

# **THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: 2 Corinthians 13:14**

## **(Sermon Summary)**

### **Reading: 2 Corinthians 13**

Coming at the end of Paul's second letter to the church in Corinth is this familiar benediction about the communion or fellowship of the Holy Spirit being with us all. But what does it mean? We might be more familiar with thoughts about the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, but find the thought of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit harder to grasp.

The idea that Scripture is conveying here is that we as believers are sharing or partaking with the Holy Spirit in something. We are united to the Holy Spirit and through Him; we are sharing in something. But what might that something be? What is this life or experience that the Holy Spirit is bringing us to be part of?

When we think about the vital role of the Holy Spirit in bringing us life in the first place, and then indwelling us to sanctify us, working in the very depths of our being, we might be right to think of this fellowship of the Holy Spirit as encompassing all of spiritual life as we receive it, understand it, grow in it, and are changed by it. Paul is praying for the believers that they will experience as full an experience as possible of all that the Lord has in mind for them and which is made available to them through the Holy Spirit. So again, this is something that is very deep and very mysterious, but very real.

Some of the texts which help us to understand what the Holy Spirit is going to lead us into include John 10:9-10, where our Lord tells us that He has come to bring us life in all its fullness. That fullness of knowledge, power, love and truth, to name a few things, is what fellowship of the Holy Spirit leads us into. Or as we read in 2 Peter 1:1-4 where we are described, as Christians, as being partakers of the divine nature. We share in the life of God and partake of those things that God can introduce into our lives that make us more and more Christ-like. What is spoken of in 1 John 1:1-4 is fellowship with the Father and the Son. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to make this real and effective. One result of these experiences will be joy. Our Lord, at the beginning of His ministry, announced in Luke 4:16-21, quoting the prophet Isaiah, that He had come to bring liberty and release. Captives and prisoners were now going to be introduced into the life of the Spirit, which is what the Lord had come to bring us by His death and resurrection.

Fellowship of, or with, the Holy Spirit eludes one simple definition. It is certainly not to be reduced to one experience. It will mean something unique for each person, according

to our need and obedience, our besetting sins, and personal infirmities. Certainly, Paul's words are not dull words that convey no meaning or have no real significance behind them. These are prayers and desires for the Lord's people which, when fulfilled, bring us into the richest of experiences of God Himself.

### **1. A ceaseless work**

This is something that has been said before in this sermon series. The Holy Spirit is always at work, whether we admit it or not, are aware of it or not. He works with strong desire to produce the character and life of Christ in us. He will be satisfied with nothing less than this. He will not allow us to settle for what we presently have or know. Neither does He allow us to give Christ second or third place in our lives. He must have first place. Nothing else will do. In this work that He does, He will equip us to serve the Lord in the church and in the world, refining us and our gifts as we travel along. It is not a negative work but a work that is preparing us for a better, more spiritual, more holy life now. This is like the work the Lord does in the believer, pruning us, as we find it described in John 15:1-2. So, we finish with a more fruitful relationship with the Son and the Father, out of which we do more good works, experience more of the reality of the love of God and grow through the contact that the Holy Spirit facilitates with the triune God.

Such fellowship with the Holy Spirit guarantees we will have no pleasure in sin. It guarantees that we will have no rest but will always be moved to repentance and change towards greater sanctification and maturity. Past decisions, inner resolves, and deeply embedded attitudes will come under His scrutiny. This fellowship means that we will always be subject to His 'Wake up!' calls and be required to re-examine our hearts. He brings us to look at our words, our behaviour, our manner of living, and to ever be busy reversing bad decisions, being reconciled to past mistakes and wrong turnings, and seeking to undo the damage of our sin, both in ourselves, and towards other people. The Spirit is always convicting us, always confronting us, always causing us to re-think things and so move towards greater purification. The fellowship of the Holy Spirit helps us to access the great resources of God that His love and grace may abound in us, to His glory.

### **2. Making space for better things**

The fellowship of the Holy Spirit is a positive thing in that He is working to replace what is sinful and unholy with that which is wholesome and good. He makes space for better things through the 'Do nots' of the Bible such as we find in Ephesians 4:25-32. These provoke us and rebuke us, so that we move away from those behaviours, making room then for better things. The Spirit gives us an ear to hear or read the Bible solemnly and seriously so that we pay attention to what it is saying rather than excuse ourselves from what it is teaching us to be and to do. Fellowship with the Holy Spirit means that we

have a Bible that speaks to us and works in us. He gives us an ear to hear the word of God.

As we obey the Lord, so we discover more of the riches of the relationship that fellowship with the Holy Spirit means we will experience. It is not a dull experience but involves change as we proceed in the life of the Spirit. The Lord is pleased to answer our prayers and encourage us much. He creates in us a delight in the word of God and a delight to obey the Lord's law. This is the pathway to exciting discoveries and great joy. The Lord becomes so much more to us than we realized was possible. We see Him as wiser, more generous, more powerful, and more loving than we could previously have imagined. It delivers us from searching anxiously for experiences or getting too stressed about smaller things and the troubles of this life.

This fellowship that Paul desires for the believers in Corinth is something to be known and walked in day-in and day-out. It is both fed by prayer and in turn inspires prayer. At every turn, we can see that this fellowship with the Holy Spirit is vital to our spiritual pilgrimage and our spiritual discoveries. It is therefore a very big prayer and longing that Paul expresses towards the believers in Corinth. We should desire to experience all that the Lord intends us to know of Him.