

Living By The Spirit
The Spirit of Christ
John 14:15-26

We should be greatly heartened by God's gift of the Holy Spirit. He is God's promise and gift to a secular and ungrateful people. He is life itself for us who otherwise must dread the idea of being without the Spirit (cf. David in Psalm 51). He puts a song in our hearts and a word on our lips and a prayer to God for a world that thinks there are only facts and aspirations.

Because God has blessed us in Christ, and because this blessing comes to us through the Holy Spirit, he is aptly referred to as 'the Spirit of Christ'.

- ▣ The apostles refer to the Spirit in this way (Phil. 1:19; 1 Pet. 1:11), and there is no distinction between him as Spirit of God and Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9).

The Holy Spirit is all about Christ. He predicts Christ's coming and inspires all that he does so that Jesus is the true man of the Spirit.

- ▣ The Spirit stirs the prophets to announce Christ's coming (1 Pet. 1:10-11).
- ▣ The Holy Spirit comes upon Mary to create her child (Luke 1:35).
- ▣ God tears open his heavens to send this Spirit on his Son (Luke 3:22).
- ▣ This Spirit is not given to him 'by measure' (John 3:34) as with us. We may say that the Spirit wholly invests himself in who this Son will be and what he will accomplish because this will be the location of all God's action for our salvation.
- ▣ The Spirit leads him (Luke 4:1), inspires his prayers (Luke 10:21), enables his exorcisms (Matt. 12:22-32), takes him to the cross (Heb. 9:14) and raises him from the dead (Rom. 1:4).
- ▣ When Jesus exorcises the mute-blind-demoniac, he says we may sin against the human Christ and be forgiven, but not sin against the Holy Spirit. Already, the Spirit is taking the things of Christ and 'showing' them—in this case—ineffectively, and with lethal consequences. The same idea is present in the Hebrews letter—if someone insults the Spirit of grace there is no offering left to save us from our sins (Heb. 10:29).
- ▣ Jesus says the disciples know the Spirit because he has been with them (and will be in them)—that is, the Spirit has been evident to the disciples as they watched Jesus in action (John 14:17).
- ▣ For his part, Jesus relied on the Spirit, including his teaching after his resurrection (Acts 1:2).

Jesus goes about all that he does so that the Spirit may be poured out on us.

- ▣ If we know who Jesus is and ask for *his* water of life, he will give it—so that we have his fountain of life within us (John 4:14). If we are thirsty and come to him to drink, rivers of living water will flow from us (7:38-39)! Our identity and our enduring energy are Christ's to give, and he will give freely to all who come to him. But this

living water will not flow until Christ is glorified—and this takes place, both in his death (John 12:27-28; 17:1), and in his resurrection and ascension (Acts 2:33).

- Jesus longs to fulfill the mission announced by John the Baptist—to baptize us in the Spirit and with fire (Luke 12:49; with Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5:2:33). But it is a baptism that will begin with him, and he longs for its accomplishment.
- He asks the Father for the new Advocate to come (John 14:16-17). His life and victory will be communicated to us in the coming of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit takes the person and completed ministry of Jesus—‘the things that are mine’—and shows them to the disciples and to us all—‘all flesh (John 15:26; 16:13-15; Acts 1:8).

- He shows us Christ, not as spectators or commentators but as participants in all God has accomplished for us (e.g. Rom. 5:5; Eph. 1:18; 3:16-17).

Our experience of the Christ and the Holy Spirit is seamless.

- We actually know Christ, and know the Spirit (John 14:17).
- Jesus calls the Spirit another Advocate (John 14:16-18). He will be the new presence that Jesus has been. But in him, Jesus will be present. Just as we see the Father in the face of Christ, so we see Christ by the wind of the Spirit.
- It is important not to be sentimental about the earthly presence of Jesus. In the coming of the Spirit we have the real presence of Christ. Later generations of believers are no further away from Christ than the first believers. Christ is not just a memory; he is a presence.
- The actions of Christ and the Spirit are one.
 - Both come to us as God’s holy visitants (John 6:69; John 14:26).
 - Both come to us as the truth (John 14:6, 17; 15:26; 16:13).
 - Both bear witness (John 3:11; 15:26);
 - Both convict of sin (John 8:44-47; John 16:8).
 - Both teach (John 14:20, 26);
 - Both come to bring freedom (Rom. 8:15-16; 2 Cor. 3:17).
 - Both give life (Rom 8:2).
 - Both are ignored by the world (John 14:17).

For us, there can be no Spirit without Christ.

- The Holy Spirit shows things ‘that are to come’ (John 16:13). Some things could not be explained before the coming of the Spirit, or before the exigencies that arose—such as the conversion of Gentiles.
- This work of the Spirit is never contrary to the Christ of history or apart from what he accomplished in his death and resurrection.
- The Holy Spirit came to the apostles in revelation, but to the church in enlightenment. Already, in the New Testament, there are warnings about ‘revelations’ that do not hold to the truth once delivered to the saints.

For us, there can be no Christ without the Spirit.

- The birth, the teaching, the miracles, the crucifixion, the resurrection and the ascension of Christ remain myths—regardless of how inspiring they may be—apart from the Holy Spirit.
- We should pray for outpourings of the Holy Spirit—for our pastors and evangelists, for us all as hearers, so that Christ and the Father may be known.