

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John 4:13**

Chapter 21- The Gift of God's Spirit

195 The Gift of God's Spirit- Part 2

WAOY Thursday 06/05/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1 John**, and today I want to continue to look at what John taught about "The Gift of God's Spirit". So, let's read **1John 4:13** again together:

By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

Now in this verse- the Apostle John is continuing to talk about the ways in which we can know that we are truly saved. Now back in verses 7-12- John told us that those who are saved will Love- they will love God and they will love the brethren. So we can see that saved people love God enough to obey Him and they love each other enough not to get bent out of shape and separate from the brethren out of anger when another brother offends them.

So now we come to the place in our journey through 1John where the Apostle once again talks about the gift of God's Spirit. So John reinforces the glorious news that saved people have the very Person of God the Holy Spirit living and walking inside them on an ongoing basis.

And as I have discussed with you before- this indwelling of the Holy Spirit inside the believer is a New Covenant Truth that- aside from very rare exceptions- no one who lived and functioned under the First or the Old Covenant ever had.

Now when I say that- please understand that this does not mean that God's Spirit wasn't busy and active in the earth- because He was. Like the Father- all three Persons of the Trinity have *always* been and always will be. God's Spirit was with God and was moving in the earth in the very beginning- during Creation- let's read **Genesis 1:1&2:**

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

2 The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

So at the very beginning of time- God's Spirit was active and was moving in the earth. God the Son was *also* there at Creation and was busy and moving as well. So there was never a time when God was not Triune and there was never a time that all three Persons of the One true living God were not active and moving to bring about God's Will. And we must know that all three Persons of God are fully Deity and deserve and are entitled to our worship and our devotion and our obedience.

Those people and groups today who *deny* the Trinity or who argue about whether or not Jesus is fully God and fully Man are deceived and their doctrine is false and they and their teaching should be rejected out of hand by faithful Christians everywhere.

Now all through the days of the Old Covenant- God's Spirit was busy as He was falling on people and moving upon people and dealing with people and anointing people and blessing people. But all during the Old Covenant- as quick as God the Spirit came- He left. The Bible says that He lifted; and He departed; and the people were not infilled and they were not indwelt- at least not to the same extent as we are under the New Covenant.

People had to literally get up and make the journey- first to the tent and finally to Jerusalem- to the Temple- in order to be in God's Presence. And so the concept that we all have today of God's Spirit walking in us and living and abiding in us was not known by any of these Old Testament saints- at least not in the way that we know it today.

So we should all take heed to ourselves and not take the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit for granted and we should be amazed and oh so grateful that when God had the choice of placing His Spirit anywhere in the Universe- God chose to place His Spirit in us – in our hearts.

And when we think that not only does God's Spirit come inside us- but now- only because of the death, burial, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ- God the Spirit not only comes to us- but He remains *in* us; He *lives* in us; He *walks* in us; He *dwells* in us; He *abides* in us- continually and forever!

And it is that infilling that keeps us saved. It is that continual Presence of God inside us that keep us going on- that causes us to refuse to quit; that allows us to persevere to the end. So please don't ever make the mistake of thinking that you have so much will power and that it is the exercise of your own human will power that causes you to be faithful to Jesus because that would be placing way too much importance on yourself.

No, the hard truth, beloved, is that *no one* has that much will power. *No one* has that much determination. *Nobody* is that strong. No, remaining faithful in our trials and not fainting; pressing on when it would be easier to quit; refusing to back down when it would be so simple to do so; is a gift from God and it has nothing to do with your own efforts or your own strength. It is the direct benefit of the Spirit of God dwelling in us.

You see, what John is talking about here is the wonderful reality of what is called "Perseverance". And Perseverance is that comforting Biblical Truth that says that those who are truly saved will *persevere* all the way to Heaven. And perseverance also says that those who do not persevere all the way to Heaven do not prove that believers can lose their Salvation- oh no, all that these people prove is that they were never truly saved to begin with. And John says here that the *reason* that saved people persevere and imposters do *not* persevere- is because saved people have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside them and the others do not.

Now the Doctrine of Perseverance is one of the most misunderstood Doctrines that exist in the Bible. More people misunderstand what this Doctrine actually teaches than anything else that the Bible talks about. I myself misunderstood what the Bible teaches about Perseverance for over thirty years and I actually fought *against* this Doctrine with all my heart because I thought that it said something that it does not say.

And I was wrong about this and so if there is anyone hearing me today that sat underneath what I taught about this issue ten, twenty or thirty years ago- please hear me now- I was wrong about Perseverance and I beg you to forgive me and I beg you to allow me the chance to correct this in your mind.

You see, dear friends, I am very serious about what I am doing in these broadcasts. I am not kidding and I am not playing. I fear God and I am going to have to stand before God and give an account of what

I said during my life and I want to make sure that I don't lead anyone astray.

And while I may be wrong about some things that I say- please know I am not *trying* to be wrong about *anything* that I say. I am trying as hard as I know how- to be right. I want to preach and teach *exactly* what the Bible says regardless of who it offends or who it blesses. So this is bigger than us- dear friends; the Gospel is more important than you or me and it is more important than life itself. And we have got to get the Gospel right.

As I said on the last broadcast- if we are living in the last days- then we are living in the time of the Great falling away and the time when the people of the Church will not be able to endure Sound Doctrine and a time of great deception and great confusion and great upheaval and great calamity and a time when evil will be called good and good will be called evil.

So we have a commandment to preach the Word and to preach it rightly and to preach it fully and to preach it without apology and without worrying about who it offends and to preach it without being so ashamed of it that we change it or alter it or leave certain parts out of it- because this is the inspired, infallible, inerrant, authoritative, relevant, and eternal Word of the living God. This Word did not come from religious men- but this Word came directly out of the Mind and the Heart and the Mouth of Almighty God.

So we cannot change it and we better not add anything to it and we better not take anything away from it. But we are to learn it just like it is- without any spin on it and we are to preach it just like it is without trying to shield people away from the demands that it makes on our lives and we are to believe it as being true and we are to live our lives as being accountable to it and we are to love this Gospel as being a gift from God and we are to defend the it against anyone or any group or any teaching that tries to challenge it.

And in doing what we are told to do- we find that this sometimes puts us at odds with people that we love and sometimes it puts us at odds with famous teachers and it puts us at odds with bestselling books and it puts us at odds with family, and friends and neighbors and sometimes even our own country.

And that is uncomfortable. I certainly don't enjoy that- but we have it to do as sons and daughters of the Lord Christ if we are to be faithful to what God has spoken in this precious Book.

I fought and taught and preached and persuaded as many people as I could *against* Perseverance for well over thirty years because in my ignorance I thought that Perseverance was teaching that sin was okay and that sin didn't matter and I knew that sin wasn't okay. I knew that sin absolutely matters to God and that it is never okay when we sin. So I was *against* Perseverance because I was *for* Holiness. I was zealous that God's people would act like God's people and that we walk like God's people and that we live like God's people and I was against the laid back attitude that so many have today and I was against the cavalier attitude that people have about the horror of sin and of how terribly offensive sin is to God.

So I was against Perseverance because I was also against worldliness. I was against any teaching that promoted a love for this world; or a love for pleasure more than God or anything that promoted selfishness and covetousness and greed in God's people. I was against Perseverance because I wrongly believed that being secure in our salvation promoted the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. I was against God's people getting settled down in this life and I was against the fact that most of our prayers today have more to do with the here and now rather than to prepare us for over there. I was against anything that made us more of a citizen of this country and that took away from us looking for a city Whose Builder and Maker is God. I was against any teaching that took away from us the concept that we are just strangers and pilgrims passing through this land and this world is not our home. I was against *anything* that took away from the promise that I have a home in Glory land that outshines the sun.

But what I didn't realize, dear friends is that what the Bible actually teaches about Perseverance doesn't detract from *any* of those things. I didn't realize that Perseverance actually *promotes* the very things that I was so zealous for.

So the bottom line is that I was against Perseverance because I had never been taught it correctly. And while I had learned *some* of it- I really had never heard it taught properly at all. But God was good to put me in a position where He would graciously open my eyes so that I might see what God has to say about this marvelous Truth.

So God dealt with my heart to begin a verse by verse study through the **Epistle of Romans** in our Church in October of 2002. And we studied that great letter by the Apostle Paul every single Sunday night for nine years and nine months.

And at the beginning- I was able to teach **Romans** with little or no problem. But after just a few verses- I began to run into trouble. Some things that Paul clearly wrote in his letter to the Church at Rome was *different* from what I had been taught and it was *different* from what I believed and from what I *myself* was teaching. And at first, this was little more than a tad bit annoying- kind of like a gnat buzzing around your head. And I could just swat it away and keep on going.

Now normally- I could teach or preach with no notes for over an hour with my eyes closed and both hands tied behind my back. But I had committed to go through this Epistle verse by verse and to ask and answer three questions about every single verse:

1. What does this verse actually say?
2. What does this verse actually mean by what it says?
3. How can I apply the Truth of this verse to my own personal life?

So this commitment forced me to park my rear end in my chair and study things that I had never studied before. Things like the Greek and Hebrew languages so I could understand exactly what Paul wrote and things like the tense of the verbs that Paul used so I could understand what Paul meant by what he wrote. And I found the need to study things like Jewish life in the Middle East during the first century so I could better understand what Paul meant; and things like legal and political aspects of life in the Middle East in the first century. And I also began to study what other people- who lived many hundreds of years before I was born- like Matthew Henry and the Puritans and Jonathan Edwards and Charles Spurgeon and Martin Luther and Augustine said about **Romans**. And I found myself on my face a whole lot more often because I had the need to beg God to help me and to give me understanding so that I would portray His Word properly to the people.

Well, I'm sorry but I am out of time on today's broadcast- but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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