

Spirit Given

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Date: 13 October 2013

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[0 : 00] I like this evening for a little while just to look at the role, at least part of the role that the Holy Spirit has in our salvation and in our lives.

And that is hugely significant for us. God the Father has an integral role to play in our salvation as has God the Son.

God so has God the Holy Spirit. They are all involved intimately in rescuing us and enabling us to live the Christian life.

And I think Christianity is unique at that level in that not only is it that God comes to us and God shares with us himself, but actually God indwells us.

So God lives in this amazing passage where Jesus is speaking and there is quite some quite miraculous and quite mysterious and quite difficult things in what he says.

[1 : 07] But we have got this reality that Jesus Christ in the person of his Holy Spirit comes and the Holy Spirit lives in Christians.

That means that right away Christianity is not just a cerebral religion. It is not just a philosophy. It is not just a way of living.

It is not just something we choose to believe. However important all these aspects are, it is a miracle. It is that God comes and lives and breathes spiritual life into us and lives in us.

And we, as it were, and obviously you have got to be careful I think how you term this, so we become part of God's life and God becomes part of our lives.

And the great thing about that is that we are intimately linked, intimately united through the indwelling of God's Spirit to God forever.

[2 : 12] We are so linked with God that as long as God lives we will live. And because God is the author of life, he will always live and therefore we will always live.

Our life force, our life blood, our spiritual life, our new life in Christ is a life that will never end. Now in many ways that is a mind blowing fact but it is a hugely significant fact for us.

So we have life and we have power to live as Christians because God's Spirit dwells in us and he brings us to life. He enables us to love God and to love one another.

Now I am going to use quite a lot of different texts this evening so I am hoping that they will come up on the screen and that is the first one that we are going to look at which just by way of introduction reminds us of that same kind of picture where Jesus says on the last and greatest day of the festival Jesus stood up and said in the loud voice let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.

Whoever believes in me, a scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them. So there is this idea that spiritual life will flow from believers because we have slaked our thirst on the Lord Jesus Christ and have been given life by the Holy Spirit.

[3 : 32] So the Spirit of God in us is often linked to this whole concept of living water that comes from us and we know that that is a great illustration because living water is essential.

And it is essential to life, isn't it? Water is essential to life. Pure refreshing glorious water.

Now we take it, we are granted, we can see water any day of the week, it pours out of our taps, it is kind of plain and ordinary and dull in many ways for us. But without water we would not be able to live now, we often sometimes prefer the taste of impurity whether it is tea or coffee or coke or milkshakes or whatever it is.

But it is pure refreshing water that is essential to life and if people find huge resources of water in places of drought then they are on to a fortune because water is what is life giving and water is what we need.

And if we are genuinely thirsty in our lives, physically speaking, there is nothing like water to quench our thirst.

[4 : 51] And if we, God forbid, if we ever find ourselves in a situation where we are dying of thirst, it will be water that will restore life to us and that will enable us to be refreshed and to enjoy that feeling of life coursing through our veins again.

And that is a great illustration because we are to strive in our lives to develop and recognise the importance of having a genuine appetite for the living water that God offers to us, that we recognise the essential nature of the Spirit of God in our lives giving us life and enabling us to live and giving us the power and the authority to live our Christian lives.

And so we recognise that our Christian lives need the Holy Spirit. It is essential to our life. We are not Christians unless we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit in dwelling is not a truth for the elite Christians or for only some Christians.

It is for every single believer the gift of the Holy Spirit who comes into our lives. And he is given to us by Jesus Christ and it is essential to our salvation that we recognise that, that we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

[6 : 21] In verses 17 and 18 of the chapter that we read, we are given that truth, that the Spirit of the world cannot accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him, but you know him for he lives in you and will be with you.

I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you. Isn't that interesting? He says, Jesus says, I will come to you. I am not going to leave you as orphans, but I am going to give you, it is my spirit.

There is this kind of paradoxical teaching of the individual persons of the Godhead, but almost used interchangeably by Jesus who says he is not going to leave them as orphans, but he will come, but it will be the counsellor, it will be the Holy Spirit who will come and live in Christians.

1 Corinthians 3, 16 says, Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? You have got that whole great picture again that takes us from the Old Testament and reminds us of God who lived with his people in the Holy of Holies in the Old Testament and wherever they went they took the tabernacle with them because it spoke to them of the presence of God with them and now he says, well, now our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit so wherever we go, whatever we do, we have this stupendous fact of God's presence with us, that God's Spirit dwells in us, that we are now changed, that today you are now able not to sin in a way that you weren't able to do before because you have God's Spirit in you in the same way that Jesus Christ had God's Spirit in him and he was able, as we saw this morning, to resist temptation, to overcome suffering, to be obedient to the Father so we can do these things.

We can love God, we can overcome temptation, we can be obedient in suffering and we can learn to do the Father's will because of the Spirit of God who lives in us and we can deal with these things and we can be changed characters so that we live our lives, so you live your life and you look at your parents and you see the characteristics that you gain from your parents and you say, that's what I'm like and I can't change that and there could be a kind of fatalism within that in our lives so that we think, well, we can't change the fact that we're kind of grumpy or bad tempered or we're impatient or whatever it might be and God says, no, you can change, you can change to be, you can be molded to become like me because I have this work within you to transform you and to make you Christ like and to make you graceful and there's not this fatalism in our lives but we can be changed to become like Jesus because of this life giving power within us that we are the temple of God's spirit. God's spirit dwells in us so that we become like Christ in the way that

He obeyed His Father and was the perfect Son. It's absolutely essential to us. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me, the life I now live in the body I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me. Christ lives in me, Christ lives in me by His spirit and that is lifting up our Christianity, giving us a bigger vision of who we are, of what it means to be a child of God and what it means to live our life and take our daily steps as old people, as middle-aged people, as young people and as young people to have this foundation in your life that you know that you are the company of God with you but in the presence of His spirit with you wherever you go and whatever you do and that this life giving presence will never leave you no matter what happens, no matter what alleged Gethsemane you feel you are going to walk through, whatever darkness the Spirit of God will be with you and He will never leave you and never forsake you and will enable you to come through that. It's absolutely of the essence of our faith.

[10:19] Romans 8 and 9 says you however are not in the realm of the flesh but in the realm of the Spirit if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you and if anyone does not of the Spirit of Christ they do not belong to Christ. If anyone does not of the Spirit of Christ they do not belong to Christ. It's of the essence of our faith. It's absolutely crucial that we know and that we understand and that we learn to put our faith in the Lord God who is with us and who dwells us in our daily impossibilities. It's not that you come to church and you hear a preacher speaking about spiritual realities or whatever it might be and you say well he has no idea of what my life is like, he has no idea what I'm going through. It's all theoretical, it's all simple, it's all clear for him. It's easy in that kind of theological bubble that he lives in but he doesn't know what my life is like. No I don't but Jesus Christ does and his Spirit is in us and his Spirit is with us and he walks with us and we have the daily impossibilities of every single moment that we can give and can bring to him. Why did Jesus say this to the disciples? Why does he speak to them in this way? Because we're reminded in verse 27 that they didn't feel God's peace and they were looking for peace and their hearts were troubled and they were afraid and that's the way, if we're honest with ourselves that will be the reality for so many of us, so much of the time that we don't sense his peace that we are troubled in our hearts by whatever it happens to be and we are afraid and he says don't and commit that fear and that trouble and that lack of peace to the living God because he is with us. So he lives in us, he's always with us. You don't need the intercession of another person, you don't need the input of another person fundamentally, obviously God uses all these things but we have Christ with us, he lives in us, he is in our lives. He's also as we see here our personal tutor in verse 26 but the counselor, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. That's his work, that's what he does in us. He makes

Jesus Christ real. He helps us to understand Jesus so that Jesus is our friend and we know who Jesus is. It's spiritual and it's mysterious and it's strange but you know if you're a Christian that when you meet another Christian they know Jesus too and you know the kind of things that immediately bond you together because you know Jesus and because there's this sense of the Spirit of God in us testifying to who Jesus is so that we can go anywhere and that's one of the privilege I've said often here, one of the privileges I've been in this congregation is on any given Sunday, particularly in the morning, any given Sunday morning there will be people from all over the world and it was this morning as usual who come together, we've never met them before, we might never see them again but they know Jesus, they're Christians and they can worship with us because we share a common knowledge that is inexplicable unless it is this gift that is given to us in this personal tutorage of the Holy Spirit and it's significant and important to us and this blepper stopped working, batteries, but there we go. And when the Advocate comes he will send to the Father the Spirit of Truth who will go out from the Father and he will testify about me. That is the work of the Spirit of God, he testifies about Jesus in our lives. His job is to highlight Jesus in our lives. As we open scripture it is to highlight Jesus Christ from our hearts in our lives, he's to tutor us as we read and to educate us as we pray and as we listen he helps us to understand the message that Jesus brings from his word which is why we long for and we look for and we pray for and we sing about the Spirit being with us when we worship so that he will take of his word and take of the truth and take of the message of Jesus Christ and will apply it to each of our hearts and in each of our situations and to each of our needs. So that almost as we pray and as we live our lives as Christians knowing who the Holy Spirit is we're asking him to testify to Jesus in our lives and we want him to speak to us spiritually in a sense symbolically to say this is what Jesus says to you in your situation, in your life, what you're doing. This is how Jesus wants you to act. This is what the message is from scripture, it's a clear message, it's a single message, it's a message for all of us but it will be a message that will be applied individually to our lives and to the stage that we are at in our lives. So he's the Holy Spirit who lives in us and he's the Holy Spirit who's our personal tutor. He's also the Holy Spirit who exposes sin and that's part of his work in John 16 verse 8. Jesus is carrying on speaking about the Holy Spirit and he says when he comes he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment in regard to sin because men do not believe in me in regard to righteousness because I'm going to the Father where you will see me no longer and in regard to judgment because the Prince of this world now stands condemned. So he has this work of conviction and bringing us to recognise and bringing others to recognise their need of a redeemer and their need of Christ and our ongoing need of Christ. He highlights, he exposes in his light, he exposes the cancer, the darkness, the disease of sin within us, the ugliness

that so often remains separate and we will not know that and we will not recognise that unless the Spirit works in us and he does so by internalising that search for us which is miraculous and which is otherworldly and which is counter cultural because our lives are primarily focused on exposing the failures and the faults of others. That's what we do. That's our default position because that enables us to carry on living the way we live. If we make others to look worse than us then that makes us better than everyone else. The default position is to do that, is to make friends that way. We associate with people and we become friends with people because we have common enemies. We can tease the same people, we can slag the same people and we make ourselves popular and friendly by doing that and by exposing the failures and the weaknesses and the vulnerabilities and the mistakes of others. But the Holy Spirit has a different work. It's a work which convicts sin in ourselves and exposes our own needs and sensitises our conscience to what we are like and to what we need to change. The work of salvation is not about us as a church or you or me as an individual changing others. It's about recognising the Spirit of God comes to convict our lives and our consciences and our hearts of the need to be like Jesus Christ.

That's His life work in us. It's to expose us to the need we have for change, the need you have, the need I have for change so that we can be healed. And that will be at times excruciatingly painful like the surgeon's scalpel. It will cut and it will expose and it will root out. And that will for many of us in our lives take great pain and he will need to move powerfully in us to deal with the pride that says I'm fine, I'm good, I'm okay, I don't need to change and I certainly don't need the God to change me. And he will deal with us in love and in grace but with absolute honesty and clarity to transform us and convict us of our needs and of our sin so that we will be healed. And you will go from here and the Spirit of God in your life will want you and will encourage you and will challenge you and will point you to Jesus to be Christ like in your tough marriage or in your dead end job or when you have a bully of a boss or when you've been given a horrific diagnosis of illness or when you've been let down or when your relationships have broken, where you've failed your exams or you're at a crossroad in life and he will be there to challenge you and to change you and to encourage you to be Christ like in that crisis and in that difficulty and will convict you of why you're there and it need not necessarily be because of any specific sin or any specific wrongdoing but it will be his work to expose your need and enable you to drink from his power in his life to transform that situation and to redeem that situation and to through that situation give you healing. And he is the power for our Christian life and I think for me that is hugely significant to take the Old Testament prophetic vision of the Holy Spirit. So he said to me, this is the word of the Lord to the Zerubbubu, not by might nor by power but by my spirit, says the Lord Almighty. And the whole of the New Testament goes on to speak about the power of God in us in salvation and the Sermon Pentecost in Acts 1. You would to wait until the power of God's Spirit would come on us in his power when the gospel resurrection power, the power that enabled Christ to be the one who would change our lives and transform our lives and enable us to live as Christians. And for me that is hugely significant. We have to recognize that we need God's power to live as Christians. We need God's power.

[21 : 26] We need the Holy Spirit to enable us to live as Christians. We need to be spiritually dependent if we are to live as Christians. We have that power within us. We are nothing unless we are spirit dependent, spirit filled Christians. And everyone has access to this Holy Spirit and if we are not Christ's, if we are not filled with the Spirit we are not Christ's. We need that recognition to transform us, to be fully restored and we need it in our church. We need the Holy Spirit in our church life. At every point of our church life, JT was singing tonight. He needs the Spirit of God to enable him to do that, to God's glory. Those who were leading the singing and the praise and playing the instruments was up in the AV screen tonight and they were helping there. So welcome in the door, make the cups of tea. We need the Spirit of God to enable us to work and serve and do these things to his glory and to do it with the right motive. And when we are spoken badly to in church or when we are offended or we need to forgive or when we are tired and we can't be bothered helping and serving and working, we need the Spirit of God. We need him in the church. And when our friends come along to church who aren't Christians and it's fantastic to see people beginning to bring their friends to church and it always fills me with great dread, great fear when people bring their friends to church. Not because it's not a wonderful thing to do but it's in case I mess up or in case they don't understand the preaching and they never come back again or someone doesn't welcome them or whatever it might be. But we need the Spirit of God. We need the Spirit of God to convict that person of their need. We need the Spirit of God to take the preaching and apply it to that person's heart. We need the Spirit of God at every level and leave

that with him and not be filled with dread. It's the foundation of what we are and that is what we must be as a church, a spirit dependent church that is prayerful and dependent and recognizes the wonderful power that we have, the power to change and to transform and to see other people being transformed. And we long to see the city. We long to see the city transformed by the power of God. But we need to ask him for that. And we need to be sharing that message with people and telling them about the truth of Jesus Christ that the Spirit of God will point to him and convict people and bring them to righteousness and salvation. So in many ways we have that great reality in our lives and what should our prayer be? Well, we should make a very simple prayer. You know, a lot of people ask us, say they don't know what to pray and they don't know how to pray. If you then know, though you are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? It's not a great sentence, not a great phrase from Jesus. That it's like wisdom. We don't have it often because we don't ask for it. And he wants us to ask, this is a great gift and he wants us to have it. Holy

Spirit, it's his role. That is what he has come to do. He has come to indwell the people of God. That's his role in salvation. That's what they agreed in the eternal kind of conversations that were had within the trinity of God will be the one the Father who will send. The Christ will be the one who will go. The Spirit will be the one who will infill his people. That's his role. And just as clearly as Christ was obedient to the cross, so the Spirit of God it longs to be poured out into the hearts of his people. And yet so often we will spend our lives saying we don't need him. It's not significant for us. We don't recognize that central truth. And we're happy with our intellectual knowledge, our philosophical understanding, or with our ritual or with our traditions or with our culture. And he says, no, I'm not wanting any of these things. I'm wanting you to come to me as children looking for good gifts from their Father who will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him. It's his role, life, refreshment, energy, power. And we recognize the great prayer of Ephesians 3 which we're going to be singing at the end of our service. Strengthen that we may be strengthened, this Paul's prayer for the church. Strengthen with power through his Spirit and your inner being. That you may have power together with all Lord's holy people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ. To know this love that surpasses knowledge that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. That is the reality of the kind of prayer life we should have, because that is, as we pray for the Holy Spirit to transform us and to teach us and to point us to Jesus and to make us Christ like then we will experience the fullness of God. That's an amazing reality for us, filled with the fullness of God. It's a great picture. It means there's no sin pockets, but we're filled with the fullness of God. There's no go areas for God in our lives that would cause friction and tension and difficulties, but we're working towards that being overflowing with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God, his life giving, grace filled transforming power, being part of our life. I long for that, that we should see that more in our own lives. I long for it in my own life. The reason it's not there is because I'm not willing sometimes to deal with the things that separate. Isn't that what stops us? That can only be the answer, isn't it? It can only be the case that we're not willing to do the business with God that will allow us to be filled in that way. We prefer to be filled with poor substitutes because they satisfy our sinful natures. Crutches of this world, drowning out the beauty and the life giving power of the Lord Jesus Christ and his grace, and rather choosing the emptiness of sinful choices, not to believe, to remain stubborn and bitter, to continue being envious, to choose other ways of living, alcohol, sex, whatever it happens to be, relationships, ambition, finding our fulfillment there rather than finding our fulfillment in our life and our fullness, life to the full in God. And the great thing is, isn't it, that He resources us. He resources us to be like this. As we ask Him, He wants us to have this life and you will face tomorrow maybe an unsurmountable wretched situation where God is saying to you, you need to forgive that person. And you're saying, I will not forgive them. What they have done is simply too bad and too evil. And He says, I'm asking you to do the impossible. I'm asking you to deny your own rights and your own feelings and to do to others as you would have them do to you and also to forgive because you have been forgiven. They're resourced by God. You as young people are resourced by God to put Him first. Not second, not third, not fourth, not last, but first. And you say, I can't do that. It's impossible. You don't understand my life. You don't understand the problems that that would bring into my life. And Jesus says, I do and I give you the ability. I am resourcing you to live this way. He doesn't tease us by saying, this is how you should live. Go and do it, but not resourcing us so to do. He enables us as we are rooted in Him, as we are dependent on Him, as we recognize that the

Holy Spirit is the one that we are to ask for again and again in our life because it's the Spirit of Christ enables us to change. Then we will so live. I want to finish with that beautiful picture in Jeremiah 17. Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him, which is really saying the same thing, looking for the Spirit of God. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes, its leaves are always green, it has no worries in the years of drought and never fails to bear fruit. That is a great picture of a Christian who understands the significance of relying on the Holy Spirit in their lives. And not just in the good times, in the times of drought as well, they will still bear fruit. And that's the greatest testimony, isn't it? Christians that will bear fruit in the drought when things are difficult, when things are, when it's a battle, when it's a struggle, when they're suffering and trials. That's when we reveal whether our faith is self-reliant or Christ-rooted and enabled by Christ. So really why I simply wanted to point towards this evening was the, a better vision of being a Christian, not to walk out of here alone as a Christian, not to think that it's all theoretical and it's all fine in square boxes and when everything's kind of covered with marshmallows and cotton wool. But in the day-to-day life that we've got, you've got a great companion. You aren't imprisoned by your past or by failure or by your upbringing or by your genes or by anything like that. And even by your situation, you're redeemed in it and through it and can be transformed. Even in the worst of situations in God, will not leave you, will not forsake you, will take you through these times and empowers you to live for Him and teaches you about Jesus. It's not just, it's not an intellectual thing, it's not about the amount of theology that you've got. Ultimately, although these things will come and are important, it's depending on the spirit of God to be your teacher, your personal tutor and that is very significant. And I hope and pray that we will have a better vision of the one that we can trust in and rely on in our Christian lives. May God bless our thoughts there, our heads in prayer. Father God, help us to understand a little bit more about you. We know that there's so much spoken in the New Testament about this spirit of

God and the amazing trinity of God involved in our salvation, the amazing provision, not just a judicial verdict to declare on us, not just a substitute in our place. However great that is and however important it is to know that that's the case, but we have a God who indwells us and who doesn't leave us alone but comes and breathes life into us and we are in Him and He is in us and there is that union that is mysterious and inexplicable, but for us is the hope that takes us through every day and helps us not to give up and not to be afraid and not to fail ultimately or to feel failed but to continue to go back for renewal and forgiveness and for strength and to know that as we grow old and as we grow weaker that even death is a broken enemy and is a defeated foe and has its had its sting removed and that we will as Christ was raised bodily to be enthroned on high, that we too will be raised to be with Him and that we can share in the mind blowing reality of life without end, in His presence, in joy and perfection and glory and goodness and we thank You for that hope that is rooted firmly in the person of Jesus Christ. Give us eyes to see, may Your Spirit teach us, may Your tutor and may we rely on Him for

[34 : 42] Jesus' sake. Amen.