

JESUS, OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST; THE HOLY SPIRIT, OUR COMFORTER

Week 10 – The Spirit Searches the Deep Things of God

November 14, 2023

Acts 7:59-60 - *And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'* ⁶⁰ *Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not charge them with this sin.'* And when he had said this, he fell asleep (to be quieted, to be calm, to be at peace). Might Stephen, filled with the Spirit, been given by the Holy Spirit a special readiness for battle, and a deep-seated peace as he was being stoned, while also expressing compassion and asking God to not charge those so angrily ending his life on earth with this sin.

WHY are we given the Spirit? As One Who comes alongside, “another Comforter” - “just like Myself” - just like Jesus! The Spirit is given to us to comfort, to counsel, to intercede for us...to guide us into all truth...to speak of what He hears...to tell us things to come...to glorify Jesus. The Spirit of truth will reveal Jesus to us!

Paul's arrival in Corinth is described in Acts 18. The church in Corinth was founded by Paul on his second missionary journey. Paul's ministry, as usual, began in the synagogue where he was assisted by two Jewish believers, Priscilla and Aquila, who were tentmakers by trade, like Paul. Paul ministered in Corinth for more than a year and a half. It is thought that I Corinthians was written on Paul's third missionary journey.

I Cor. 2:1 - *And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God.*

Paul did not come displaying his wisdom. Paul came as a witness ...declaring the testimony of God. The Holy Spirit had regenerated Paul and he experienced a transformation that changed the entire direction of his life. So transformed was Paul that he traveled to serve God among people who were impressed with worldly demonstrations of human wisdom.

I Cor. 2:2-3 - *For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.* ³ *I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.* And this is when the Spirit of God intercedes – when we are desperate for Him!

I Cor. 2:4-5 – *And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom...but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,* ⁵ *that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.* The power of the Holy Spirit ignited Paul and his message of life to the people!

Paul, having spoken of “the demonstration of the Spirit and of power,” continues...

I Cor. 2:7-8 – ...*we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery* (which can only be known by God's revelation; truths of God which had been hidden in the past), *the hidden wisdom* (having been previously concealed) *which God ordained* (appointed beforehand; decided from eternity past)

before the ages for our glory, ⁸ which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Paul, beginning with a quote from Isa. 64:4, spoke of the Spirit's "searching" ministry...

I Cor. 2:9-11 - *But, as it is written...Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. ¹⁰ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of*

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God. ¹¹ *For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.* God's wisdom is not discovered from human sources. God's wisdom is revealed to us through the Holy Spirit! The Spirit of God knows the things of God! He resides within believers, not to be dormant and passive, but to be actively engaged in revealing God's hidden wisdom.

Rom. 11:33 - *Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!*

It appears that the Spirit of God searches the deepest depths of the wisdom of God to lift out truths from Scripture that we need to know and to understand...and to reveal them to us – we who are believers...Jesus' followers.

I Cor. 2:12 - *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God (from Scripture) that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God – the things that are recorded in Scripture. (Deut. 29:29 - those things which are revealed belong to us....).* The Spirit of God is fully equipped to reveal God's wisdom, having searched the deep things of God! The Holy Spirit illuminates God's Word (Eph. 1:17-20). (I Pet. 1:10-12 – The OT prophets studied their own writings about the sufferings and the glories of the Messiah.)

Regarding our experience in life as we walk in the Spirit, have you found this to be true...when you're in a situation and there's no way of escape...the Holy Spirit makes the way.

During times of loss and much grief, the Spirit of God is there to give us insight by bringing to mind Biblical principles/the truths of God into such pain...and He comforts us.

When we encounter unknown waters, the Spirit of God is alongside. II Tim. 1:7 - *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*

The Holy Spirit lives within us to reveal, to teach, to direct.

When you believe God has given you the answer re: a decision for which you have been praying, waiting on God, and searching Scripture...and others think you're foolish. But you

know that the Holy Spirit is directing you in your decision...that He has given you His wisdom, conviction and knowledge. Upon what did you act?

When Paul departing from the leaders in Ephesus. Paul told them...

Acts 20:22-23 - *And see, now I go bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.* It appears that, because of the confidence Paul is expressing in this passage, that he is bound by the Holy Spirit...not tied up in knots. Paul was surrounded/encompassed by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Supernaturally, the Spirit communicated with Paul's spirit as the Spirit "testified" to Paul what was to transpire...that in every city chains and tribulations/afflictions would occur. And, Paul was confident! The Spirit does not always lead us into places of comfort,,and so, Jesus promised the Comforter to believers. At times God leads us into a difficult place to serve as His representative.

Acts 20:24 - *But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.* I'm thinking that this is a preliminary prompting of the Holy Spirit with us. The Holy Spirit also gave Paul confidence which was an assurance! What we're understanding in this example of the Apostle Paul is the supernatural way in which fear flees when the Holy Spirit communicates His presence and gives us His incredible power!

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The Spirit of God takes the things of God and communicates them to believers – in whom He dwells. Let's look at I Cor. 2:12 again with the addition of I Cor. 2:13...

I Cor. 2:12-13 - *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. ¹³ These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual or perhaps, spiritual things with spiritual persons...* those who have the Holy Spirit dwelling within. Since every believer has the Spirit of God dwelling within them, every believer has access to God's wisdom. This does not mean every believer has equal spiritual wisdom.

Might we then consider that by the Spirit's "combining spiritual (from God) thoughts with spiritual (from God) words," He is leading us into new (to us) and unexpected (to us) territory. The promptings of the Holy Spirit can be unexpected and spontaneous. As we continue to walk in the Spirit as we are told to do, He gives us growing confidence as He provides the wisdom and the strength, based on God's word that we will need to face what lies ahead.

Promptings from the Holy Spirit

- In times of loneliness and desperation, the Spirit prompts hope and encouragement.

I Kings 19 – Elijah who experienced a powerful victory through the fire of God falling on the prophets of Baal, ran for his life when Jezebel, the wicked wife of King Ahab, threatened Elijah's life. Deep in the woods, in a moment of desperation, Elijah sat down under a tree and asked the Lord to take his life. He was full of self-pity and disillusionment.

I Kings 19:5-9 - *an angel touched him, and said to him, 'Arise and eat.'*⁶ *Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again.*⁷ *And the Angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, 'Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you.'*⁸ *So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.*⁹ *And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?'*

Our gracious God didn't shame Elijah nor did He rebuke Elijah. God ministered to His servant...

I Kings 19:11-12 – God spoke to Elijah, *'Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD.'* *And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake;*¹² *and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.* No additional details.

But, we know that God connected with Elijah. Soon after his encounter with God, Elijah wrapped himself in his mantle and moved out of the cave. He didn't run from God...Elijah moved toward God. I'm suggesting that these 3 phenomenon of creation announced the arrival of the Lord (Psa. 18:7-15) – God's still small voice. God, at times, quietly, without our perceiving Him, does His work to accomplish His purposes. Are we listening? Are we accepting what God reveals to us?

Sometimes God's most meaningful touch on our lives comes when we are alone. Isa. 46:10 – *Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.*

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- In times of threatening fears, the Spirit prompts calm determination and courage.
Acts 20:22-24
- In times of times of potential danger and disaster, the Spirit prompts inner reassurance.
Acts 27:21-44
- In times of great sorrow and pain, the Spirit ministers grace to us.
II Cor. 12:7-8 – *And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.*⁸ *Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.* Paul asked God for relief...relief didn't come. On three separate occasions Paul prayed that God would take away the pain. All three times the answer was no.
II Cor. 12:9 – God communicated to Paul's inner spirit that brought Paul enormous relief...
And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in

weakness. 'Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

When the Spirit of God ministers grace, He prompts within us divine strength... which can turn our pain into a means by which God powerfully shows up and displays His power!

Accessing God's Wisdom

There is a difference between “earthly wisdom” and the “wisdom that comes from above” (James 3:14–18). To access God's wisdom, we must desire it and ask God for it. *If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you*” (James 1:5). The next verse states that we must *ask in faith, nothing wavering* (James 1:6).

True wisdom comes from God and Jesus is the embodiment of that wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:30 - *But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption*) To trust in Christ and yield to His Holy Spirit is to walk in wisdom; as believers, *we have the mind of Christ* (1 Corinthians 2:16). (Jn. 14:26 – the Holy Spirit brings to remembrance what Jesus taught while on earth; Jn. 16:13 - ... *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.*** Is this speaking of the communication within the Godhead? Is this speaking of the Holy Spirit illuminating/enlightening us re: end times as based on the word of God?

To have the “fear of the LORD” is to be in awe of God and to exalt Him because of Who He is... and to trust His character and His word and to live accordingly.

To access God's wisdom, we must walk in the Spirit, seek God's wisdom, diligently study and meditate on God's Word (II Timothy 2:15). God desires to give His wisdom to His children. Are we willing to be led by that wisdom?

QUESTIONS: What impacted you? What is your takeaway? How will you then live?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK: Reread Week 10 with the Bible references. Consider and ask God _____ . Share with others. During the break _____