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Friend of God #3 – God Dwelling with Us

- have you ever had a friend where it seemed like practically every time you were together, your life was enriched?...you felt like you were closer to the Lord, or that you had learned something or been challenged in some way...
- not because it was planned that way in advance...but being around that person always seemed to have a powerful and positive impact on you...
 - where you would say in your heart – I’m in a better position to love and serve God as a result of being around that person...he/she is good for me?...
- If you’re from our town or have lived here a long period of time...you probably remember Pastor Greg Hackett from First Assembly...
 - Greg is now planting a church in Orlando but for many years he pastored First Assembly after he and his father made a leadership transition there around the same time that Pastor Goode and I made one here...
 - Greg and I were about the same age and he was just a good friend for a lot of reasons...
- for one thing, he is one of the funniest people I know...and certain things are funny to pastors that many people probably just wouldn’t get...
 - but I can remember times on the golf course where Greg would get me laughing so hard about some event that had happened at church...or just some church related joke he knew...that I could hardly even hit the golf ball...
 - and if you’ve ever seen me play golf, you know I don’t need any distractions...but it was almost like someone tickling you without even tickling you...and he’d have me laughing so hard that I couldn’t even look at him in the golf cart while I was getting ready to swing at the ball or I’d break up laughing again...
- but that’s not what I appreciated about him the most – what really impacted me was that Greg Hackett has a real heart for missions...if fact after his father retired from First Assembly he became the leader of their denomination’s missions board...
- and sure we always had some doctrinal issues on which we differed – I’m not trying to suggest those things weren’t there...
 - but Greg loved missions so much that it just came out in his conversation...
- and what I liked was—it wasn’t planned or forced—it was just natural because it was who he was...
 - and I would tell people – I like getting time with Greg because I always come away challenged about foreign missions...being around him has a powerful and positive impact on me...
- do you have friends like that?...where you would say...being around them makes me better?...I hope so...
 - and here’s what I’d like to especially emphasize today...
 - if there has been a definite time in your life where you repented of your sin and trusted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord...you certainly have at least one friend like the one we’re describing...it’s the Holy Spirit of God...
 - and that’s what I’d like to talk with you about this morning – the amazing joy of having a friend who is **God Dwelling in Us**.
- with that in mind, please open your Bible to 1 Corinthians chapter 6...page 132 of the back section of the Bible under the chair in front of you...
- our church’s theme this year is Living Life Together...

- and I would encourage you to be thinking each week about whether you are making progress at becoming more connected to your church family here...
- maybe that means you invited a person or a family to have a meal or a visit with you in some setting...
- maybe that meant going out of your way to attend a wedding, or a shower, or a memorial service or a viewing...
- maybe it meant sending a card to someone who was hurting...
- maybe it meant joining an adult Bible fellowship, or a Point man Group, or a Ladies Bible study...
- perhaps it meant participating in a service opportunity...
- maybe it meant finally making the decision to become a Christian this year, or to be baptized, or to attend our Intro to Faith Class, or join our church...this theme could be acted upon in dozens and dozens of ways..
 - and maybe no one else hardly noticed...but you know that that was a step for you...you were moving out of your comfort zone because you wanted to not just be a hearer of the Word...but a doer of what we've been learning from the Word of God this year...
- the last few weeks we've been emphasizing this issue of being a **Friend of God**...
 - the ultimate foundation on which we can live life together...what unifies us and brings/binds us together is our love for Jesus Christ...
 - and we started 2 weeks ago by just considering this outrageous possibility...
 - Abraham is referred to repeatedly in Scripture as the friend of God...
 - Jesus said the same thing about His disciples, people like you and me...He wants us to be His friend...
 - and so we worked through James 2 and studied what saving faith looks like when it's really alive and authentic...how can you tell if a person is really a friend of God...
- then last week, on Mother's Day, Pastor Dutton focused our attention on God Reaching Out to Us...
 - He stands at the door and knocks...not only is He willing to have the friendship, He actually initiates it...
 - because people like you and me who are dead in our trespasses and sins could never initiate such a thing...
 - please don't ever make the theological mistake of thinking that you were primarily a good person and that you were on a life-long search for truth and righteousness and that holy pursuit led you to the door of God's heart on which you began to fervently and faithfully knock...
 - rebels and idolaters (and that is exactly the kind of terminology Scripture would use to describe us in our unregenerate state)...rebels and idolaters do not reach out to a holy God with a humble, softened, repentant heart...
 - and to really understand what it means to be a friend of God---it's critical to realize that it was Jesus standing at the door, and knocking...
- now, this morning, we want to look 1 Corinthians chapter 6 along with several related passages, to see what it means to have the kind of friendship where it's **God Dwelling in Us**.
- please follow along as I read – and please also already be considering this – that this concept of the indwelling presence of God was not given in a vacuum...there is an important context here that makes this concept intensely practical for everyone of us this morning...
- **read 1 Corinthians 6:1-20**

- so we're talking about God Dwelling in Us, and with the time we have remaining, let's think about **3 perspectives from which to view God's indwelling presence.**

I. The Privilege of God's Presence

- it's clear from this book that Paul had the kind of relationship with this church where he could speak very directly with them...and it's also very apparent that that's what they needed at this point in their history...
- so he just says... **1 Corinthians 6:19 - Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you...**
- now, this was one of the reasons we read the entire chapter to get some of the context about church members taking one another to court, or using their bodies that displeased God...and we could have continued after this key text into chapter 7 which talks about the sexual opportunities and responsibilities that married people have to one another...
- the point is – when Paul says – don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit...he's not asking whether they could have answered that question correctly on a theology exam...he's saying, this is...

A. Something that needs to be known and applied practically.

- in Scripture – we don't truly know something until we have allowed that concept to penetrate our hearts and lives in a way that produces genuine change...
- so Paul wanted them, and wants us to take a long drink at the fountain of what it means for our bodies to be the temple of the Holy Spirit...
- so let's do that, shall we?...

B. The Holy Spirit takes up residence inside of you.

- it is that kind of personal, intimate relationship with the Spirit of God...
- now, let's think through some of the key ideas we find in Scripture about this...
- clearly, this phenomenon occurs...

1. at the moment you are saved.

- the fact that we are reading this concept in the book of 1 Corinthians is one of the clear proofs of this idea...
- the Corinthian church was one of the most immature, problem-riddled churches addressed anywhere in Scripture...
 - if there was ever a case to think some people might be followers of Christ but not yet possess the Holy Spirit...it would be right here...
 - but there is no question that Paul addresses this to every person in the church...regardless of the degree to which they are currently living out the implications of their position in Christ and benefitting from the Holy Spirit's power and presence in their lives or not...
- that's why Paul told the church at Rome...
 - **Romans 8:9 - However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.**
 - I don't see how it could be any clearer than that...every person who has trusted Jesus Christ as savior and Lord immediately becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit of God...if you don't have that, you don't belong to Christ...
- and I realize that you might say – but why do some people – who would appear to love God as much as we do, and study His Word as much as we do – say that first you trust Christ and then later you make a second decision to receive the Holy Spirit?...

- generally the answer to that question has to do with how you interpret the book of Acts...are the experiences we read about in that book on the part of the early church transitional, or normative?...
- in other words...did those events occur while the church was in a period of transition between the old and new covenant, prior to the Scriptures being fulfilled...and therefore we should not expect those same things to happen today since the Scriptures are completed and the transition is finalized...
- or, should we expect everything that happened in the early church to be repeated in our day and age?...
- what's the answer – it's the former...
 - so there is no question about the fact that as the various people groups were brought into the church, the Holy Spirit came upon them subsequent to their faith in Christ to make it clear that the decision they made was genuine and that they too were to be considered equal participants in the family of God...
 - but that was never normative for followers of Christ, and passages like 1 Cor 6:19 and Romans 8:9 prove that...
- now, what about those who say on the other end – well, maybe you can have this kind of friendship for a while, but you might lose it...since salvation is a gift of God—it wouldn't be much of a gift if it could be taken away...which is why Scripture is clear that the Holy Spirit takes up residence inside of you...

2. permanently.

- **Ephesians 1:13 - In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,**
- just like an ancient scroll was sealed with hot wax and then stamped with the insignia of the person sending the document with the clear understanding that no unauthorized person could break that seal without serious ramifications...
- it's a beautiful image to describe the permanence of the Holy Spirit taking up residence in our bodies...
- and for any who might wonder about that, Paul even said this toward the end of the book...that this friendship will remain...

3. until the day of redemption.

- **Ephesians 4:30 - Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.**

- now, if all of this is true and it is—no wonder Paul would challenge these men and women by saying...do you not know that this is true...in the sense of, are you living in a way that walks out the practical implications of this marvelous privilege?...
- now I realize that for some of us...perhaps all of us...it is very hard to get our minds around this...because it just seems too good to be true...
- that's why this next phrase is so important...**1 Corinthians 6:19 - ...whom you have from God...**

C. This is one of God's gifts to you.

- and Jesus promised this gift so there would never be a question...
- **John 14:16-17 - "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.**

- now, how do we get from this to something practical that helps us do what Paul wanted the Corinthians to do?...to know this in a way that makes a genuine difference every day?...
- maybe thinking about this will help...

D. All of the resources of the Holy Spirit are available to you.

- what kind of friendship is this...
- just like every time I was around Pastor Hackett – it had a positive impact on me...
- well, how does the fact that the Holy Spirit is living in you provide for you?...here's a short list...

1. His assurance.

Romans 8:16 - The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

- there is no more important question than where you'll spend eternity...and God has given us a personal gift, a personal friend, His own spirit, not just to be available at the end of a phone line if we ever need Him – but resident inside...to help our spirits recall and understand Scripture to provide assurance of our salvation...

2. His fruit

- one of the other seminal passages on this subject is Galatians 5-6...where we read, in part...
- **Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.**
- do you agree with me this morning that any person who could help you develop characteristics like these is a friend for sure?...

3. His gifts.

- **1 Corinthians 12:4 - Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.**
- **1 Peter 4:10 - As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**
- isn't it amazing that in addition to receiving everything that comes with salvation as a free gift from God...we are in turn provided abilities, spiritual gifts to be used in service for Christ...

4. His power.

- Paul prayed that God...
- **Ephesians 3:16- that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,**

5. His comfort

- **Acts 9:31 - So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.**

- and all of that and much more comes under this heading of "whom you have from God..."
- being a friend of God means that you have the Holy Spirit of God personally dwelling in you...

- and I am sure we have men and women here who could say – and PV, that is what sustained me this week...I thought specifically about how wonderful it is that God will never leave me or forsake me...and I allowed the promise of His presence to impact the choices I made...
- and even if you felt like at that moment, you didn't have anyone else that you could count on, or anyone else you could depend upon – you would still say—I found His gracious presence to be enough.

- so there's no question that this is a privilege...but the passage also talks to us about...

II. The Price of God's Presence.

- the Spirit of God cannot take up residence in a vessel unless the problem of sin has been once and for all addressed...and the issue of ownership and control has been determined...that's why the passage says...

A. You have been bought with a price.

- **1 Corinthians 6:20 – For you have been bought with a price.**

- that's why Paul spent so much time emphasizing the cross in the first chapter of this book...

- and that's why in a few chapters, he will provide the church with a blueprint for practicing the Lord's table...where we are instructed to say in part...

- **1 Corinthians 11:25 - In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."**

- that's to remind us that in order for our bodies to enjoy the personal presence of God, a tremendous price had to be paid...

- it's like Peter said -- **1 Peter 1:18-19 - knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.**

- and that...

B. Affects the way you view yourself.

- did you see that at the end of verse 19?...

- **1 Corinthians 6:19 - ...and that you are not your own?**

- this is where the issue of the filling of the Holy Spirit comes into the equation...

- **Ephesians 5:18 - And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,**

- some people think about that from the perspective of amount – we need to get more of the Spirit...

- that's not the case – you receive all of the Holy Spirit you're ever going to receive the moment you repent and believe...

- the point of the text is – being filled with the Spirit is compared to drunkenness...in each case, the issue being controlled, or influenced...

- and followers of Christ would say – I understand that the God who is personally present inside of me is holy and wise...and I joyfully submit to His leadership in my life...

- He bought me...He owns me...and He leads me with His presence...

- now, I realize this has been a lot of heavy theology...and I'd like us to spend the rest of our time thinking about what this looks like practically...but thankfully Paul ends the passage with that in a general way, but its embedded in a context that is highly specific...

- we've talked about the privilege of the privilege of God's presence, and the price—now let's think about...

III. The Purpose of God's Presence

1 Corinthians 6:20 - ...therefore glorify God in your body.

- now, what can we learn from the context to help us make this practical?

A. In the way you attempt to solve problems individually and with others in the church.

- that's the way this chapter started...
- with the unbelievable tendency on the part of some of the people in the church to actually take one another to court...
- and Paul couldn't have been any clearer...
- **1 Corinthians 6:5-8 - I say *this* to your shame. *Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren, but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers? Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud. You do this even to your brethren.***
- and I know I'll be talking to people this morning who in some cases would rather do just about anything before actually sitting down with another person and try to communicate about and solve a problem together...
- there will be some people here who clam up...others who gossip...
- and the excuse might be – but it's just too hard to communicate the way this passage is saying...

- and here's the point of this morning – whose presence is that failing to acknowledge?...
- and that takes us right back to Paul's original question – “don't you know...” not because you couldn't give the correct answer on a theology quiz, but because you aren't letting the truth impact the way you're living...

- earlier I mentioned Galatians 5 – one of the most extended passages in the Bible about what it means for the Holy Spirit to be personally present in the lives of His people...
 - so we read about being filled with the Spirit, and walking in the Spirit, and putting on the fruit of the Spirit...and then the very next topic is what?...

- **Galatians 6:1 - Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.**

B. In the way you promote hope for change.

- there's a direct connection between the topic of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit of God, and the great verses on hope in the middle of this chapter...
- in verses 9-10, there is this whole list of habits and lifestyles that are difficult to change...and then Paul says...
- **1 Corinthians 6:11 - Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.**
- do you realize that there are a lot of people who believe our belief in community based outreach ministry is a bit crazy?...because they rightly ask – what would you do if some of those persons trusted Christ and wanted to become part of the church?...
- and again – whose presence does that fail to acknowledge?...

C. In the way you use your bodies.

- time doesn't allow us to go into all the themes...

- but there is a major emphasis on using our bodies for righteousness...which is impossible...unless the Holy Spirit is resident inside, giving us the strength and grace we need to appropriate God's Word to our hearts and behavior...
- there's also the emphasis in chapter 7 of married people seeking to please one another sexually...
- and that too may be a challenge long term...
- but it's just like when I would spend time with Greg Hackett and then walk away more challenged and confident than ever to follow the Lord...
- when you factor the personal presence of God into the challenges you're facing, it challenges and encouraged you to use your bodies in a way that honors the Lord...
- that makes your body a vessel fitting for the master's use...