

So That You May Know

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

Chapter 21- The Gift of God's Spirit

198 The Gift of God's Spirit- Part 5

WAOY Wednesday 06/11/08

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 we have been investigating just what John is talking about in this verse and we have already discovered several things. First of all- in the previous verses- John has been talking about Love and now he is talking about the indwelling of God's Spirit. Now these are not two separate things- but they are wound together as one single thought. To better understand this concept of how Love and the Spirit of God are connected- we need to turn to **Romans 5: 5** and see how Paul taught about this great wonder. In this verse- Paul says:

and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

So Paul is teaching here that the *reason* that believers love and the reason that believers have this kind of love in our hearts is because this kind of supernatural and unconditional love that is a part of God's very Own Nature and Character is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us.

So we can see several things that are true because of that. First of all some people are, by nature, more loving than others. And these people can demonstrate their love regardless of whether they are saved or not. So neither John nor Paul is talking about that kind of earthly human love that some people possess. The Love that John and Paul are talking

about is a supernatural love that is not found in any human being prior to their conversion. Nobody on earth is born with this Love nor are they born with this Spirit. This Love is not a human love; it is not an earthly love- no, this love is a heavenly kind of God- Love that is given to the believer at the very moment of his conversion as the Holy Spirit now sets up His abode in their hearts.

God the Spirit brings with Him this Love and so this love as well as the Spirit Who brings it are both gifts to the unworthy sinner from a good and Gracious God.

So we cannot take pride in the fact that we have either the Spirit or the Love of God in us because both of these are gifts to us from God. Nobody conjures up the Spirit based upon what he does or does not do and nobody can “will” himself to love with this kind of supernatural Love by and through his own human efforts. And it is also true to say that no lost person has either the love of God or the Spirit of God abiding in him, at any point of time in his entire life- this is reserved solely for believers.

But the good news is that John is saying that all believers have both the Spirit and the Love of God in them. You see, dear friends, this is not something that occurs at some point after conversion like many of us were taught- that is not what the Bible teaches. All believers are believers precisely because the Holy Spirit has Sovereignly regenerated that person prior to his conversion. In fact, without the Spirit actively and Sovereignly working inside that person to give him eyes to see; ears to hear; and a heart to believe- nobody would ever be saved. So it is ridiculous to think that the Spirit does not dwell in us until something else happens after we are saved. The reason we are saved is because the Spirit changed our nature.

You see brothers and sisters- there is always a tendency that we have to narrow down or to reduce the Christian life from being the wondrous supernatural miracle that it is to being something that Man can do by and through his own human power or will. There are many today who honestly believe that Salvation is simply a matter of them giving up two or three gross and obvious sins and of making a decision to adopt a moral code about their life and hooking up with a Church. But that is not Christianity dear friends- that is Mormonism; that is Gnosticism; and that is Humanism- but it isn't Christianity.

Living as a Christian does not just mean living a moral life and of being “good” as the world calls good and of being “decent” as the world calls decent and of periodically doing nice and noble things. Anybody can do that. Muslims can do that; even atheists can do that. No, for us to live the Christian life- Jesus had to die- and we need to always remember that when we talk about anything to do with Christianity. We need to always ask this questions when we talk about the Church or winning souls or walking in the Spirit or anything that has to do with living the Christian life- and that is “Did Jesus have to die in order for this to be done?”

And if we can do that thing without Jesus dying and shedding his Blood then it isn't of God. For example- if people can be saved simply by exercising their own human free will or by making a decision to be saved – then Jesus didn't have to die for that to be done. If you can go to Heaven based upon anything that you do by and through your own human power like attend the Mass or take Communion or be Baptized; or go through the Rite of Penance or buy the Church a new piano; or treat your neighbor well- then Jesus didn't have to die for that to be done and it isn't of God.

Salvation is a miracle; it is by definition supernatural and it is higher than Man and it is more powerful than Man and it is more wonderful than anything that human philosophy or man- made religions can invent- and that is why Salvation is eternal.

We must take heed to ourselves, beloved that we do not think that because we have changed habits or because we have stopped doing certain things that are bad that that is what Salvation is. When you read here what John said,

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

It makes all the little moral things that we do and all the improvements that we make for ourselves and by ourselves shrink by comparison. Now don't get me wrong. Morality is a necessary part of being saved and without biblical morality; without bearing fruit- Jesus said that you are proving that you are not saved. But we must understand beloved, that people have the ability to practice a certain

degree of morality without being saved and without the Love of God and the Spirit of God abiding in them.

For example- Mormonism is a cult that operates in isolation of and in contradiction to Divine Scripture. Mormonism does not teach the new birth and rejects Salvation by and through the shed Blood of Jesus Christ- so while some people who attend a Mormon Church may well be saved- it is incorrect to say that Mormonism is a branch of Christianity- it is not. It is an entirely separate religion apart from Christianity that teaches an entirely different way to be saved than what the Bible teaches.

So by definition then, Mormonism teaches that people can be moral without the indwelling power of God the Holy Ghost. And yet Mormons are some of the most moral people on earth. But the same thing can be said of Islam; Hinduism; Buddhism; and even some branches of Judaism. I have personally met some atheists who hate the very concept of God's existence and yet who are moral in many ways that are very commendable. So human morality in and of itself is not the only thing that determines whether a person is saved- it is that God's Spirit dwells in them- and you can't wing that.

In fact that is precisely why the Bible is so strict about how believers should live because even in John's day unbelievers had a certain degree of morality about themselves. So if a pagan can be somewhat moral- then how should some live who has God the Holy Ghost living inside him?

Listen, improving your marriage is great and living in a nice house and going to the right schools and voting for the good guy and being a member of all the right organizations is all wonderful but unless God's Spirit dwells in you on an ongoing basis- you are not saved- and it is all in vain.

It is said today that people need to become more religious. That by following the teachings of their Church – that that is what will get them into Heaven. But that is not true, dear friends. Following rules and regulations may cause you to order your life more effectively but it will not bring God the Holy Spirit to live inside you- which is all that matters. There are rules in Christianity and to say that there are no rules is to ignore the Bible. But believers obey God out of a humble gratefulness over what God has already done in them by saving their unworthy soul- not to try to earn points with God or to develop their

own personal righteousness. Good and holy and righteous Works are commanded in Scripture and to live in lawlessness is not being free and it is not living in Grace- it is simply being lawless. Conversely striving to enter in at the straight gate is not legalism and it is not bondage- it is obedience to what Jesus expects out of those who have already been saved by Grace through Faith alone.

So there is a mystery at work here that we need to get a grip on that is both wonderful and encouraging. Works cannot save anyone. And the reason that works cannot save anyone is because whatever we do is not good enough. God's requirement for anyone to go to Heaven is that that individual be perfectly righteous and continuously righteous and no human born of woman can do that. It isn't that some people earn Heaven while others do not- no, nobody earns the right to go to Heaven based upon what they do or what they stopped doing.

A human being cannot develop his own personal righteousness through religious observance to the point where he is perfectly righteous and continuously righteous- you simply can't get there from here. And yet God's requirement for Heaven is so high that all men fall short of it. So, what are we to do? We need a Savior Who did perfectly keep His Father's Law; Who did not sin – ever- not one time- Who literally earned His way to Heaven by what He did and what He did not do. And it is that sinless spotless Righteousness of Jesus Christ that is imputed to us by faith alone that allows us entry into Heaven.

For the purpose of understanding this – you need to see Salvation like this. Jesus worked His way into Heaven based upon what He did and what He did not do. Jesus was sinless; He was perfectly Righteous, and He was continuously Righteous. That is why Jesus had to live for 33- ½ years- so that He could be presented with every single temptation that anybody could ever be tempted with and yet Jesus never failed God one time- in either thought, word, or deed.

So, Jesus was saved by His Works. But we cannot be saved by our works because we do sin and we sin all the time and we constantly fall short and we are very, very sinful. So what worked for Jesus will not work for us. So we are cannot be saved by what we do. We are saved by faith in His Finished Work. Now please understand that I am not saying that Jesus needed to be saved- He didn't- I only use that illustration to try to make the distinction between Works and Faith.

But after we are saved by Grace through Faith alone- we are then become a bondslave of Jesus Christ; we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit; we have received within ourselves the new divine nature; and we are now commanded to do good works-not to bring about our Salvation- but to obey the One Who graciously saved us.

Now the reason that we need to get this right about the difference between doing works to be saved and doing works because you are saved is because even though we try to do good works- most of the time- we sometimes fall short of being perfect in doing those good works. So if Salvation were dependent on us doing those good works- we would either not be saved or we would lose our Salvation due to the fact that in our effort to do good works- we fell short.

But because doing good works is a loving response to already being saved- our Salvation is not in jeopardy when we fall short of performing those good works in a perfect way.

Well, I have to stop right here, 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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