

Faith -N- Focus

Adult Bible Studies

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“Pneumatology: The Work of the Spirit”

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“Pneumatology: The Work of the Spirit”

Monthly Summary

In this month of *Faith-N-Focus*, we consider the work of the Spirit, particularly in regard to salvation and victory over sin and the world. God’s Spirit is working in our lives to deliver us from the clutches of sin and evil. But how does he do this? First of all, the Spirit convicts. He causes us to see our own sinfulness and guilt. This work of the Spirit enables us to understand our need for God’s forgiveness and a Savior.

Second, the Spirit regenerates. He gives us spiritual life through faith in Jesus Christ. We are no longer “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ep. 2:1), but we have new life being born of the Spirit of God. Regeneration is therefore a spiritual transformation being brought from death to life. The born again believer is regenerated to walk in the Spirit in the newness of life.

Moreover, the Spirit sanctifies. He frees us from sin, delivering us from its power and dominion over us. As children of God, we are called to live holy lives. However, within ourselves we have no power over sin. Fortunately, God has given his Spirit to us, placing his Spirit in every believer when he is regenerated, in order to sanctify us within. Only through experiencing the sanctification of the Spirit can we be victorious over sin and the flesh.

Finally, God’s indwelling Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit in every born again believer. We are regenerated by the Spirit to walk in the Spirit. We are sanctified by the Spirit to enable us to walk in the Spirit and produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. By producing the good fruit of the Spirit, we distinguish ourselves from the world and more readily discern right and wrong.

May 6, 2018

“Convicted by the Spirit”

Main Point

Conviction is a work of the Spirit revealing one’s sin and guilt through the truth of Jesus Christ.

Introduction

Quoting from the *Abstract of Faith*: “Conviction is **a revelation to man by the Holy Ghost** of the righteous judgment of God. Through conviction, unregenerated souls see themselves as sinners before God, experience guilt, and realize their separation from Him who is holy, just, and good.” In today’s lesson, we will consider some basic observations about conviction as it relates to the work of the Holy Spirit and the mission of the church.

Key Verse

“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Ac. 2:37).

Lesson Summary

Jesus commissioned the church to proclaim the gospel throughout the world, but we are not alone in this missionary endeavor. As we declare the truth, God confirms his Word through the work of the Spirit. Jesus taught, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is *expedient* for you that I go away: for If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (Jn. 16:7-8). First of all, an essential point about conviction is that it comes by the agency of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of God reproves or convicts the world of sin. Though we play an important part in the work of conviction in proclaiming the truth (Lu. 14:23; Ja. 5:20), the Spirit is actually the one who reproves sinners by the truth we proclaim. A good example of this point is the ministry of Stephen. When he declared the truth in the power of the Spirit, his adversaries were “cut to the heart” (Ac. 6:5, 10; 7:51, 54-55). The mission of the church relies on the work of the Spirit, indicated by Jesus’ use of the word *expedient* (v. 7). Moreover, “And when he is come” defines a change, a greater dimension of the work of the Spirit through the church in the world. Jesus departed,

yet he did not leave us comfortless, without assistance, but gave his Spirit to us in order to move our missionary work forward through his conviction and reproof. Furthermore, conviction is God’s revelation in the heart of sinners, causing them to see the error of their ways. It is not merely being shamed or condemned by another. Although we can tell people that they are sinners and even shame them for their unrighteous actions, only the Holy Ghost can bring about true conviction, for it is a revelation by the Spirit whereby he shines the light of holy God into a sinner’s darkened heart (1 Jn. 1:5; Jn. 3:19). An individual’s sin and guilt must be exposed and brought to light (Ep. 5:13). Conviction is the illumination of the Spirit in the heart of sinners leading them to the truth, testifying of Jesus, and pointing them to Christ, the light of the world (Jn. 1:4, 9; 15:26; 16:13). Through the Spirit, the sinner is being drawn by the Father to the Son. Jesus taught, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him” (Jn. 6:44). Finally, Holy Ghost conviction changes an individual’s self-perception. In Acts 2:37, the Bible describes the experience of conviction as being *pricked*. Peter, full of the Holy Ghost (Ac. 2:4, 4:8), preached a dynamic message of Christ crucified and resurrected. When the Jews heard the Word of God, they were convicted – “pricked in their heart” (2:37). After listening to Peter’s witness, something changed in them. They no longer felt good about themselves (2 Co. 7:9). After the spiritual light of their soul was turned on, they saw themselves as guilty – as already condemned by God (Jn. 3:17-18). Thus true conviction by the Holy Ghost causes the sinner to wrestle with his personal, sinful condition.

Scripture Study

The agency of the Spirit – Jn. 16:7-8; Lu. 14:23; Ja. 5:20; Ac. 6:5-10; 7:51-56

The illumination of the Spirit – 1 Jn. 1:5; Jn. 3:19; Ep. 5:13; Jn. 1:4, 9; 6:44; 15:26; 16:13

Pricked by the Spirit – Ac. 2:36-37; 2 Co. 7:9; Jn. 3:17-18

Conclusion

The mission of the church cannot be accomplished without the conviction of the Holy Ghost. Our effectiveness in winning souls to Christ depends on his reproof. We should therefore seek to be filled with the Holy Ghost, declaring Christ and the Word of God, in order to illuminate sinners with God’s truth.

May 13, 2018
“Regenerated by the Spirit”

Main Point

Regeneration is a work of the Spirit raising a sinner from spiritual death to spiritual life through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Introduction

Regeneration (“born again,” Jn. 3:3) is a word that conveys the idea of a “new beginning.” We seldom use this word in casual conversation, but we use other words that essentially communicate the basic concept of regeneration. For example, he *restored* the antique furniture; he hired the contractor to *renovate* his home; she *renewed* her driver’s license; and the doctor *revived* her patient. When people die, they are sometimes *resuscitated* or brought to life again. Fallen man is spiritually dead, but God has provided the way in Christ for all who believe to be brought to life again – to be spiritually restored to new life or regenerated by the Spirit of God.

Key Verse

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (Jn. 3:6).

Lesson Summary

When Adam was created, “the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Ge. 2:7). Of course, Satan deceived Eve; she ate the forbidden fruit, and in turn, Adam also ate and disobeyed the Lord’s commandment. The results were physical and spiritual death. Reflecting on Adam’s disobedience and rebellion against God, the apostle Paul explained humanity’s sin condition and its consequences, saying, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Ro. 5:12). Because of sin, mankind inherited the physical penalty of death (Ge. 2:17), but also experienced the greater consequence and judgment of spiritual death, being “dead in trespasses and sins” and “by nature the children of wrath” (Ep. 2:1, 3; Ja. 1:15). Regeneration is God’s solution to this problem of spiritual

death. Jesus explained it to Nicodemus in terms of being “born again” (Jn. 3:1-8). The Spirit quickens or gives spiritual life in Christ (Jn. 6:63; 11:25; Ro. 8:5-6, 10-11; 1 Co. 15:45). By the Spirit of God, a sinner is born again by faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, whereby he becomes a child of God and “is passed from death unto life” (Jn. 3:6-7; 5:24; Col. 2:12-13). Being brought from death to life is a spiritual transformation – a radical change in the heart of the believer producing a translation from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God (Jn. 3:3, 5; Col. 1:13). For this reason, the apostle Paul wrote, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Co. 5:17). Clearly, regeneration means a completely new life in Christ – a fresh, new beginning in the Lord. Thus after we are regenerated by the Spirit, we should “walk in the newness of life” in the Spirit (Ro. 6:4; 8:1, 4; Ga. 5:25), not walking after the sinful desires of the flesh (Ga. 5:16).

Scripture Study

Spiritual death – Ge. 2:7, 17; Ro. 5:12; Ep. 2:1, 3; Ja. 1:15

Spiritual life – Jn. 3:3, 5-7; 5:24; 6:63; 11:25; Ro. 8:5-6, 10-11; 1 Co. 15:45; Col. 1:13; 2:12-13

Living in the Spirit – 2 Co. 5:17; Ro. 6:4; 8:1, 4; Ga. 5:16, 25

Conclusion

The spiritual evidence of a regenerated life is the fruit of the Spirit (Ga. 5:22-23; Ep. 5:9-10). Simply put, when a person accepts Jesus Christ as his Savior, his life will change. The way he talks and behaves will be transformed even as his soul has been transformed by the Spirit. However, one should keep in mind that regeneration is not the same as sanctification. The only way a believer can continue to experience victory and power over sin is through the crucifixion of sinful flesh (Ro. 6:6). Indeed, Jesus also shed his blood for our sanctification; every child of God should embrace this by faith.

May 20, 2018

“Sanctified by the Spirit”

Main Point

Sanctification is a work of the Spirit delivering a believer from the power and dominion of sin.

Introduction

The essential idea in sanctification is holiness – being set apart from sin and unrighteousness. God’s will for every believer is sanctification (1 Th. 4:3). Since we are called to be holy in Christ, God wants every child of God to conduct himself in purity and honor (vv. 4, 7). This is a part of our “high calling” in Christ (Ph. 3:14; He. 12:14). However, though we are called to be sanctified and set apart to God, man cannot free himself from the power and dominion of sin. Only God can do this for us and in us. In today’s lesson, we will see that the Holy Spirit is the one who sanctifies the believer and delivers him from the grip of sin.

Key Verse

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Ro. 8:13).

Lesson Summary

As followers of Christ, we must not yield ourselves to sin (Ro. 6:1-2; Ep. 4:26-27). Sin should never reign in our lives and dominate us (Ro. 6:12-14). The apostle Paul declared, “for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness” (v. 19). Clearly, the responsibility to be holy and separate from sin falls upon our shoulders. But we ourselves have no innate power to cease from sin. In fact, man’s fallen nature is prone to sin (6:20; 7:14-20). In response to this dilemma, Paul taught the flesh-Spirit conflict that must be resolved in the life of every believer (Ro. 8:4-9, 12-14; Ga. 5:16-17, 24-25). Since the Spirit and flesh work against each other, the flesh with its sinful desires and works must be put to death, crucified, or mortified (Ga. 5:19-21, 24). This second definite work of God’s grace is called sanctification. Fortunately, God provided the way for a Christian to be sanctified and delivered

from the sinful flesh when he deposited his Spirit within him in regeneration (Ga. 5:16, 25; Ro. 8:9). On this basis of the indwelling Spirit, the apostle Paul implored the church at Thessalonica to live in a manner pleasing to God and consistent with the Spirit of holiness (1 Th. 4:1-8). In fact, to resist holiness is to resist the Holy Spirit abiding in us (v. 8). Accordingly, regeneration by the Spirit to new life in Christ anticipates and expects sanctification by the Spirit unto holiness. The Word of God teaches the difference between sin and righteousness (Ro. 6:13), between carnal and spiritual (Ro. 8:6), and between iniquity and holiness (Ro. 6:19). Moreover, the Word of God teaches the way of freedom and deliverance from sin through faith in the blood of Jesus Christ (Ac 26:18; He. 13:12). In brief, when we accept God's will for our sanctification (1 Th. 4:3) and embrace God's provision of sanctification by faith in Christ, we can both expect and experience the sanctifying grace of God in our lives. The Spirit indwelling the believer provides the agency of God's power and deliverance from sin. By the work and enablement of the Spirit in our lives, we are sanctified in Christ in order to put to death the sinful deeds of the flesh and live holy (Ro. 15:16; 1 Co. 6:11; 1 Pe. 1:2; 2 Th. 2:13; Ro. 8:13; 2 Co. 7:1; Ro. 12:1).

Scripture Study

The flesh-Spirit dilemma – Ro. 6:1-2, 12-14, 19-20; 7:14-20; 8:4-9, 12-14; Ga. 5:16-17, 24-25

Called to holiness – 1 Th. 4:1-8; Ro. 6:13; Ro. 8:6; Ro. 6:19

Sanctified by the Spirit – Ro. 15:16; 1 Co. 6:11; 1 Pe. 1:2; 2 Th. 2:13; Ro. 8:13; 2 Co. 7:1; Ro. 12:1

Conclusion

When we come to Jesus Christ as Savior and are born again, the conflict of the flesh and Spirit indwelling us must be resolved. The Spirit that regenerates us to new life also compels us to be sanctified – to be made holy. God will not allow a believer to continue sinning, but will by his Spirit sanctify the inner man and empower him to live holy and victorious over sin and unrighteousness.

May 27, 2018

“Fruit of the Spirit”

Main Point

Bearing the good fruit of the Spirit is essential to discerning both right and wrong.

Introduction

Have you ever bought a bag of fruit that looked ripe and delicious only to discover later that one piece was bad? You examined the fruit thoroughly when you made the purchase, but you could not see the inner rottenness. After a couple of days, what was hidden became self-evident. Perhaps, you noticed the obvious dark, mushy spot or maybe you smelled the curious odor when you examined it. Like the old saying goes, “One bad apple can spoil the whole bushel,” so you threw it out before it corrupted the rest. Suffice it to say, when you are ready to take a bite, picking out good fruit is essential, and recognizing bad fruit is just as important. In today’s lesson, we will consider the role of the fruit of the Spirit in the Christian life.

Key Verse

“For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth” (Ep. 5:9).

Lesson Summary

In Matthew 7:15-23, Jesus warned of false prophets who appear to be sheep when in fact they are wolves ready to devour unsuspecting souls. Not every minister who proclaims Jesus Christ is a true prophet of God (vv. 22-23). Likewise, not everyone who professes to know God and follow Christ is a genuine Christian (v. 21). For this reason, Jesus said, “Beware” (Mt. 7:15). Although we should avoid suspicion in our relationships, particularly within the church, we should not be spiritually naïve, but rather discerning. We can recognize false brethren by their fruits, because a good tree bears good fruit and a corrupt tree bears evil fruit (vv. 16-17). In fact, “a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit” (v. 18). Therefore, a tree, good or bad, is known by the fruit it produces (v. 20). The truth of God’s word will always reveal and bring to light. Though at the first recognizing deception

can be difficult, in time the bad fruit will become self-evident as we continue to walk in the light of the Truth of God’s Word and Spirit (Ep. 5:6-13; 1 Jn. 4:1). The light of God’s Truth reveals and exposes “things which are done of them in secret” (Ep. 5:11-13). A child of God does not walk in sin and unrighteousness, but he produces the good fruit of the Spirit because he is born of the Spirit (1 Jn. 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:4, 18). As a child of God walks in the light manifesting the fruit of the Spirit, he will recognize deception. What is the good fruit that the Spirit produces in the life of a true believer? In his writings, the apostle Paul made a sharp distinction between what we were without Christ and who we are in Christ (Ep. 2:1-22). In Christ we are no longer servants of sin, but being free from it and now serving the Lord, we have our “fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life” (Ro. 6:22). The fruit of the Spirit is holiness and righteousness: separation from sin and set apart to God. The fruit of the Spirit aligns to all that is good, right, and true (Ep. 5:9). Specifically, Paul identified the fruit of the Spirit as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Ga. 5:22-23). Though we cannot save ourselves by our own efforts, we are saved by the grace of God to produce good works that please the Lord (Ep. 2:10). Our good works attest that we are God’s workmanship, a new creature in Christ Jesus (v. 10; 2 Co. 5:17).

Scripture Study

Good or bad fruit – Mt. 7:15-23

Recognizing deception – Ep. 5:6-13; 1 Jn. 2:29; 3:9; 4:1, 7; 5:4, 18

The good fruit – Ro. 6:22; Ep. 5:9; Ga. 5:22-23; Ep. 2:10; 2 Co. 5:17

Conclusion

A tree is known by its fruit, good or bad. As we walk in the Spirit, we exhibit the fruit of the Spirit and establish ourselves as true children of God. When we bear the good fruit, we distinguish ourselves from all that is bad in the world, enabling us to discern between good and bad, right and wrong, and truth and error.