TITLE: The Work of the Holy Spirit

TEXT: Jn. 17:20-26, 1:29-34; Acts 2:1-6 & 1:8, 2:22-24, 2:37-41;

Jn. 3:13-17; 1 Co. 12:7-13

INTRODUCTION: Last week we talked about the triune God.

Triune meaning tree in one. In the completeness and totality of God we find three distinct persons or personalities—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

An Illustration that I used last week to help us get our finite minds around this concept of a Triune God was this:

*-- T. Watson*

*The three persons in the blessed Trinity are distinguished, but not divided; three substances, but one essence.*

This morning I want to talk more fully about the third person of the Trinity.. And that is God the Holy Spirit. Because His workings seem more mystical and more secretive the Holy Spirit, I think, is more difficult for us to get our finite minds around then the other two persons of the Trinity, God the Father and God the Son.

This morning we will talk more specially about the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

But first I want to go and look at a prayer that Jesus prayed.

This, in my opinion, is the most important and significant prayer of Jesus in Scripture because it is a prayer that Jesus prayed specifically for you and for me.

Do you realize that Jesus has actually prayed for you personally? There is a prayer that Jesus prayed with you and I in mind?

After Jesus has just prayed for His disciples He goes on…

**John 17:20 - 26 (NIV) 20“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,  21that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.**

**May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.  22I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:  23I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. 24“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. 25“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me.  26I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”**

This prayer that Jesus prayed for us here is packed with reference to a triune God. It also tells us the primary purpose of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives..

So we will spend some time dissecting this prayer of Jesus this morning…

First Jesus says…

**20“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message…**

OK, just who is Jesus referring to here when He says: **Those who will believe in Me through their message?**

Jesus was referring to you and I and every other person who has come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ from hearing the Gospel message that originated through these original disciples of Christ that walked with Jesus when He was here…..

Now listen to what Jesus prays for us!

**21that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.**

Jesus prayer for us is that we may be one as God the Father and God the Son are one! Jesus said: **Father, just as you are in Me and I am in You may they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me!**

What is to be the earthly evidence that Jesus is who He claimed to be? The evidence that will proclaim that truth to our world is your and my unity or oneness with the father and the Son..

**21that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.**

Our union or oneness with the Father and the Son is the witness to the world in which we live that will bring them to believe that Jesus was sent by the Father...

Jesus then goes on to tell how this unity with the Father and the Son takes place….

**22I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:  23I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.**

**22I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:**

What is the Glory that the Father gave the Son that the Son desires to give us? What is the Glory that we are given that we may become one as they are one?

What Glory is Jesus talking about?

The Glory that Jesus was talking about was the Glory of the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit is the glue, the bonding agent of the triune God!..

When Jesus was just about to begin His public ministry He goes to John the Baptist who is baptizing in the Jordan River and what is it that happens?

**John 1:29 - 34 (NIV) 29The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!  30This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’  31I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.” 32Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him.  33I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ 34 I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.”**

What is it that caused John to recognize Jesus as the Son of God?

The Holy Spirit descending upon Him like a dove!

The Holy Spirit was the Glory that Jesus was referring to that Jesus said he had received from the father that He would pass on to us!

The Holy Spirit is the thread that ties the Father to the Son and it is the thread that ties us to the Son and the Father.

**21that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.**

**22I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:  23I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.**

The Holy Spirit not only brings unity between the Father and the Son but the same Holy Spirit is what unites us to the Father and the Son so that we can be brought into complete unity with them!

Jesus said:

**22I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:  23I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity!**

The Holy Spirit then is He who brings us into complete unity with the triune God…

And this tells us the purpose of the Holy Spirit in our life…

To not just bring us into unity with the Father and the Son but to bring us into complete unity with the Father and the Son!

So how will we know if we are in complete unity with the triune God? That we are in fact one as they are one?

The evidence of the work and purpose of the Holy Spirit indwelling our life is found in Acts Chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost.

Do you understand the significance of what happened on the day of Pentecost?

The Three primary things that happened at Pentecost were this:

#1 The great purpose of Pentecost was to give the final proof of the fact that Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of the world..

#2 The second thing is that Pentecost was the great inauguration of the Church into His body..

It was the fulfillment of the promise that Jesus had made in His prayer for us when he said:

**22I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:  23I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity!**

Pentecost is when the Holy Spirit came down to indwell the Church and bring about the unity with the Father and the Son that Jesus had talked about.

#3. Pentecost was to empower the Church to do what the Church has been called to do---Continue the earthly mission and ministry of Jesus the Son!

**Acts 2:1 - 6 (NIV) 1When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.  2Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.  3They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.  4All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. 5Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.  6When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language.**

Up until this time the Church, numbering approximately 120 at this time in history, had been gathered together waiting for the promised Holy Spirit that Jesus said that he would send to them after he assented to Heaven.

Jesus had told them not to depart from the city until they had received the Holy Spirit which He would send to them..

Just before He ascended Jesus had told them the purpose of the Holy Spirit’s coming…

**Acts 1:8 (NIV) 8But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

Jesus said that the purpose of the Holy Spirit indwelling our life was for a very specific reason…

To empower us to become His witnesses within our world!

What was the immediate result of Pentecost?

The Church was empowered to preach the gospel and witness Christ!

The first scene that we have after the Church was filled with the Holy Spirit we have Peter get up and preach the Gospel to the crowd in a powerful way.

Peter, the un-educated fisherman, the one who always seemed to put a size 12 foot in a size 10 mouth, the one who just weeks earlier had ran in fear after Jesus arrest in the garden and then denied even knowing who Jesus was three times in one night because of fear of identifying himself with Jesus….

Now Peter stands up before the crowd, many of whom were probably a part of the crowd that cried for Christ to be crucified, and boldly says this in:

**Acts 2:22 - 24 (NIV) 22“Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.  23This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.  24But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.**

What on the earth had come over Peter here? What enabled him to be so bold, so fearless in addressing this crowd?

**and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.**

What on the earth had come over Peter? Nothing on earth had come over him--Something from heaven had just come over Him! The Holy Spirit of God had just come into him..

Listen to the result of this first sermon preached after being filled with the power of the Holy Spirit….

**Acts 2:37 - 41 (NIV) 37When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” 38Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

**39The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” 40With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”  41Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.**

3000 souls were saved from this one presentation of the Gospel after the Church’s inauguration into the literal body of Christ by being filled with the Holy Spirit!

And this tells us the primary purpose of the Holy Spirit in our lives..

To empower us to witness Jesus within our world so that they might be saved…

The purpose of the Holy Spirit was not found in what was like tongues of fire falling upon men.

The purpose of the Holy Spirit wasn’t found in men being able to speak in other tongues-in languages that they had never learned!

Those where vehicles of the Spirit, manifestations of the Spirit, but they were not the purpose of the Spirit..

The purpose of the Holy Spirit was what happened as a result of the Holy Spirit’s impact upon those who received Him….. 3000 men, women and children were saved that day! 3000 souls escaped the torment of hell and were added to the Body of Christ!

A day or two later Peter and John share the Gospel message and it says another 5000 men came to believe in Jesus as their Lord and savior because of it…

The primary purpose of the Holy Spirit is to bring us into oneness with the Father and the Son!

If we are truly one with the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit then our primary purpose in life will become the same as theirs! To seek to save the lost! To minister and proclaim Jesus to others who don’t know Him..

How can we know this? Because that is what Jesus life was all about. Seeking to save the lost..

**John 3:16 - 17 (NIV) 16“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.  17For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.**

The purpose of the Father sending the Son was to bring salvation to the world…

The purpose of the Son’s coming and dying on a cross was to bring salvation to the world…

The purpose of the Holy Spirit coming to indwell our hearts is to empower us to bring salvation to the world…

That is what Jesus prayed for us!

**Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe!**

**23I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.**

**26I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”**

Why? So that we can fulfill His earthly mission of seeking and saving the lost…

-- Steven B Borst,

*In the early 1990s, the University of Michigan boasted what many commentators believed to be the top five basketball players in the country. This quintet was quickly dubbed the "Fab Five," and talk of four successive NCAA championships dominated the sports section of newspapers. History, however, proved otherwise. While superstars in their own right, they never meshed as a team.*

*None of the "Fab Five" ever won one championship because even though they we individually very gifted and talented they never learned the importance and necessity of being a team player…*

The apostle Paul faced a similar situation in the city of Corinth. The church he had previously started there was deeply divided by strife and jealousy. Those blessed with certain spiritual gifts felt superior to those whose gifts seemed more "average." Others acted in blatant disregard to those around them, oblivious to the effect their words and actions had on others.

That's why Paul wrote his letter to the Corinthians. He calls them back to loving God with their whole hearts, and strengthening and supporting their neighbors as themselves. He drills his point home by using an analogy for the church:

**1 Corinthians 12:7 - 13 (NIV) 7Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.  8To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,  9to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,  10to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.  11All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. 12The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.  13For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.**

I believe that God gifts His Church with spiritual gifts.

Some of the gifts given are for our personal edification to help build us up and draw us into close communion with the Father and the Son. Give us that sense of oneness and union with the triune God!

Some of the spiritual gifts God gives us are for the mutual building up and edification as His Body to draw us all into closer fellowship and communion with the Father and the Son and give us that sense of oneness and union with the triune God…

But all Spiritual gifts that God gives primary and ultimate purpose is to equip we, His Church, to do what we have been called to do and that is to witness Christ to our world!.. Empower us, embolden us, to seek and save the lost!

Example:I read about a man who got so caught up in the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that he forgot the purpose of his giftedness….

He left the particular Church he had attended for years because he felt that the gifts were not being manifest enough…. It was said that People would go to the alter and receive Christ regularly…The lost were being reached and saved both from within the Church and through the Body’s influence outside of the Church and yet this man felt that the Holy Spirit was not in operation there!

Excuse me but isn’t that THEE manifestation of the Spirit’s presence! Souls being saved! Isn’t that thee primary work of the Holy Spirit and thee primary calling of the Church!

The gifts of God are all wonderful and special and powerful things….

But they are given for the sole purpose of continuing the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ and that ministry is one of seeking and saving the lost of this world.

The reason the gifts had become divisive and disruptive in the Church at Corinth was because the people who had been blessed and entrusted with them had lost sight of that fact. Blessings, gifts that God intended to bring about unity and oneness had become things that were bringing about division and disharmony…

People had started to worship the gifts instead of the giver of the gifts….

The Holy Spirit’s ministry is to bring about unity within the body of Christ and to equip us, empower us to continue the ministry of Jesus of seeking to save the lost.

Jesus said:

**22I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:  23I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me!**

Whatever gift you have been given by God this morning it is a special gift of God to you and its purpose is to help you to become one with the Father and the Son and His Body the Church and help empower and encourage you to fulfill your calling and commission to witness Christ to your world….Your calling to continue the ministry of Jesus in seeking to save the lost….

*Richard Wilton ….*

*Come, Holy Dove,*

*Descend on silent pinion,*

*Brood o'er my sinful soul*

*with patient love,*

*Till all my being owns Thy mild*

*dominion.*

*Spirit of grace,*

*Reveal in me my Saviour,*

*That I may gaze upon His mirrored Face,*

*Till I reflect it in my whole behaviour.*

Are you thankful for the workings of the Holy Spirit in your life this morning?

Are you allowing Him to do His intended work in your life?

Draw you into oneness with the Father and the Son and empower you to witness Christ unto your world and fulfill the calling and ministry we each have been given to seek and save the lost!