

1 Corinthians 12:1-3

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were heathen, you were led astray to dumb idols; however you may have been moved. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus be cursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.”

Last week we started looking at the Apostle's Creed, and I asked you "What do you believe? Do you believe in God? Do you believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?" I then asked "If we believe this then why do we often times live like we don't?" We say we believe in God. We say we believe in Jesus Christ. But then we turn around and treat each other with meanness, bitterness, selfishness, petty jealousies, some we treat with love, but only a select few, only the ones we like. Why?

My sister-in-law use to say to my father, who had a very critical tongue, "do you actually eat with that mouth?" Because my father could say hurtful things to people, and not even realize it; my sister-in-law could not believe he ate with the same mouth that said such hurtful things to people. Many say mean hurtful and demeaning things and have done it for so long without ever being held accountable they no longer realize what they say is hurtful. But come Sunday morning there they are prancing in the front door as if they were here to grace God with their presence instead of the other way around.

Isaiah talked about this very thing in chapter 29 and Jesus later referred to it in Mark 7 and Matthew 15 when he said; *“These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.”* We really do this!

We just let each other know when we said the Affirmation of Faith, *“I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit”* and near the end we said again *“I believe in the Holy Spirit.”* Again, do we really believe what we say? Do we really believe in the Holy Spirit? Do we really believe **IN** the Holy Spirit or just **OF** the Holy Spirit? There is a difference.

Let me mention one very important point right here, belief in the Holy Spirit is essential to finding true peace, joy, and victory as a Christian. Most live far below their God given potential as Christians because they are not fully connected, and have never discovered and/or received the Holy Spirit in their lives. Most Christians, let alone people, know next to nothing about the Holy Spirit and His life changing power, about His anointing, about His

intersession, about His gifts, about His fruit, and about His indwelling, which He seeks and longs to produce in and through them. What is even worse is that most don't even care. They believe as long as they come to church, sit in their pew and don't kill anyone they are safe. Sorry to inform everyone, but to be a Christian, the Holy Spirit active in your life is essential, not optional.

Living a life without the Holy Spirit is like trying to drive a car without any gas. Most people have no clue as to the inner workings of the internal combustion engine, but what we do know is if we do not put gas in the tank we will never leave the driveway. If we do not have an indwelling of the Holy Spirit guiding and directing our lives we will never leave the pew.

Most Charismatic churches place most if not all of their emphasis on the Holy Spirit, which does away with the Holy Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). This produces a sloppy self-serving unbiblical belief system. While many main stream churches, and/or Christians, place very little, if any emphasis on the Holy Spirit. This produces a sloppy head knowledge religion, which too is an unbiblical belief system.

An experiencing relationship with God the Father and God the Son, can only be achieved by and through the Holy Spirit. This is made clear in Romans 8:9 *“But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.”* Could that be any plainer?

Why do so many say they believe in the Holy Spirit, but in reality they reject Him? Some even fear Him! They reject what they fear and most fear the Holy Spirit. Patricia and I had an opportunity a couple years ago to attend a conference in Nashville Tenn. Next door to the Opryland Hotel is a mall, and in that mall is a restaurant which has or is a giant aquarium. You sit and dine as you watch sharks, tunas, sting rays, and many other varieties of fish swim around you. I love to have a fish tank. I love to sit and watch the different fish swim around so calmly and enjoy their surroundings.

Keeping up an aquarium was not easy. I had to make sure the filter was working properly; I had to maintain a constant water level; I had to maintain a constant water temperature; I had to keep a constant check on the ph and alkaline levels; most importantly is I had to feed them.

When I have my aquarium up and running the fish I have are totally dependent upon me. They depend upon me doing all the things I just explained in order for them to have a good life. Even though I totally care for them every time I approached the tank they would scatter and attempt to hide. These fish are totally dependent upon me, yet they fear me.

The same is true with Christians today. Many proclaim with their mouths that they believe in the Holy Spirit, but in reality they fear Him and stay as far from Him as humanly possible, and if possible they squash the Holy Spirit when-ever possible. We claim we believe but again our lives tell a different story. Let someone cry out praises to God during a service and I see the looks people give. Some have trouble staying seated when this happens, they want to jump up and leave. After all this is worship who are they to take part.

The Holy Spirit is to be worshipped equally with the Father and the Son. John declares in 4:23-24 *“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is Spirit and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”*

Jesus said in Matthew 28 *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”* We are not asked to worship the Spirit, we are not asked to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We are commanded! After all the Holy Spirit is our liaison between God and the world; it is through the Holy Spirit that God acts in the world and acts in the minds and hearts of people. If there’s no Holy Spirit, there’s no connection it’s that simple. Feel like praising God through the Holy Spirit but don’t, you just cut your connection. Refuse the Spirit’s leading and you cut your connection. Our words can say anything, but our lives show the real truth.

There are some who say they believe in the Holy Spirit, but they are waiting for Him to come and give them a sign. They say they are waiting to be led. What are you waiting for! The Spirit is here, now, and we have already been told to *“Go into all the world.”* What are we waiting for? What more direction do we need? What kind of sign do you want?

Remember the story of the impending flood? God sent weather warnings, police warnings, men in boats, men in helicopters. What are you waiting for? Waiting is either a sign of unbelief or an excuse. You decide which one.

We meet the Holy Spirit in the opening words of the Old Testament in Genesis 1:2: “*and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.*” This is saying that the Spirit is God’s agent in creation. The Hebrew word for Spirit is *ruach* and the Greek word is *pneuma*. Both of these words mean breath as well as Spirit. The Spirit of God is found breathing life into chaos and into that which has no life. In the Book of Acts alone there are about 60 references to the Holy Spirit. In these events we see fully displayed the action of the Holy Spirit in the early formative days of the Church. Here we see a Church in which the Holy Spirit was the birthright of every person, in which the Spirit gave to the people, wisdom, courage, and endurance they needed to do the work of Jesus Christ here on earth. During these times no one served unless they were of the Spirit, and no step was taken except under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

This means that the Holy Spirit is here for each of you. The Holy Spirit is everywhere for you and is in you right now. Do you believe the Holy Spirit is in you and in this church? Before you say “no,” think about all it can mean. When Jesus speaks of the Spirit, He uses the name “Counselor.” A counselor is someone who guides you, especially in the ways of right and wrong. More particularly, a counselor helps you to do the good you already know you should do.

When Paul lists the fruit of the Spirit, that we may know where the Holy Spirit is present; he doesn't talk about pride or boastfulness or being sure of your faith or that you know chapter and verse of every Scripture. Paul simply says in Galatians 5:22 that the signs of the Spirit are these: “*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*” Live in these qualities and you live with God and the Holy Spirit lives in you. Sometimes the Holy Spirit is the quiet strength of a faithful heart and sometimes He is the rush of a mighty wind, but He is here with us: our Comforter, our Counselor, and the Spirit of truth.

He is in Jesus Christ and in our Almighty God, and will never leave us or forsake us. God's Holy Spirit will abide with us now and always, even to the end of the age. But only if you believe and seek Him!

Are you fully connected? Do you seek the Holy Spirit or do you run away and/or reject Him? What do you believe? Your words are just that, words. Your actions speak much louder than your words. Are you fully connected? The world around you knows what type of connection you have. It's time for us to stop playing church and get fully connected with the Holy Spirit and start being the church! Amen!

Prayer

Ever-faithful God, who is Guide and Protector to the church of Your people, we pray today with thankful hearts for the gift of your Holy Spirit. Open our hearts to Him warmth and joy. Open our minds to Him power and purpose. Open our ears to Your Word and our eyes to Your mighty deeds, that we may know the Spirit among us and share His love with others.

O Righteous God, we pray for Your living Spirit. Let the Spirit of peace descend upon us all, that the wars and violence and bloodshed may cease. Let the Spirit of justice flow through the earth like a mighty stream and blow through the air like a mighty wind, that this may yet be a world with which You are pleased. Through Jesus Christ, our Counselor, we pray. Amen!