes a new nature.
 - ◆ ***2 Corinthians 3:3 You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.***
 - ◆ 3) This new nature is what allows us to now walk by and to be led by the Spirit.
 - ◆ ***Galatians 5:16-18 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.***
 - ◆ The failing of the Old Covenant was Israel's inability to live up to the righteousness of the law because of the weakness of the flesh.
 - ◆ The Spirit living in us addresses this deficiency.
 - ◆ 4) The Spirit brings us spiritual understanding as He gives us the "mind of Christ."
 - ◆ ***1 Corinthians 2:15-16 The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, ¹⁶ for, ...we have the mind of Christ.***
 - ◆ These internal changes brought about by the gift of the Spirit are to be our guide in spiritual matters under the New Covenant now that it has superseded the Old Covenant.
 - ◆ It is important to understand the primary source of change in this sanctifying process is the Holy Spirit.
 - ◆ Jesus did not leave His disciples without spiritual guidance when He ascended to heaven.
 - ◆ After all, it was Jesus who said, ***"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth."*** (John 16:13).
 - ◆ So the role of the Spirit is crucial to our new walk in Christ.
 - ◆ The Holy Spirit takes over Jesus' role in preparing disciples who are allowing God to purify them as His holy people.
- It's important to understand this point as the external guiding factor in the formation of holiness in Israel, the Torah, has been replaced by the Spirit who develops God's internal holiness on our hearts.***
- ◆ Next time, we will examine what it means to have the "mind of Christ."