



G R A C E

REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

SOLI ◇ DEO ◇ GLORIA

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Sermon Notes

The Person of the Holy Spirit, Part IV

The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Lives Believers Today: United with Christ

John 16:5-15

June 11, 2006

BACKGROUND / REVIEW

⇒ In the first week, we learned of the importance, indeed, the necessity of the Trinity:

“Within the One Being that is God, there exists eternally three coequal and coeternal persons, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” James White, *The Forgotten Trinity*

✱ There are two primary ways in which we can speak of the Trinity:

1. **Ontological** or [more commonly] **Imminent Trinity**:

- Who God is apart from Creation
- In other words, how can we distinguish between the Persons of the Trinity *apart* from Creation, that is to say, in eternity past?

2. **Economic Trinity**

- Who God is with respect to Creation, especially the work of Redemption
- In other words, what are the roles or functions of each Person of the Trinity in the plan of Redemption?

✱ In this series, we are primarily focusing on the **function** or **role of the Holy Spirit**. However, the danger in studying one Person of the Trinity at a time [although we should do it] is that we forget that **EVERY ACT OF GOD IS AN ACT OF ALL THREE PERSONS OF THE TRINITY.**

✱ Yet, we must also affirm the distinctions in Persons and Functions within the Godhead Trinity. **For example, the Son died on the Cross for our sins – NOT the Father and NOT the Holy Spirit.** However, the Atonement was an act of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

* In the series, though, one of the most important benefits each of us can take away is simply a **heightened awareness of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit**. Such an awareness may correct a misunderstanding we have concerning the nature of who God is. Once again, the Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force, but a Divine Person who possesses all of the eternal characteristics that the Father and Son possess.

- ⇒ In the second week, we learned that the Holy Spirit is a **Person**, in fact, He is a **Divine Person** – FULLY God, that is, equal with the Father and the Son in power, authority, and eternity.
- ⇒ In the third week of this study, we observed the role of the Holy Spirit **in the Old Testament** and **in the life of Jesus Christ**.
- ⇒ Last week, we examined the **role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the first century Apostles**.
- ⇒ Finally, this week, we will examine the **role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers today**.

I. Salvation Planned

- Divine Election

II. Salvation Accomplished

- The Sending and Work of the Son

III. Salvation Applied

a. *Ordo Salutis*

1. Effectual Calling
2. Regeneration
3. Repentance Unto Life
4. Faith in Jesus Christ
5. Justification
6. Adoption and the Seal of the Holy Spirit
7. Sanctification
8. Perseverance
9. Glorification

b. Union with Christ

I. Salvation Planned – A Work attributed *Primarily* to the Father

- Divine Election
 - “...just as He [the Father] chose us in Him [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will.”Ephesians 1:4-5

II. Salvation Accomplished – A Work attributed *Primarily* to the Son

- The Sending and Work of the Son

III. Salvation Applied – A Work attributed *Primarily* to the Holy Spirit

a. Ordo Salutis (The Order of Salvation)

1. Effectual Calling

- John 6:44-45

2. Regeneration

- Read Ezekiel 37:1-10 [The Valley of Dry Bones]
- Read Ezekiel 36:24-27
- Read Jeremiah 31:31-34
- Regeneration by the power of the Holy Spirit is **no less a divine act** than when Jesus Christ called forth Lazarus from the grave (John 11:43).
- Notice, also, the sovereign, monergistic act of Regeneration:
 - “Just as you do not know the path of the wind and how bones are formed in the womb of a pregnant woman, so you do not know the activity of God who makes all things.”Ecclesiastes 11:5
 - Read John 1:12
 - Read 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18
 - Read John 3:3; 5-8
 - James 1:18
- According to the Scriptures, Regeneration is **by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God**. Notice the cooperative effort of the Written Word and the Holy Spirit.

- “for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.”
1 Peter 1:23
 - James 1:18
 - John 15:3
- There are several aspects of Regeneration [by the power of the Holy Spirit] that are worth noting:

(1) Spiritual Sight

- John 3:3

(2) Cleansing from Sin

- John 3:5
- Ezekiel 36:25-27
- Titus 3:5
- 1 Corinthians 6:11

(3) Change in Nature

- “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.” 2 Corinthians 5:17
- No longer are we ‘in Adam’ but we are ‘in Christ.’

(4) Liberation of the Will

- Ezekiel 36:27

Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847) once wrote that regeneration involved “**the expulsive power of a new affection.**”

In other words, God does not save us “against our will” – **He changes our will.**

- ✳ Just as Total Depravity affects the whole man, so Regeneration reaches every part of the new man.

3. Repentance Unto Life

- ⇒ When we speak of “conversion” there are primarily two aspects of salvation that we are referring to: (1) repentance of sin; and (2) faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, conversion involves both a negative (repentance) and positive (faith) aspect. Basically faith and repentance are two sides of the same coin; yet, it is important to remember that BOTH are **essential** for salvation. It could be said [roughly] that repentance represents our dying

with Christ – the death of the old man [Adam]; and faith represents the resurrection of the new man [Christ].

- Just as faith is a gift, so **repentance is a gift of the Holy Spirit**.
 - Acts 5:31
 - Acts 11:18
 - 2 Timothy 2:25

Accompanying repentance is ALWAYS a new attitude toward sin – shame, sorrow, even hatred towards it (Romans 6:21; Luke 15:19).

4. Faith in Jesus Christ

- Once an individual has been regenerated and given spiritual life, He can understand and discern the things of the Spirit. God has opened his mind “... spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.” Westminster Confession of Faith
- As with regeneration, the Word of God is the **instrumental cause** of faith (Romans 10:14).
- Let us never forget that even **faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit**.
 - Ephesians 2:8-9
 - Philippians 1:29
 - See also Ephesians 6:3 where Paul prays for “faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” therefore, indicating that it is a gift – i.e. something *given* by God.
 - Peter, also, writes concerning believers who have “*received* a faith as precious as ours” (2 Peter 1:1).

The saving power of faith resides thus not in itself, but in the Almighty Savior on whom it rests. It is never on account of its formal nature as a psychic [spiritual] act that faith is conceived in Scripture to be saving, - as if this frame of mind or attitude of heart were itself a virtue with claims on God for reward...It is not faith that saves, but faith in Jesus Christ...**It is not, strictly speaking, even faith in Christ that saves, but Christ that saves through faith.** B.B. Warfield

5. Justification
6. Adoption and the Seal of the Holy Spirit
7. Sanctification
8. Perseverance
9. Glorification

b. Union with Christ

“From God’s counsels in eternity past before the world was created, to our fellowship with God in heaven in eternity future, and including every aspect of our relationship with God in this life - all has occurred in union with Christ.”
Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p. 840

- ⇒ So important is the expression [and the theological meaning behind it] ‘**in Christ**’ that it appears, along with its certain variations, around **160 times** in Paul’s writings.
- There is a danger in viewing salvation as a “Golden Chain” of events (i.e., Regeneration, Faith, Justification, Sanctification, etc.). The reason for this is that **no aspect of salvation is fully completed this side of eternity**. The *Ordo Salutis* may lead one to believe that, for example, when faith begins, regeneration is fully completed...but it is not.
 - **Regeneration even has a ‘yet-to-be-accomplished’ aspect to it.**

Matthew 19:28 states, “And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”
 - There is also a very real sense that **Sanctification** is both (a.) a completed event, and (b.) an event that is progressively being completed [but will not be fully accomplished until our glorification].
 - ⇒ 1 Corinthians 6:11:
 - ⇒ Romans 6:1-14
 - ⇒ 1 Thessalonians 5:23
 - This is even the case in **glorification** (2 Corinthians 4:18; Romans 8:28; 1 Peter 4:13).
- ⇒ The question, then, arises, “How are we united with Christ...in Christ?” The answer is simple: **through faith**.
- “We must now examine this question. How do we receive those benefits which the Father bestowed on his only-begotten Son – not for Christ’s own private use, but that he might enrich poor and needy men? First we must understand that as long Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us...We also, in turn, are said to be ‘engrafted into him’ (Romans 11:7), and to ‘put on Christ’ (Galatians 3:27); for, as I have said, all that he possesses is nothing to us until we grow into one body with him. **It is true that we obtain this by faith**. Yet...reason itself teaches us to climb higher and to examine into the secret energy of the Spirit, by which we come to enjoy Christ and all his benefits.”
John Calvin

⇒ So what does it truly mean to be **United with Christ**?

- In his classic work, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, John Murray writes:

The wide range of similarity used in Scripture to illustrate union with Christ is very striking. On the highest level of being it is compared to the union which exists between the **persons of the Trinity in the Godhead**. This is staggering, but it is the case (John 14:23; 17:21-23). On the lowest level it is compared to the relation that exists between **the stones of a building and the chief corner stone** (Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:4-5). In between these two limits there is a variety of similarity drawn from different levels of being and relationship. It is compared to the union that existed **between Adam and all of posterity** (Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:19-49). It is compared to the union that exists between **man and wife** (Ephesians 5:22-33; cf. John 3:29). It is compared to the union that exists between **the head and other members in the human body** (Ephesians 4:15-16). It is compared to the relation of **the vine and the branches** (John 15) ...The mode, nature, and kind of union differ in the different cases.

- “Every element in the classical *ordo salutis* is thus a further perspective on the one reality of the believer’s union with Christ. Christ becomes our covenant partner, as the Holy Spirit binds us to him. **Everything that is his as the one for us becomes ours**. We become one with Christ in the mysterious union of which becoming one flesh in marriage is an analogy (Ephesians 5:30-32). The closeness of the union is dependent upon our mutual possession by, and possession of, the Holy Spirit. By him, Christ bestows on us all his goods...**The central role of the Spirit is to reveal Christ and to unite us to him and to all those who participate in his body**. Just as the indwelling of Christ and the indwelling of the Spirit are two aspects of one and the same reality in the New Testament, so to sustain us ‘in Christ’ is the heart and soul of the Spirit’s ministry.”

Sinclair Ferguson

- John Calvin, commenting on 1 Corinthians 1:5, states, “...since we have been made one with him [Christ], **he [Christ] shares with us all that he has received from the Father.**”
- In the letters of the Apostle Paul, it is quite clear that it is **only in the context of being ‘in Christ’ that we receive any spiritual blessing**. However, “every spiritual blessing” is ours now in Christ (Ephesians 3:1).
- “Because our union with Christ is earthed in his flesh, and has his Spirit as its bonding agent, we share in the implications of the great moments of his redemptive work; we are thus crucified, buried, raised, and ascended in him (Galatians 2:19-20; Romans 6:1; Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 2:6-3:4). Our lives are no longer determined by what Adam has done, but by what Jesus Christ has done (Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:20).”

Ferguson

⇒ We are united with Christ because Christ took on **human flesh**, He had a **FULLY human nature**; therefore, He could redeem our fallen human nature.

- Louis Berkhof writes, “By this union [being ‘in Christ’] believers are changed into the image of Christ according to his human nature. What Christ effects in his people is in a sense a replica or reproduction of what took place with him. Not only objectively, but in a subjective sense also they bear the cross, are crucified, die and are raised to newness of life with Christ. They share in a measure in the experiences of their Lord.”
- At the Incarnation, the Word became flesh in order to save our humanity. Therefore, the Holy Spirit transforms us “into the image of God that is expressed in Christ’s humanity.” Therefore, in a very real sense, it is only ‘in Christ’ that we become more fully and truly human. Ferguson

⇒ One way in which we can understand the implications of the phrase ‘in Christ’ is to examine the opposite of it: being ‘in Adam’

- **In the final analysis, we are either (a.) ‘in Adam’ [flesh], or (b.) ‘in Christ’ [Spirit]. Either Adam is our representative or Christ is. To be ‘in Adam’ or ‘in Christ’ means to possess all that our representative possesses [both blessings and curses]**
- **“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.”**
1 Corinthians 15:22
- * Read also **Romans 5:12-21**
- This is why it is so significant that the Apostle Paul calls all of those who are ‘in Christ’ ‘new creations’ (2 Corinthians 5:17). **The old creation is of the flesh and has Adam as its head, its representative. The new creation is Spiritual (Romans 8:9) and has Christ as its head.**

* Union with Christ is a very inclusive subject. It embraces the wide span of salvation from its ultimate source in the eternal election of God to its final fruition in the glorification of the elect. It is not simply a phase of the application of redemption; it underlies every aspect of redemption both in its accomplishment and in its application. Union with Christ binds all together and insures that to all for whom Christ has purchased redemption He effectively applies and communicates the same.

Union with Christ is the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation...There is no truth, therefore, more suited to impart confidence and strength, comfort and joy in the Lord than this one of union with Christ.” John Murray