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USING EXPOSITORY PREACHING TO INTRODUCE
THE HOLY SPIRIT'S PERSON, POWER, AND WORK
TO FORT HOWARD COMMUNITY CHURCH,
FORT HOWARD, MARYLAND

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the Faculty of
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by
Michael Anthony Shafran, Jr.

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HOWARD COMMUNITY CHURCH, FORT HOWARD,
MARYLAND

Michael Anthony Shafran, Jr.

Read and Approved by:

Michael E. Pohlman (Faculty Supervisor)

William F. Cook, III

Date _____

To Julie,

The love of my life and my best friend!

It is a joy to serve the Lord with you and our wonderful
children, Michael, Anna, Will, and Emma.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	viii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose	1
Goals	1
Ministry Context	2
Rationale	4
Definitions, Limitations, and Delimitations	5
Research Methodology	7
2. THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR PREACHING THEOLOGY AND THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	11
Introduction	11
God Has Revealed Himself and is to be Known	11
General Revelation	12
Special Revelation	13
God is to be Known	16
The Holy Spirit is Deity and a Person Who is Knowable	18
Deity of the Holy Spirit	18
Personhood of the Holy Spirit	22
The Holy Spirit Is the God of Creation and Regeneration	22
Ezekiel 36:26-27	23
John 3:5-8	24

Chapter	Page
The Holy Spirit Gives Believers Security through Spirit Baptism and Sealing.....	26
Spirit Baptism	26
Spirit Sealing	28
The Spirit is the Spirit of Adoption and Works Obedience in the Lives of Believers.....	29
Romans 8:14-17.....	30
Galatians 4:1-7.....	31
The Spirit of God Changes the Affections of Believers	33
Believers Possess the Holy Spirit	33
Believers Live According to the Spirit	33
Believers Are Transformed by the Spirit.....	35
The Spirit Is the Author of Scripture and Illuminates Scripture to Conform Believers to the Image of Christ	35
The Spirit Is the Author of Scripture	35
The Spirit Illuminates Scripture to Believers	37
Believers are to Walk by the Spirit Exhibiting the Fruit of the Spirit	38
Works of the Flesh.....	38
Walking by the Spirit.....	39
The Spirit Gifts Believers for Speaking and Service	40
Purpose of the Gifts	41
Speaking Gifts	42
Service Gifts	44
Believers can be Confident in Prayer Now and of the Glory of Final Sanctification that is to Follow.....	45
The Spirit and Prayer.....	45
The Spirit and Glorification.....	46

Chapter	Page
Conclusion	47
3. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED TO PREACHING THE PERSON, POWER, AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	49
Introduction	49
The Spirit and Christians' Communion with God	49
Views of the Spirit's Purpose	50
Central Role of the Holy Spirit	54
The Spirit's Use of the Scriptures in Christians' Sanctification	56
The Believer's Role	57
The Holy Spirit's Role	61
Preaching and Sanctification	62
The Spirit's Use of Prayer in Christians' Sanctification	64
Biblical Mandate on Prayer	65
Scripture Reading and Prayer	66
The Spirit's Work in Prayer	67
The Spirit's Work in Christians' Sanctification	69
Holy Spirit's Work and Believer's Work	69
The Agent of Sanctification	70
Conclusion	73
4. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	74
Overview	74
The Project and Participants	74
The Sermon Series	74
The Sermon Evaluations	78
The Project Results	79
5. PROJECT EVALUATION	86

	Page
Introduction	86
Evaluation of the Project's Purpose	86
Evaluation of Goal 1	86
Evaluation of Goal 2	86
Evaluation of Goal 3	87
Strengths of the Project	87
Weaknesses of the Project.....	88
What I Would Do Differently	89
Theological Reflections	89
Personal Reflections.....	90
Conclusion	90
 Appendix	
1. DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT SURVEY	92
2. PREACHING RUBRIC	96
3. LETTER TO CHURCH	98
4. SERMON EVALUATION RESULTS	99
5. OBJECTIVE DATA FROM PRE- AND POST- SURVEYS.....	110
BIBLIOGRAPHY	114

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
A1. T-Test: Paired two sample results	110
A2. Pre- and post-test results.....	111
A3. Total scores questions 1-5	112
A4. Total scores questions 6-10	112
A5. Total scores questions 11-15	112
A6. Total scores questions 16-20	113
A7. Total scores questions 21-25	113

PREFACE

The inspiration for the project came to me prior to my having the privilege of preaching the Word of God. I listened through a series of sermons by John Piper, in which he explored the doctrine of regeneration. I had always heard expository preaching on a book-by-book basis but never on a topic of systematic theology. Since I have a great love for systematic theology and for preaching, it spurred me to explore how this needed aspect of preaching might be implemented in my own church.

I would like to express my unwavering gratitude to Dr. James Mook of The Master's Seminary (formerly at Capital Bible Seminary) for his deep dedication to the Lord through teaching systematic theology and for evaluating the sermons for this project. I appreciate the work of Pastor John Banks and Joshua Heins in reviewing all my sermons for this project. I would like to thank the professors at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for their dedication to "preach the Word." I would especially like to thank Dr. Michael Pohlman, who graciously became my supervisor mid-way through the project. I am grateful to Dr. Bill Cook for opening my eyes to preaching the gospels more effectively and for the ministry of Ninth & O Baptist Church. To the saints at Fort Howard Community Church, I thank the Lord for your love of the Word and the privilege to preach each Lord's Day. I am ever grateful to my parents, Mike and Betty Shafran, for their godly example and to my in-laws, Bill and Cindy Spence, for their constant support. Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Julie, for her love, dedication, and perseverance. She supports me without fail and loves the Lord and solid preaching.

Michael Shafran

Fort Howard, Maryland
May 2017

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to use expository preaching to introduce the Holy Spirit's person, power, and work to the congregation of Fort Howard Community Church (FHCC) in Fort Howard, Maryland.

Goals

The first goal was to assess the knowledge and attitude concerning the person, power, and work of the Holy Spirit of FHCC members and committed attendees. This assessment of pneumatology showed the strengths and weaknesses that exist in both doctrinal knowledge and practical application at FHCC. This goal was measured by administering a pre-sermon series survey to a minimum twenty members and committed attendees at FHCC regarding doctrinal questions concerning knowledge of the Holy Spirit as well as personal, practical questions regarding the Holy Spirit in their lives.¹ These minimum twenty believers were selected to represent the members and committed attendees including, young and older adults, men and women, and older and newer believers. This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum twenty believers completed the survey and it was analyzed yielding a clearer picture of the strengths and weaknesses of their knowledge and attitude of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

The second goal was to develop a ten-week expository sermon series on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of this series was to develop a method of

¹See appendix 1.

preaching systematic theology called expository doctrinal preaching. This goal was measured by an elder of FHCC, a pastor outside FHCC, and a theologian outside FHCC who utilized a rubric to evaluate the series for expository principles, biblical faithfulness, clarity, and relevance of the sermon series.² This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of all the rubric evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficient level.

The third goal was to preach a ten-week sermon series to introduce the doctrine of the Holy Spirit to the congregation of FHCC. This goal was measured by a post-series survey to the same minimum twenty members and committed attendees at FHCC to measure a change in doctrinal knowledge and change in personal, practical application of the knowledge of the Holy Spirit in their lives. This goal was considered successfully met when the t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-survey scores.

Ministry Context

This project took place in Fort Howard Community Church, Fort Howard, Maryland. Three aspects that pertain to the context of FHCC impacted this project. First, the church has a strong commitment to the Bible, but it lacked a formal study of the Bible. Most of the members and attendees of FHCC are blue-collar workers and professionals outside the realm of academia, including many retired steel workers along with farmers and police officers. A few are involved in education, such as high school or special education, but very few have any formal Bible training in a Bible college or seminary. They have a general, surface understanding of the Word that leads them to missing a depth to the Word especially in certain areas of theology.

²See appendix 2.

Second, FHCC has enjoyed a rich heritage of expository preaching, but this preaching has lacked theological reflection. Founded in 1947 as a continuation of Sunday school classes held at a military fort by a chaplain, FHCC seemed to be formed without a real commitment to specific doctrine. Fortunately, several of the first full time pastors from Washington Bible College (WBC) and Capital Bible Seminary (CBS) saw the need for theological soundness and over twenty years after its founding developed the church's first formal doctrinal statement.

For the last thirty-five years, WBC and CBS have provided FHCC with expositors and shepherds who proved to be faithful to the Word of God but have neglected to show the connections of individual texts and certain theological themes. Through the years, FHCC leaders have attempted to fill the theological and practical voids through Sunday school curriculum, Sunday evening services, and specific home Bible study topics. These services were lightly attended, no matter the study. Therefore, if FHCC was to grow in understanding of theological doctrine, it had to come from expository preaching.

Third, while the congregation exhibited a love and understanding of foundational doctrines such as Christology and soteriology, they needed a richer understanding and desire for the Holy Spirit's person, work, and power. Fortunately, not all areas of systematic theology have been equally neglected. For example, historically FHCC has shown a love for the gospel (soteriology), specifically justification by faith alone, not by works. FHCC is located in a heavily Roman Catholic area in which many have attended or grown up in the Roman Catholic Church. With the Catholic emphasis on works, and with many people in FHCC with Catholic backgrounds, a heightened sensitivity of the truth of justification by faith alone through the work of Jesus Christ developed. However, other doctrines are or have been neglected by expository preaching in the past. Pneumatology was one of them. In preaching through the series of doctrinal expository messages on the Holy Spirit, I attempted to show FHCC the beauty and

necessity of all areas of theology in their lives to create a desire to understand other doctrines as well.

Rationale

The context of FHCC above shows that there were three strong rationales for this project, namely the content of theological exposition, the means of expository preaching, and the practical application of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in their lives. The first is that people were eager to learn the content of the Scriptures and embraced theology preached, in particular the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Currently, there is a spirit of unity at FHCC. Many desire to grow in godliness and evangelism. The New Testament commands preachers to teach sound doctrine, to follow it in godliness, and to be careful not to stray from it (Eph 4:14; 1 Tim 1:3, 6:3-4; Titus 1:9, 2:1, 10). If people were going to be able to recognize false doctrine they needed to be taught sound doctrine. FHCC was ready to take the next step from book by book exposition to theological exposition.

The second was the means by which the doctrine of the Holy Spirit must be taught, namely expository preaching. While the great doctrines of the faith have perhaps been taught in the past in various means such as Sunday school, small groups, or Sunday evening service, the people of FHCC greatly value the Sunday morning pulpit. I have labored hard to win the trust of the people by showing faithful and practical exposition in order to lead them to grander doctrines through the Bible. I believed if the people were going to learn the great doctrines of the faith it was going to have to come from the pulpit in the form of expository preaching. Perhaps by understanding theology better first from the pulpit, a fire was lit that will be able to spread by other means. But for now, if theology was to be taught, and it must, it had to come from expository preaching.

The third was the need for the practical aspects of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit to be taught. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit had been mentioned in various texts such as John 3, 14, and 2 Timothy 3, but He had not been focused upon. It did the people

well to hear, learn, and apply teaching about the Holy Spirit found in the Scriptures. The centrality of the gospel had been the focus for quite some time and the people were ready to grow in the gospel. It was needful for the people to see exactly who the Holy Spirit is, understand His power, and experience His work today. This is needful for the growth of the people toward godliness and evangelism. For example, concerning inspiration, virtually all the people understood was that the Holy Spirit is the author of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16). Concerning sanctification, some may have understood the Spirit is the Person of the Trinity who works in believers transforming them into the image of Christ (2 Cor 3:18; Rom 8:28-29). Yet few would have put the two truths together to see the means by which the Spirit is going to produce godliness in the believer is through the Word of God. For the growth of the people toward personal godliness and evangelism, I believe the people of FHCC needed to hear the great doctrine of the Holy Spirit unleashed from the pulpit through expository preaching.

Definitions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Technical and theological terms used throughout this project are defined below to aid the reader.

Expository preaching / sermon. “The technical definition of an expository sermon requires that it expound Scripture by deriving from a specific text main points and sub points that disclose the thought of the author, cover the scope of the passage, and are applied to the lives of listeners.”³

Inspiration. “A term referring to the fact that the words of Scripture are spoken by God. Because of the weak sense of this word in ordinary usage, this text prefers the term ‘God-breathed’ to indicate that the words of Scripture are spoken by God.”⁴

³Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 23.

⁴Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 1245.

Regeneration. “Regeneration is a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to us. This is sometimes called ‘being born again’”⁵

Sanctification. “A progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and more like Christ in our actual lives.”⁶

Spirit adoption. “An act of God whereby he makes us members of his family.”⁷

Spirit baptism. “The Spirit’s activity that joins the believer to the body of Christ at the time of salvation.”⁸

Spirit illumination. The “illumination by the Holy Spirit helps the Scripture reader or hearer understand the Bible and creates the conviction that it is true and is the Word of God.”⁹

Spirit indwelling. This is the teaching that all true believers have the Holy Spirit living in them. “To express indwelling Paul not only used the preposition *en* but also the verb *oikeō*, to dwell (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16; though, of course, sometimes he used only the preposition as in 6:19). He related this ministry of the Spirit to all believers.”¹⁰

Spirit seal / guarantee. An “evidence that God keeps those who are born again safe for eternity is the ‘seal’ that God places upon us. This ‘seal’ is the Holy Spirit within us, who also acts as God’s ‘guarantee’ that we will receive the inheritance promised to us.”¹¹

The only limitation on this project was it took place in a single location, Fort

⁵Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1253.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., 1235.

⁸Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1986), 624.

⁹Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 283.

¹⁰Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 409.

¹¹Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 790–91.

Howard Community Church, where the normal sermon length was expected to be between 40-45 minutes long.

The first delimitation was that the sermon series did not include every passage in the Bible dealing with the Holy Spirit. Rather, the sermons consisted of representative passages. The second delimitation was that the sermon series did not include every aspect of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. While the sermons dealt with the major aspects of Pneumatology, the sermon series was considered an introduction. The third delimitation in the sermon series was the depth of material. While each facet of Pneumatology could have been its own series, the sermon series was an in-depth overview. For example, when preaching on the spiritual gifts, the sermon gave an overview of the spiritual gifts without an in-depth analysis of continuationist versus cessationist views. However, the sermon presented these views and endorsed a cessationist position. The fourth delimitation was the series lasted ten weeks. While this doctrine could be preached for longer, in order to gain a healthy overview and grasp of this doctrine, this time frame seemed most appropriate.

Research Methodology

The research for this project included the following instrumentation: a pre- and post-sermon survey for the member and attendees and a rubric to evaluate the sermon series.¹² Three goals were utilized to determine the effectiveness and success of this project. The first was to evaluate the pre-series survey to determine the knowledge and attitude concerning the person, power, and work of the Holy Spirit.¹³

The survey was completed by a minimum twenty members / regular attendees

¹²All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project. See appendixes 1 and 2.

¹³See appendix 1.

of FHCC. They were at least 18 years old and agreed to do this voluntarily. They agreed to attend / listen to at least eight of the ten sermons. Sermons were posted on the church's website so it was possible for a person to miss a service or two yet still be able to hear all the sermons. Each person chose a unique 4-digit code for the survey and remained anonymous.

The pre- and post-sermon survey was a series of questions conducted using a t-test for dependent samples. The questions assessed two areas using a 6-point Likert scale. The first aspect of the survey examined their understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The survey gave doctrinal statements to determine the participant's agreement. The response showed the knowledge of the participant. For example, the survey asked participants to respond to statements such as "The 'miraculous' gifts such as tongues and healings are in existence today" and "The Holy Spirit is a Person." Other areas of understanding include regeneration, inspiration, sealing, miraculous gifts (tongues was used too as a representative gift), Holy Spirit's deity and personhood, as well as sanctification.

The second part of the survey examined the relation of the participants' beliefs to their practice in their lives. The survey gave practical statements such as "I know my spiritual gift" and "I depend on the Holy Spirit when sharing the gospel." The goal was met once the pre-sermon survey was completed. The surveys were examined for strong and weak areas in doctrine and practice.

The second goal was to develop a ten-week sermon series on doctrines of the Holy Spirit. In doing this, the sermons utilized a method of preaching expository doctrinal messages. The series focused on maintaining the major tenants of expository preaching, such as upholding the author's original intent, seeking the central idea of the passage, utilizing the context, and applying the message of the text to a doctrinal passage of Scripture. The major difference from traditional expository preaching was that it was not necessarily seriatim, but rather focused on a passage that supported the theological

teaching on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Though each sermon may have been from a different book, the sermons were linked to the previous ones to present a systematic theology.

The sermon series reflected the results of the pre-sermon series. Strengths and weaknesses of the pre-sermon series were the basis for the emphasis of the series. Those areas that were weak gained more attention. The sermon series was evaluated by three men in leadership positions. The first was a member of the FHCC leadership team, the second was an outside pastor, and the third was a theologian.

Each man evaluated the sermon series using a rubric looking for the following areas: expository principles, biblical faithfulness, clarity, and relevance.¹⁴ Any sermon that evaluated below 90 percent “sufficient” was reworked and resubmitted until it passed the 90 percent “sufficient” approval from the panel. First, the sermon was doctrinal but expository in nature. The evaluation looked at areas such as preaching the main idea of the text, proper illustrations, author’s original intent, and context. Second biblical faithfulness was evaluated. The evaluation looked at areas such as analogy of faith (i.e., Scripture compared with Scripture) and orthodox doctrine. Ultimately the text produced the doctrine and not the doctrine being read into the text. Third, clarity was evaluated. Though at times exegesis is technical, that does not need to follow into the pulpit. Clarity was evaluated on ease of understanding, conciseness, and support of argument. Finally, the sermon series was evaluated based on relevance. This sermon series was not to be for mere knowledge, but was also to move in the affections of the people for change. Therefore it had to be relevant to their lives. This was evaluated on the need for the message, practicality of the sermon, and application in specific ways for change in the hearers’ lives.

The third goal was to preach the ten-week sermon series to introduce the

¹⁴See appendix 2.

doctrine of the Holy Spirit. This goal was measured by the post-sermon survey to the same minimum twenty believers at FHCC. The t-test for dependent samples was used. The goal was deemed successful if it demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-survey. From hearing the doctrinal expository sermons on the Holy Spirit, it was the ultimate objective to have people at FHCC being transformed into the image of Christ.

CHAPTER 2
THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR
PREACHING THEOLOGY AND THE DOCTRINE
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Introduction

Theology is not to be left in books. Rather, it is to be proclaimed from the pulpit to the pews for the understanding of church. Paul tells the preacher Timothy that the Scriptures are profitable for “doctrine” and exhorts him to “preach the word” (2 Tim 3:16; 4:2). The final outcome of the proper understanding of Bible doctrine is preaching. Right doctrine is vital for Christian living. As Warren Wiersbe states, “Wrong doctrine always leads to wrong living. Right doctrine should lead to right living.”¹ The goal of the believer is Christlikeness. This chapter will argue through exegesis of various passages that Systematic Theology in general, and Pneumatology in particular, are essential to the Christian life.

God Has Revealed Himself and is to be Known

God revealed Himself to mankind. Because humans are finite and God is infinite, if they are to know God it must come by God’s manifestation of Himself.² From the beginning of creation, the Lord interacted with man in a relational way and showed Himself to man. Adam was made in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27). Because man was made in the image of God, man was uniquely blessed when God communicated with

¹Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary New Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Chariot Victor Publishing, 1992), 2:105.

²Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 178.

Adam “in the form of direct address.”³ God has not hidden Himself from man. He revealed Himself by means, namely, general revelation and special revelation.

General Revelation

The general revelation of God is “God’s communication of himself to all persons at all times and in all places.”⁴ God revealed Himself for all to see. Everyone is able to understand at least something about God. Paul states “For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them” (Rom 1:19). This knowledge of God is further explained to be His “eternal power and divine nature” (Rom 1:20). But this knowledge is not to be understood as the message of the gospel. As Tom Schreiner writes, “Paul’s purpose is to show that the knowledge of God that all people have through observing the created order is suppressed (v. 18) and distorted (vv. 21-23), so that all without exception have no excuse.”⁵

This knowledge of God is a general knowledge of God that is usually expressed in three areas: nature, history, and the moral make up of human beings.⁶ People are able to simply look at creation itself and know that someone has created it. As the Psalmist states, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork” (Ps 19:1). Many have turned and worshipped the creation rather than the Creator (Rom 1:25). “The ancients were tempted to ‘kiss their hand’ to sun and moon and the host of heaven. . . .; the moderns to explain them away as fortuitous, in one mood, or to revert to astrology in another. Only the Christian is moved to filial wonder and joy at

³Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 67.

⁴Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 178.

⁵Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 85.

⁶Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 178.

the thought of their Maker.”⁷ But the general revelation of God in nature alone is not sufficient to save.

Others see the general revelation of God in His moving of history. Since God is the One who moves in history, His hand should be detected. Erickson rightly states that this is not as easy to discern as the glories of nature for “history is less accessible than nature” and is dependent upon the work of others and uncertain accuracy.⁸ Nevertheless, one can see God’s hand in the preservation of His people Israel.⁹

General revelation of God is finally found in the aspect that man is made in God’s image and therefore is a moral being. By looking at man and his understanding of morality, there is seen in him the mark of the Creator. Paul states, “For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves [and] show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness” (Rom 2:14-15). Man, though marred by the fall, has some sense of right and wrong. This is a reflection upon being made in the image of God and points toward a Creator. Though man is able to see something of God in nature, history, and himself, he still is not able to know of the saving work of Christ in the Gospel. Man needs more than general revelation, he needs special revelation to know God savingly.

Special Revelation

Whereas general revelation is seen in nature, history, and the morality of man, special revelation is “God’s words addressed to specific people, such as the words of the Bible, the words of the Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles, and the words of God spoken in personal address, such as at Mount Sinai or at the baptism of

⁷Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72* (repr., Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 115.

⁸Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 179.

⁹Ibid.

Jesus.”¹⁰ Because of the depravity of man, God’s special revelation is essential. Michael Horton states, “Like the ruins of a grand castle, human knowledge of God is grossly disfigured. For both a true interpretation of nature and any news of God’s gracious gospel, we require *special* revelation.”¹¹

Before the fall, man enjoyed fellowship with God. After the fall, this relationship was lost. For this relationship to be reestablished, man had to rightly know God. The only way for man to rightly know God is for God to reveal Himself. The Lord has indeed made Himself known in various ways. Erickson explains three modes of special revelation: historical events, Divine speech, and the incarnation.¹²

There are many historical events that can be attributed to God alone. For example, when Joshua led the Israelites across the river Jordan, this historical event spoke to the people in the land and revealed something about God. It can be argued that this revelation was something beyond mere general revelation for when the news of this event reached Rahab, she sought the Lord’s spies asking for mercy (Josh 2:12-13). When the inhabitants of Jericho heard of historical events of the Jordan River crossing and the crossing of the Red Sea, the inhabitants’ hearts melted so much that “there was no spirit left in any man because of you for the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath” (Josh 2:11). The event went beyond general revelation of God, for at least Rahab and her family, because it led to their salvation.

God is not only a God of history but also a God of speaking. Mankind communicates in various ways but perhaps the most common way is through verbal communication. The phrase “The Lord said” occurs 275 times, “God said” occurs 52

¹⁰Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 123.

¹¹Michael Scott Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 151.

¹²Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 207–16.

times, “the word of the LORD came to me” occurs 62 times in the Bible.¹³ For example, when God wanted to communicate His covenant with Abram, He did so by the mode of speaking:

Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Gen 12:1)

The incarnation of Jesus Christ provides the final mode of revelation. This is affirmed directly by Scripture. The writer of Hebrews states, “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world” (Heb 1:1-2). God has revealed Himself most fully in His Son. Jesus stated to Philip, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). Jesus Himself reveals the Father unlike anyone or anything else. For “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power” (Heb 1:3).

God has revealed Himself in history, speaking, and in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. But God also has revealed Himself in the Word of God. It is in and through the Word of God that we interpret history and the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Without the verbal Word of God, the meaning of these events would not be understood. The written Word of God is the surest way for believers to understand and to know for certain whom God is and what His will is. Wayne Grudem states, “In the Bible . . . we have clear and definite statements about God’s will. God has not revealed all things to us, but he has revealed enough for us to know his will.”¹⁴ The Bible is the testimony to seeing God speaking in history, recording many of God’s sayings, and reporting on the incarnation of

¹³Bibleworks search on these phrases in the English Standard Version.

¹⁴Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 119.

Jesus. The Bible then serves as revelation for those who came after these events and serves to preserve these so God's people can be sure to know what the Lord's will is.¹⁵

Many verses speak to the testimony of the Word of God being true and trustworthy. The apostle Peter declares that "knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet 1:20-21). Scripture has as its Author the Holy Spirit and is not a mere interpretation of events. It is the very Word of God.

This special revelation of God is profitable. Paul writes to Timothy and shares with him the importance of Scripture that "from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim 3:15). Paul explains to Timothy that "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16-17). In other words, Scripture is all that a believer needs to be completely equipped to live a life that is pleasing to the Lord. This is why Paul instructs young Timothy to "preach the Word" (2 Tim 4:2). God specially reveals Himself in the Words of Scripture.

God is to be Known

Since God has revealed Himself in the Scripture in a special way, He communicates to mankind in a way that He is able to be known. He does not speak in hidden codes or riddles, but rather in normal, understandable language. Though we see something about God through His general revelation, special revelation is needed to know specifically about Him and His ways.

¹⁵Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*, vol. 1, *Revelation and Inspiration* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 173.

God not only revealed Himself to man through His Word, but He also provided man a way to be reconciled to Himself through His Son. Because of the fall, man was alienated from God. Man was counted His enemy and dead in his trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1-3). But God made a way for man to know Him relationally again – through reconciling Himself to man by the death of His Son. Paul states this very truth in Colossians 1:21-22 “And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.” Christ sought to “reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility” (Eph 2:16). Jesus Himself states this when He reveals to Thomas, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

God made a way of providing eternal life for man. Eternal life is more than saving people from hell. Eternal life is the reconciling of man with God. Man, who was previously unable to know God, is now in a state of fellowship with the Creator. As Jesus tells the Father in His High Priestly prayer, “And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17:3). Thus, eternal life is indeed knowing God which comes through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Since God revealed Himself in the Bible and made a way for man to know Him through Jesus Christ, it is also noted that God calls men to know Him. This is supported by the Scriptures which call for men to repent and to believe the gospel (Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38), to seek the Lord (Deut 4:29; Isa 55:6), and Jesus’s call “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt 11:28) and ““If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water’” (John 7:37-38).

One can conclude that God is a revealing God and has shown Himself to man. He has revealed Himself in a general way that is apparent to all. However, this revelation is not sufficient to bear the message of gospel. The specific message of the gospel is

found in God's special revelation to man, the Bible. Since this message is revealed, it is concluded that man is to seek the God Who has revealed Himself. This is essential for every person to do. As Isaiah 55:6-7 states, "Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

The Holy Spirit Is Deity and a Person Who Is Knowable

The nature of the Holy Spirit is misunderstood by many in the church. When people speak of the Holy Spirit, they seem to speak carefully. Some neglect the Holy Spirit, avoiding Him lest they be accused of being too mystical or charismatic. Some overemphasize the Holy Spirit to the neglect of the Father and Son. Many do not even understand that the Holy Spirit is a Person, rather thinking of Him as a force. These extremes and misconceptions are not helpful and should be corrected. The Scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit is fully God and is a Person who the Christian is to know.

Deity of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God. This is taught in a variety of places in Scripture that will be developed in two ways: The Holy Spirit's attributes and His relationship to the Godhead.

The Holy Spirit's attributes. If the Holy Spirit possesses attributes that only God possesses, then the conclusion must be that the Holy Spirit is God, equal in essence with the Father and the Son. The first mention of the Holy Spirit is in creation in Genesis 1:2, which states, "And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." Verse 1 clearly states that "God created" leaving the conclusion that if the Spirit of God

is present, He is not a part of creation but rather is the Creator.¹⁶ No one is the Creator but God alone (Ps 33:6).

In the Scriptures, when the Holy Spirit is mentioned, He is very often attributed with characteristics that belong to God alone. David does this in Psalm 139:8-9 when he is sharing the glory and grandeur of God. He explains God's omniscience in verses 1-6 and omnipotence in verses 13-18. In between those sections, David delves into the omnipresence of God in verses 7-12.¹⁷ It is here that he speaks not of the Father or the Son but of the Holy Spirit specifically asking, "Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!" (vv. 7-8). There is no one who possesses the quality of being everywhere at once except for God alone. Since the Holy Spirit is omnipresent, He must be God.

The Holy Spirit is described as knowing everything as well, in the fact that no one gives Him counsel (Isa 40:13).¹⁸ No one can show or teach the Spirit anything He does not already know. He is fully and completely knowledgeable of all things. Only God knows all things (1 Cor 2:9-13). Since the Holy Spirit is omniscient, He must be God.

A third attribute that continues with the Holy Spirit's omnipresence and omniscience is His omnipotence. The Holy Spirit is capable of doing powerful acts that no one other than the all-powerful God can accomplish, such as giving life (Job 33:4; Ps 104:30). The only one who creates life is the source of life, God Himself. Since the Holy Spirit has the power to create life, among other things, He demonstrates His

¹⁶The concept of the Holy Spirit's being the Creator and Re-creator, or the Agent of regeneration, will be developed in the next section.

¹⁷Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 98.

¹⁸Ibid.

omnipotence.¹⁹ Since only God is omnipotent and the Holy Spirit demonstrates this, the Holy Spirit must be God.

The Holy Spirit's relation to the Godhead. The Holy Spirit is unique in His relation to the Godhead. He is not described as subservient to the Father and Son in His essence. He is very God of very God in His being. The Scriptures place the Holy Spirit as equal to the Father and Son.

In Jesus's Great Commission to the disciples, He commands them to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:19). The word "name" (τὸ ὄνομα) is singular yet signifies a plurality of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, showing equality in the Trinity.²⁰ The Spirit is also shown to be of equal essence in the Trinity in 2 Corinthians 13:14 which states, "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." This grace comes equally from all three Persons of the Trinity.

In John 14:16 Jesus tells His disciples that He will send "another" (ἄλλος) helper in His place when He departs. He is speaking of the Holy Spirit. When He speaks of "another" He is meaning "the Spirit's presence with the disciples will replace Jesus' presence with them while on earth. According to John, then, the primary role of the Spirit is that of substitute presence for Jesus: 'he lives with you and will be in you' (14:17)"²¹

¹⁹Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Anderson (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir, 1980), 88. Basil states, "He [The Spirit] gives life together with the Father who enlivens all things, and with the life-giving Son" (Rom 8:11, John 10:27-28). "But the Spirit gives life in the Same way" (Rom 8:10). "The Lord testifies that 'the Spirit gives life; the flesh profits nothing'" (John 6:63). "How can we separate the Spirit from His life-giving power and associate Him with things which by nature are lifeless? Who is so perverse; who is so devoid of the heavenly gift, so un nourished by God's good words; who is so empty of sharing eternal hopes, that he would separate the Spirit from the Godhead and number Him among Creatures?"

²⁰Bruce A. Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 40.

²¹Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Encountering John: The Gospel in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspective*, annotated ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 157.

Certainly, as John Calvin notes, this shows the distinction of the Person of Christ and the Holy Spirit.²² Only God can fully take the place of God. This was accomplished when the Spirit took the place of Christ on Earth.

Finally, Paul shows the grand redemptive work of the Trinity in Ephesians 1:3-14. He deals with the work of the Father in verses 3-6, the Son in verses 7-12, and the Spirit in verses 13-14. Each Person has unique roles but Paul concludes each description with either “to the praise of his glorious grace” (v. 6) or “to the praise of his glory” (vv. 12, 14). The Father, Son, and Spirit are all awarded “glory” for their work in salvation. The Lord does not give His glory to another (Isa 42:8). Since the Spirit is ascribed glory along with the Father and the Son, it must be concluded that He is God.

Other proofs of the Holy Spirit’s deity. When the Scriptures mention the Holy Spirit, Deity is attributed to Him in various ways. The Holy Spirit’s titles show He is Deity due to the fact He “proceeds from God and keeps all creatures alive.”²³ Because He proceeds from the God, Herman Bavinck notes, “He is called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of the Father (Gen. 1:2; Isa. 11:2; Matt 10:20), as well as the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the Son (Rom. 8:2, 9; 1 Cor. 2:4-16; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; Phil. 1:19; Gal. 3:2; 4:6; 1 Pet. 1:11), standing before the throne of God and of the Lamb (Rev. 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6).”²⁴ The Holy Spirit’s work in the virgin birth (Luke 1:35) and His work in inspiration of the Scriptures (2 Pet 1:21) point to His Deity. In addition, blasphemy, which is namely against God, is attributed to being against the Holy Spirit in both Matthew 12:32 and Acts 5:3-4. The Scriptures teach the Holy Spirit is Deity by showing

²²Jean Calvin, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), 142.

²³Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 2, *God and Creation*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 277.

²⁴*Ibid.*

His attributes, His relation to the Godhead, His titles, His work, and that He can be blasphemed.

The work of the Holy Spirit also shows His Deity. Louis Berkhof notes He was involved in creation (Gen 1:2), providential renovation (Ps 104:30), regeneration (John 3:5,6), and the resurrection of the dead (Rom 8:11).²⁵

Personhood of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is not an inanimate force or an influence. He is a Person. He is fully God, yet He has His own personality and purpose to accomplish. The Holy Spirit is a person noted by the attributes of personhood. He has intelligence (Rom 8:27), shows feeling (Eph 4:30), and has a will (1 Cor 12:11). Further, He demonstrates actions of a person. He guides (John 16:13), convicts (John 16:8), performs miracles (Acts 8:39) and intercedes (Rom 8:26). The Scriptures also speak of Him as a Person by showing He can be lied to (Acts 5:3), can be resisted (Acts 7:51), is to be obeyed (Acts 10:19-21), and can be grieved (Eph 4:30). He also searches (1 Cor 2:10-11), judges (Acts 15:28), hears (John 16:13), speaks (Acts 13:2), teaches (John 14:26), and witnesses (John 15:26).²⁶ Finally, Bavinck states, “He is coordinated with the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor 13:13; Rev. 1:4). None of this is possible, we think, unless the Spirit, too, is truly God.”²⁷

The Holy Spirit Is the God of Creation and Regeneration

The Holy Spirit is the Creator (Gen 1:2).²⁸ The Bible reveals He was involved not only in the initial creation but also is involved in recreation. Since the fall of man in

²⁵Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 98.

²⁶Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 278.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 60.

the garden, he became depraved. Mankind is now alienated from God. The Scriptures refer to man as being “dead in the trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1, 5; Col 2:13). Because of man being “dead” towards God, possessing a heart of stone (Ezek 36:26), he is in need of someone to give him life, making him alive to God again. This is the work of regeneration. The Person who is responsible for this work in man is the Holy Spirit. There are two main texts that teach the Holy Spirit’s role in regeneration.

Ezekiel 36:26-27

In Ezekiel 36, the Lord is making a promise to Israel. He is about to act for the sake of His own glory (v. 22). He is going to vindicate His glory among the nations so they will know that He is Holy (v. 23). Israel has profaned the name of the Lord among the nations and the Lord is going to exonerate His holy Name by fundamentally changing His people from the inside out.

The fundamental change that will occur will be one of the people’s hearts. They will obey the Lord as He states, “And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules” (v. 27). This obedience will be accomplished by the Lord removing their hearts of stone and giving them hearts of flesh (v. 26). This is a recreation of the people. Before they were dead, having a heart of stone. Now they will be alive, having a heart of flesh. And it is the Holy Spirit of God who does this work of regeneration that is promised to the people to now obey the Lord.²⁹ Cooper notes, “This change of will from ‘stone’ to ‘flesh’ would be made possible by the new covenant presented in Jer 31:31-34.”³⁰

²⁹Lamar Eugene Cooper, *Ezekiel*, The New American Commentary, vol. 17, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 317.

³⁰Ibid.

John 3:5-8

Jesus speaks of the necessity of regeneration in John 3 in His discussion with Nicodemus. He tells Nicodemus that if he wants to enter the kingdom of God he must be “born again” (γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν).³¹ Nicodemus is confused about this saying, asking how can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb (v. 4). Jesus however was not speaking of a physical birth but of a spiritual birth. Jesus explains, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (vv. 5-6).

It must first be determined what “born of water” means. There have been a number of interpretations concerning this passage which contradict either the history or the theological teachings elsewhere in Scripture. Some, such as Laney, have indicated that water referred to physical birth since Nicodemus referred to his natural birth (v. 4).³² It is unlikely that Nicodemus would have associated “water” with natural birth. While the modern world may understand this, there is virtually no biblical or extra-biblical evidence to suggest the ancients would have associated water with natural birth.³³

Second, others such as Beasley-Murray, understand water to be associated with NT water baptism.³⁴ This, however, contradicts the teaching of the rest of Scripture that

³¹This phrase can also be translated “born from above.”

³²J. Carl Laney, *John*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1992), 78. Laney states, “Jesus’ explanation in v. 6 suggests that He is referring to physical birth. He declares, ‘Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.’ In other words, there are two kinds of births—natural (‘flesh’) and spiritual (‘spirit’). Pamment points out that ‘the breaking of the water in natural birth makes sense of the double expression “of water and spirit” as a description of birth and rebirth.’ It has also been observed that, etymologically, the verb ‘to give birth’ in Akkadian (halum) and Hebrew (yalad) denotes the rupture of the membranes. In Jesus’ analogy, then, the fleshly, or natural, birth corresponds to being ‘born of water.’ During pregnancy the unborn child floats in the amniotic fluid within the mother’s womb. During delivery, this water is expelled. The child is literally born ‘out of water’ (ek hudatos). The expression ‘of water’ is used here as a figure for physical birth.”

³³D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England: Eerdmans, 1990), 191.

³⁴G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 228–29. Beasley-Murray states that just as Christ was referring to the Lord’s Supper in John 6:53 when He said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves,” even so here “born of water” brings to mind Christian baptism.

man is justified by faith alone (Rom 3:26). The teaching of the NT is to believe and then be baptized (Acts 8:12, 13; 18:8). Baptism is an external sign of an inward reality.³⁵ It is identifying oneself with Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection and cannot add to one's salvation (Rom 6:4).³⁶

Third, some such as D. A. Carson understand water and spirit to be referring to the inward cleansing work of the Spirit of God in "a new begetting, a new birth that cleanses and renews, the eschatological cleansing and renewal promised by the Old Testament prophets."³⁷ This seems to be the sense that is being spoken of here by Jesus.³⁸ Nicodemus being a Pharisee (3:1) would have been well read in the OT and would have understood Ezekiel's prophecy and the OT rites of purification. Ezekiel 36:25 states, "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you." Jesus was speaking of water in the sense of the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit. John Frame notes, "With the reference to the Spirit, we may distinguish in the new birth a negative and a positive aspect: negatively purification from sin, and positively creation of new life through the Spirit."³⁹

Jesus states that Nicodemus has to be born again. He could not do this himself but it would be done to him. This regeneration is the work of the Spirit of God. God the Holy Spirit is responsible to give people hearts of flesh where they once had hearts of stone. Jesus explains it when He says, "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone

³⁵Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1110. Erickson states, "Baptism is, then, an act of faith and a testimony that one has been united with Christ in his death and resurrection, that one has experienced spiritual circumcision.

³⁶Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 968–69. Grudem makes the point that immersion is the only way to show the true picture of being identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

³⁷Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 195.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2013), 947.

who is born of the Spirit” (v. 8).

The NT further confirms the teaching of Jesus in John 3 that the Holy Spirit is the Agent of regeneration. In Titus 3:5, Paul explains how God saved His people. God redeemed them “not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.” It is the Holy Spirit’s secret work of regeneration that awakens people who have hearts of stone and are dead in their trespasses and sins, giving them hearts of flesh that makes them clean and desiring to follow the commandments of God.

The Holy Spirit Gives Believers Security through Spirit Baptism and Sealing

One of the greatest blessings Christians can know is the security of their salvation. There does not need to be doubt and or fear of one’s eternal destiny. God alone has finished the work of salvation and even guards one’s faith (1 Pet 1:5). Christ is the One who baptizes believers in the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit seals them till the day of redemption giving believers security in their salvation.

Spirit Baptism

In Matthew 3:11 John the Baptist states, “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit. This is recorded in all four gospels (Matt 3:11, Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33). Jesus first baptized with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 1:5; Acts 11:16). The only other reference to Spirit Baptism occurs in 1 Corinthians 12:13 where Paul explains the implications of this baptism. When believers are regenerated, Christ baptizes them in the Spirit in the body of Christ. Grudem notes, “It was that baptism that resulted in their being members of the body of Christ, the church.”⁴⁰

⁴⁰Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 767.

Spirit baptism then, like regeneration, is solely a work of God. Believers do not contribute to their Spirit baptism. The NT never commands believers to be baptized in the Spirit as if it were something they did and something subsequent to salvation. Rather this baptism is the direct act of Christ that securely places believers into the body of Christ. Grudem explains Christ is the baptizer, the Spirit is the “element” into which believers find themselves baptized into, and the church (i.e., body of Christ) is the location into which they are placed after baptism.⁴¹

It should be noted that baptism of the Spirit is not subsequent to regeneration but occurs at the same time.⁴² Baptism of the Spirit is not exactly the same as regeneration but includes regeneration, as well as the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit for the new believers to live as new creatures in Christ.⁴³ Now that the believers are baptized in the Spirit, there are a number of blessings that occur as a result.

The first blessing that believers enjoy is that Spirit baptism “joins us to the Body of Christ.”⁴⁴ This has several implications for believers. Being placed into the body of Christ by the Spirit “means we are risen with Him in newness of life (Rom. 6:4), and we should exercise our gifts to keep that body functioning properly.”⁴⁵ Spirit baptism also urges believers to “keep the unity of the body” (Eph 4:5) and are assured of the “security of our position in His body.”⁴⁶

The second blessing that believers enjoy is that Spirit baptism “actualizes our cocrucifixion with Christ.”⁴⁷ This is the truth that believers need to understand and realize

⁴¹ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 768.

⁴² Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 894.

⁴³ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 769.

⁴⁴ Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 419.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

for their growth in sanctification. The understanding that believers are identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection shows them that they are now dead to sin and are alive to God (Rom 6:1-10).⁴⁸

Therefore it is seen that Christ fulfills the promise of the baptism with the Holy Spirit in believers' lives. Grudem summarizes baptism of the Holy Spirit this way:

Baptism in the Holy Spirit, therefore, must refer to the activity of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the Christian life when he gives us new spiritual life (in regeneration) and cleanses us and gives a clear break with the power and love of sin (the initial stage of sanctification). In this way 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' refers to all that the Holy Spirit does at the beginning of our Christian lives.⁴⁹ Believers then have a tremendous blessing of Christ by being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Spirit Sealing

The second aspect of being secure in the Spirit is the Spirit's work in sealing believers. Regarding Spirit sealing, Grudem states, "This 'seal' is the Holy Spirit within us, who also acts as God's 'guarantee' that we will receive the inheritance promised to us."⁵⁰

Paul explains what Spirit sealing is in his great Trinitarian treatise of the work of salvation in Ephesians 1. Concerning the work of the Spirit he writes, "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory" (vv. 13-14).

The Word for "seal" in Ephesians 1:13 is the Greek word "σφραγισμός" which means, "to mark with a seal as a means of identification, *mark, seal*."⁵¹ So the Holy Spirit

⁴⁸Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 419.

⁴⁹Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 769.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 791.

⁵¹William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 980.

is the mark that believers now belong to God. Further, the word “guarantee” in v. 14 speaks directly of the Holy Spirit. The Greek word for “guarantee” is “ἀρραβών” which means “payment of part of a purchase price in advance, *first installment, deposit, down payment, pledge.*”⁵² Using the same word, Paul also shows the Holy Spirit is our guarantee in 2 Corinthians 1:22. Grudem sums up this meaning when he states, “When God gave us the Holy Spirit within, he committed himself to give all the further blessings of eternal life and a great reward in heaven with him.”⁵³

The Holy Spirit is the One who seals the believer at conversion.⁵⁴ This sealing should bring about confidence in the believer. For once this sealing is given, it cannot be taken away. Ryrie notes, “Sealing is to the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30). This refers to that future day when our redemption shall be fully accomplished, including receiving our resurrection bodies (cf. Rom. 8:23). Thus the sealing guarantees the complete fulfillment of God’s promises to us. And no believer can become unsealed on his way to heaven.”⁵⁵

At the time of conversion, the Holy Spirit is given to believers. This brings great security to believers knowing their salvation is secure, not because of themselves, but because the Holy Spirit has baptized them into the body of Christ, and He has been given to them as a seal and guarantee till the day of redemption.

The Spirit Is the Spirit of Adoption and Works Obedience in the Lives of Believers

The doctrine of adoption is “an act of God whereby he makes us members of his family.”⁵⁶ Whereas before we were enemies of God, “following the prince of the

⁵²Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 134.

⁵³Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 291.

⁵⁴Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 414.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 415.

⁵⁶Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1235.

power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience,” now we have become sons and daughters through adoption (Eph 2:1-3; Gal 4:5-7).

Paul writes that it was the Father who “chose us” in Christ “before the foundation of the world” and that He “predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will” (Eph 1:4-5). The Spirit plays a vital role in this adoption (Rom 8:14, 15-16).⁵⁷

Romans 8:14-17

Paul states “all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God” (Rom 8:14). Doug Moo notes the idea of being “‘led by the Spirit’ probably means not to be *guided* by the Holy Spirit but, as in Gal. 5:18, to have the direction of one’s life as a whole determined by the Spirit” (italics original).⁵⁸ This “leading,” along with v.15 showing the believer is not a slave to sin, indicates that the believer is inwardly obedient to God.⁵⁹ The Spirit is the Spirit of adoption who believers receive (v. 15). The word “leading” (*ἀγνοῦνται*) is in the passive voice. According to Schreiner, this indicates that any obedience of the believer is the result of the work of the Spirit as the “primary agent in Christian obedience.”⁶⁰

Prior to receiving the Spirit of adoption who enables believers to obey God, people were void of the Spirit making them slaves to sin. In v. 15, the word “spirit” is probably not a reference to either the Holy Spirit or human spirit. Paul most likely “uses

⁵⁷Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 739–40. Grudem notes two very specific privileges believers have regarding their adoption and the work of the Holy Spirit: First, we are given an “*internal witness from the Holy Spirit* that causes us instinctively to call God our Father”; second, we have “the privilege of being *led by the Holy Spirit* is also a benefit of adoption.” Italics original.

⁵⁸Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 498.

⁵⁹Schreiner, *Romans*, 424.

⁶⁰Ibid., 422. Schreiner notes, “Although this does not exclude the need for believers to follow the Spirit (Barrett 1991: 152; Deidun 1981: 79), it emphasizes that any human obedience is the result of the Spirit’s work.”

this word rhetorically, as a hypothetical antithesis to the ‘Spirit of adoption’: ‘the Spirit that you have received is *not* a “spirit of bondage” but a Spirit of adoption.’⁶¹ Slavery to sin is no longer what believers have. They now have the Holy Spirit, who is the “Spirit of adoption.” Now having the Spirit of adoption, there is no fear like before. Schreiner notes, “This fear contemplated is the fear of eschatological punishment, which is the result of sin.”⁶² Now there is a confidence and security of future glory. God is no longer Judge but Father and it is the Spirit of adoption who allows us to cry “Abba! Father” to God and “bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (v. 16).

The Spirit in confirming this shows believers that although they are already sons, a greater and fuller glory awaits them. Believers are not only sons but also heirs (v. 17). Believers are not only heirs of the promises of God but “heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ” (v. 17). Schreiner states that they are heirs of all the promises of God but even more so are heirs of God Himself.⁶³ While it is true that believers will receive all the promises of God, it goes deeper and is greater than the promises of God. It is the promise of God Himself. Schreiner argues, “The supreme benefit of the covenant with Abraham is not inheriting the land but having God as one’s God (Gen. 17:7).”⁶⁴

Galatians 4:1-7

Paul wants the believers in Galatia to understand that they are no longer considered slaves but rather sons and heirs (v. 7). This passage complements Romans 8:14-17 in showing the transformation of the slave into a son and heir. One key focus of Romans 8:14-17 was the Spirit of adoption results in obedience. The focus on Galatians

⁶¹Moo, *Romans*, 500. For a detailed discussion of the discussion of the possible meanings of the phrase “spirit of slavery,” see Moo, *Romans*, 500; Schreiner, *Romans*, 423-24.

⁶²Schreiner, *Romans*, 424.

⁶³Ibid., 427. Moo, *Romans*, 505, disagrees, stating, “Christians are, then, “heirs of God” – meaning not that Christians inherit God himself, but that they inherit “what God has promised.”

⁶⁴ Schreiner, *Romans*, 428.

4:1-7 is from slave to heir.

Paul gives the example of what it is like to be a slave. Even an heir child is like a slave if he is under guardians and managers (vv. 1-2). He makes the connection that we were the same way, enslaved to the “elementary principles of the world” (v. 3). This was until at the right time God sent Christ born of a woman, “born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law” (vv. 4-5). The result was that those redeemed would “receive adoption as sons.” It is argued that Paul is alluding here to the Roman act of adoption. F. F. Bruce explains:

If the son to be adopted was not yet of age, his original father conveyed him into the *potestas* of his adoptive father by a pretended sale. Once adopted into the new family, the son was in all legal respects on a level with those born into that family. If the son to be adopted was of age, he was adopted by his new father in the ceremony of *adrogatio*, in which the pontifex maximus and the augurs were involved. It was also possible, later, for a testator to adopt some one in his will.⁶⁵

Because they are sons, God sends them His Spirit to be in their hearts. Bruce notes, “Their instatement as sons and their receiving the Spirit would thus appear to be simultaneous.”⁶⁶ Connecting this with Romans 8:14-17, Bruce notes, “this Spirit is called the Spirit of *υιοθεσία*, the Spirit ‘who imparts the assurance of sonship and enables believers to call God their Father’ (F. Davidson and R P. Martin, *NBCR*, 1031), so that they realize and express their new status as sons of God, anticipating their full manifestation as such at the parousia (Rom. 8:23).”⁶⁷ The purpose of the Spirit is to give believers security of knowing God is now their Father. Timothy George comments, “The Holy Spirit is the sign and pledge of our adoption so that by his presence in our hearts we are truly convinced that God is for us, not against us, that indeed he is our Heavenly Father.”⁶⁸ So it is the Holy Spirit Himself who gives assurance of salvation to the

⁶⁵F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 197.

⁶⁶Ibid., 198.

⁶⁷Ibid., 199.

⁶⁸Timothy George, *Galatians*, The New American Commentary, vol. 30 (Nashville: B & H,

believer.

The Spirit of God Changes the Affections of Believers

All true believers possess the Spirit of God. With the possession of the Spirit, believers' affections are changed, from the desires of the flesh to the following of the Spirit. Believers are being transformed into the likeness of Christ, by the power of the Spirit.

Believers Possess the Holy Spirit

The key verse that teaches this is found in Romans 8:9, "You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him." Paul is arguing that all true believers possess the Spirit of God. Ryrie rightly claims, "Not to have the Spirit is the same as not belonging to Christ, Paul declared (Rom. 8:9)."⁶⁹ For to have possession of the Spirit of God is fundamentally what a Christian is.⁷⁰

Believers Live According to the Spirit

Paul discusses two groups of people, those who have the Spirit and those who do not. It should be noted that Paul is giving a description of people's being or nature and not behavior. Schreiner states, "This is manifestly the language of ontology."⁷¹ There is no command present in verses 5-8 for believers to live according to the Spirit.⁷² For those who have the Spirit, namely believers (v. 9), he states that they "set their minds on the things of the Spirit" (v. 5), experience "life and peace" (v. 6), "the Spirit is life because of

1994), 307.

⁶⁹Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 409.

⁷⁰Moo, *Romans*, 490.

⁷¹Schreiner, *Romans*, 410.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 411.

righteousness” (v. 10), and the Spirit “will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you” (v. 11). The end result of the believer is resurrection and eternal life verse 11.

This is contrasted with those who do not have the Spirit, who live according to the flesh, namely unbelievers.⁷³ Those who live according to the flesh “set their minds on things of the flesh” (v. 5), experience “death” (v. 6), have a mind that “is hostile to God” because “it does not submit to God’s law” and is not able to do so (v. 7), and “cannot please God” (v. 8). This final description of those in the flesh explains a “moral inability” to obey God’s law.⁷⁴ The end result is the opposite of the believer. Instead of life, it is God’s wrath. This is why having the Spirit is so vital. Without the Spirit there is no hope of transformation. Moo notes, “No neutrality is possible; without the Spirit’s mind-set, found only through union with Christ (see vv. 9-10), people can only order their lives in a way that is hostile to God and that will incur his wrath.”⁷⁵

Thus it is the presence of the Spirit who changes the affections of believers. If the Spirit is not present, there is no possibility to walk after the Spirit. Indeed, all will walk after the flesh. However, having the Spirit gives the believer the assurance of resurrection.⁷⁶ The Spirit changes the desires. Schreiner sums it up by stating, “The fulfillment of the law by believers is the result of the Spirit’s work in their heart. New obedience is rooted in the transforming work of the Spirit, and thus is not a burden imposed from without but a delight embraced from within.”⁷⁷

⁷³ Schreiner, *Romans*, 413.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 412.

⁷⁵ Moo, *Romans*, 488.

⁷⁶ Schreiner, *Romans*, 415. Schreiner takes “the Spirit is life” in v. 10 to refer to resurrection in light of v. 11. He states, “The reference is probably to the resurrection. The presence of the Spirit demonstrates that believers will not be saddled with their weak and corruptible bodies forever. The Spirit is a life-giving Spirit and will overcome death through the resurrection of the body (so Murray 1959: 290; Cranfield 1975: 390).”

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 409.

Believers Are Transformed by the Spirit

Believers are given the Spirit for a purpose. The purpose is transformation. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3:18, “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” Murray Harris notes, “The new era is the era of the Spirit, for as a result of conversion to the Spirit (vv. 16, 17a), there is liberation through the Spirit (v. 17b), including the lifting of the veil of spiritual ignorance and hardheartedness, and also transformation by the Spirit (v. 18). The Spirit, his person and his work, is the hallmark of the new covenant.”⁷⁸

The Spirit Is the Author of Scripture and Illuminates Scripture to Conform Believers to the Image of Christ

Every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Ryrie comments, “To express indwelling Paul not only used the preposition *en* but also the verb *oikeō*, to dwell (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16; though, of course, sometimes he used only the preposition as in 6:19). He related this ministry of the Spirit to all believers.”⁷⁹ Since the Holy Spirit indwells each believer and is the Author of Scripture, He illumines the Scripture to each believer. The “illumination by the Holy Spirit helps the Scripture reader or hearer understand the Bible and creates the conviction that it is true and is the Word of God.”⁸⁰ The ultimate goal of the Spirit is for the believer to be transformed into the image of Christ (Rom 8:29). The Holy Spirit uses the Scriptures to accomplish this transformation.

The Spirit Is the Author of Scripture

Two main passages deal with the God being the author of Scripture. While 2

⁷⁸Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Paternoster Press, 2005), 318.

⁷⁹Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 409.

⁸⁰Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 283.

Timothy 3:16 speaks of God as the general author, 2 Peter 1:21 speaks of the Holy Spirit as the specific author. The term that is most often used stating that God is the author of Scripture is “inspiration.” Inspiration is “a term referring to the fact that the words of Scripture are spoken by God. Because of the weak sense of this word in ordinary usage, this text prefers the term “God-breathed” to indicate that the words of Scripture are spoken by God.”⁸¹

The origin of the term ‘inspiration’ comes from 2 Timothy 3:16, which uses the Greek word θεόπνευστος. To avoid confusion of what the word ‘inspiration’ means, it is better to use the phrase ‘God-breathed,’ which is a more literal translation of θεόπνευστος. Using the term ‘God-breathed’ shows that the Scriptures have their origin in their very words from God Himself. Regarding this Greek term B. B. Warfield states, “The Greek term has, however nothing to say of *inspiring* or of *inspiration*: it speaks only of a ‘spring’ or ‘spiration.’ What it says of Scripture is . . . that it is breathed out by God, ‘God-breathed’ the product of the creative breath of God.”⁸²

The Holy Spirit however is the Person of the Trinity who moved upon the men to write the Scriptures. Peter writes to ensure his readers that the prophecy being given is not some account that is merely of man-origin. In fact, eyewitness accounts, in this case the transfiguration, confirm the OT Scriptures (vv. 17-19) further showing the Scriptures are completely reliable and should be taken seriously and given much attention.⁸³ These words are not produced “by the will of man” but rather come from the Holy Spirit. Thus the Divine origin is confirmed again but in addition somewhat of the process is explained. Warfield remarks, “It was through the instrumentality of men who ‘spoke from

⁸¹Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1245.

⁸²Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1948), 133.

⁸³Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: Holman Reference, 2003), 320–21.

him.’ More specifically it was through an operation of the Holy Ghost on these men which is described as ‘bearing’ them.”⁸⁴ The term for bear (φέρόμενοι) means more than guiding, directing, controlling, or leading.⁸⁵ Warfield explains, “What is ‘borne’ is taken up by the ‘bearer,’ and conveyed by the ‘bearer’s’ power, not its own, to the ‘bearer’s’ goal, not its own. The men who spoke from God are here declared, therefore, to take up by the Holy Spirit and brought by His power to the goal of His choosing.”⁸⁶ The very words then are the Holy Spirit’s words.

The Spirit Illuminates Scripture to Believers

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to enable believers to understand certain truths. Jesus told the disciples that the Holy Spirit would teach them and bring to remembrance things that Jesus said to them when they were to write the words down (John 14:26). He also told them that the Holy Spirit would “guide you into all the truth” (John 16:13). In the sense of writing Scripture, or revealing new revelation, the Spirit does not operate this way today.

However, the Spirit still illuminates the Scripture to believers so they can understand its meaning. Regarding the meaning of “guidance,” Carson notes, “The notion of ‘guidance’ (the Gk. verb is *hodēgeō*) in all truth has nothing to do with privileged information pertaining to one’s choice of vocation or mate, but with understanding God as he has revealed himself, and with obeying that revelation—as the occurrence of this verb in the Psalms makes clear (*e.g.* Pss. 25:4–5 [LXX 24:4–5]; 143:10 [142:10]).”⁸⁷

⁸⁴Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, ed. Samuel G. Craig and Cornelius Van Til (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1948), 137.

⁸⁵Warfield, Craig, and Van Til, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, 137.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 540.

It is the role of the Holy Spirit to guide believers to understand all truth, that is the truth that is found in Jesus Christ, who He is and what He has done.⁸⁸ For it is the Spirit's role to testify of Jesus (John 15:26). Illumination is essentially "understanding" that comes from the Holy Spirit. If believers are to understand the thoughts of God they must have the Spirit of God for only the Spirit can understand the thoughts of God (1 Cor 2:11). Paul declares that all Christians do indeed have the Spirit so that "we might understand the things freely given to us by God" (1 Cor 2:12). The spiritual man is able to understand spiritual things precisely because he has the Spirit of God. It is the spiritual man who not only has the Spirit of God but is "taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual" (1 Cor 2:13).

The purpose of illumination is for believers to grow in their understanding of the faith and to be fully equipped as believers (2 Tim 3:17). If the Spirit is the Author of Scripture (2 Pet 1:21) and the Agent of sanctification (Rom 15:16), it is the illumination of the Scripture by the Spirit (Eph 1:17-19) that enables understanding and thereby growth for the believer (Ps 119:18; 1 Cor 2:11-13).

Believers Are to Walk by the Spirit Exhibiting the Fruit of the Spirit

Since believers are indwelt by the Spirit and the Spirit is transforming them, being conformed to the image of Christ is inevitable. The evidence which one should evaluate growth in the Spirit is by the fruit produced. Galatians 6:16-26 is a key section regarding the teaching of walking in the Spirit versus works of the flesh.

Works of the Flesh

Paul makes clear that there is a difference in walking in the flesh versus walking in the Spirit. These two are not compatible in that they are "against" each other

⁸⁸Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 540.

(v. 17). Paul explains what the “works of the flesh are: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these” (vv. 19-21). This is not to be thought of as an exhaustive list of the works of the flesh.⁸⁹ Paul ends with a strong warning that those who do these things will not inherit God’s Kingdom.

Walking by the Spirit

Those who “walk by the Spirit” are contrasted with those who fulfill the “desires of the flesh.” As Bruce notes, “They [Galatians] had received the Spirit (3:2); otherwise they would have no experience of the conflict between the Spirit and the flesh.”⁹⁰ The fruit is the outward evidence that the Spirit is in the believer. Whereas Romans 8:1-11 offers the internal evidence of the Spirit residing in the believer, Galatians offers the external evidence. The fruit of the Spirit is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal 5:22-24).

Those who have the Spirit and thereby have spiritual understanding are told to “keep in step with the Spirit” (v. 25). The Spirit can be sinned against and grieved (Acts 5:3; Eph 4:30). But that is not to be the perpetual way of life for believers. Those who have the Spirit are being changed and will exhibit the fruit of the Spirit. They are to be “led by the Spirit.” Bruce again states, “To be ‘led by the Spirit’ is to be walking by the Spirit—to have the power to rebut the desire of the flesh, to be increasingly conformed to the likeness of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18), to cease to be under law.”⁹¹

⁸⁹Bruce, *Galatians*, 250. Bruce notes that elsewhere Paul similarly refers to the “unfruitful works of darkness” (Eph 5:11).

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 244.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 245.

The purpose of the believer having the Spirit is transformation. The Spirit is not Someone who merely resides in believers but is God Himself who fundamentally changes the nature of believers in Christ. He is changing them, by the Word, into the image of Christ. This is a process and therefore does not come all at once. But this already position of being sons is seen by the evidence of the transformation that is occurring in believers' lives. The evidence is unmistakable. It is the very fruit that comes from the Spirit Himself.

The Spirit Gifts Believers for Speaking and Service

The Spirit who is given to believers not only transforms the believers but also gifts them with abilities that are to be used for the body of Christ, the church. Paul addresses “spiritual gifts” (τῶν πνευματικῶν) in 1 Corinthians 12-14. Thiselton notes that τῶν πνευματικῶν are referring to Spiritual gifts and not people, seeing τῶν πνευματικῶν is best understood in the neuter sense rather than the masculine.⁹² This seems to fit as well with the meaning of το χάρισμα in Rom 11:29, 12:6, 1 Cor 12:9, 28, 30, 21.⁹³ το χάρισμα has the meaning of “that which is freely and graciously given, *favor bestowed*, gift.”⁹⁴ Tom Edgar defines spiritual gifts this way: “A spiritual gift is an ability given to an individual supernaturally by God through the Holy Spirit so that the recipient may utilize that ability to minister to the needs of the church, the body of Christ. God supernaturally gives the believer special ability for service.”⁹⁵ Every believer has at least

⁹²Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 910. Thiselton is quoting Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary On the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Hermeneia--a Critical and Historical Commentary On the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 204. See also, David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary On the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 561-64. Garland discusses this extensively as well and opts for “spiritual ones” seeing it connected with 14:37.

⁹³Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 910.

⁹⁴Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1081.

⁹⁵Thomas R. Edgar, *Satisfied by the Promise of the Spirit: Affirming the Fullness of God's Provision for Spiritual Living* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 1996), 36.

one gift and no one possesses all the gifts. Also, not all the gifts are equal (1 Cor 12:31). There are four places where the NT lists the gifts: Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, Ephesians 4:11, and 1 Peter 4:10-11. Regardless of whether these include natural talents or are supernaturally given at the time of regeneration, it should be noted that Scripture teaches that every gift that people possess, natural ability or supernaturally given, is a gift from God (Jas 1:17). Nevertheless, it is best to stay strictly within the bounds of Scripture and focus on the gifts that are specifically mentioned in these passages.

Purpose of the Gifts

The purpose of the gifts is ultimately for the glory of God (1 Pet 4:11). The Holy Spirit works in the lives of believers and empowers them for service. Specifically the Spirit empowers believers to impact the church. This is done in several ways.

The first is for service. First Peter 1:10 states, “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” This shows that one purpose of the gifts is to serve one another. The gift, therefore is not given for the benefit of the believer but is given for the believer to serve other believers in the body of Christ.

The second purpose is for the common good. First Corinthians 12:7 states, “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” This verse is in the context of spiritual gifts (v. 1) and explains the purpose Paul has in mind. It is not for an individual’s benefit but rather is for everyone. Therefore no believer should use his or her spiritual gift for selfish gain. Rather it is to be used for the good of all believers.

The third purpose is for edification. Ephesians 4:12 states that the gifts were given “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” First Corinthians 14:26, also in the context of spiritual gifts, states, “Let all things be done for building up.” The use of spiritual gifts is to be exercised for building up of God’s people. They are to help believers to become more like Jesus Christ. Believers therefore are responsible for knowing their gifts and using them according to the purpose

and will of God.

Speaking Gifts

There are various ways to divide or categorize the gifts. The most accurate would be to categorize them as Scripture does. Some gifts were temporary being exercised only in the foundational time of the church and some continue today.⁹⁶ Peter tells the believers to be “good stewards of God’s grace” (1 Pet 4:10). He further explains the two major categories, those of speaking and service (v. 11). Those who speak are to speak “as one who speaks oracles of God” and those who serve are to serve “as one who serves by the strength that God supplies” (v. 11). The purpose of the gifts is always for the benefit of others.⁹⁷ The ultimate purpose is given for these, which is that “in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ” (v. 11).

The speaking gifts that have been given to the church are listed in two groups. This follows the lead of 1 Corinthians 12:28 which gives an order of the gifts signifying the foundational nature and importance of some gifts over others namely “first apostles, second prophets, third teachers.” Paul then lists a number of other gifts some speaking and some service.

The first group includes apostles (Eph 4:1; 1 Cor 12:28), prophets (Eph 4:11; 1 Cor 12:28), and teachers (1 Cor 12:28; Rom 12:7).⁹⁸ The apostles refer to the twelve and Paul and Barnabas. This was a foundational gift that is no longer in existence today; according to 1 Corinthians 9:1-2 an apostle must have been a personal witness to the

⁹⁶For a detailed argument explaining this position, see Edgar, “Cessation of Gifts: Are Some Gifts Temporary?” in *Satisfied by the Promise of the Spirit*. He concludes, “Biblical evidence, therefore, demonstrates that the apostles and prophets were only for the beginning or foundational stage of the universal church (Eph 2:20). Biblical evidence also shows that the miracles and signs were only for the first generation of believers and were past by the time some of the New Testament was written (Mark 16:17-20); Heb 2:3-4). There is biblical evidence that the sign gifts were mainly apostolic and that their purpose was to confirm the original outreach of the church. From the Bible alone we would expect the gifts of apostle, prophet, healings, miracles, and tongues to be temporary” (248).

⁹⁷Edgar, *Satisfied by the Promise of the Spirit*, 39–40.

⁹⁸The gift of “teacher” is combined as “shepherd-teacher” in Eph 4:11.

resurrected Christ.⁹⁹ A prophet was not only one who was able to proclaim God's Word but also one who had special revelation from God.¹⁰⁰ Pastor-teacher is taken to be one gift in Ephesians 4:11 and includes "the ability to shepherd, provide for, care for and protect God's people" and teaching the Word of God so the people of God can clearly understand God's Word.¹⁰¹ It should be noted that not all teachers are pastors but all pastors must be teachers.

The second group includes evangelists (Eph 4:11), utterance of wisdom (1 Cor 12:8), utterance of knowledge (1 Cor 12:8), prophecy (1 Cor 12:10; Rom 12:6), ability to distinguish spirits (1 Cor 12:10), speaking in tongues (1 Cor 12:10, 28), interpreting of tongues (1 Cor 12:10), and exhortation (Rom 12:8). The evangelist or evangelism is one who has exceptional ability of proclaiming the message of the Gospel.¹⁰² An utterance of wisdom can be combined with utterance of knowledge and indicates "the ability to understand and communicate God's truth to people."¹⁰³ Prophecy has a general application and a specific one. In the general sense, it simply means to proclaim or pronounce the words of God. In the specific sense, it has the idea of receiving Divine revelation, including prediction of the future, and proclaiming the message.¹⁰⁴

Distinguishing of spirits was "the ability to distinguish between true and false sources of supernatural revelation when it was being given in oral form before the completion of the canon."¹⁰⁵ Speaking and interpreting of tongues go together. There was not to be the speaking of tongues without an interpreter (1 Cor 14:28). Tongues are

⁹⁹Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 431. See also Edgar, *Satisfied by the Promise of the Spirit*, 246.

¹⁰⁰Edgar, *Satisfied by the Promise of the Spirit*, 84.

¹⁰¹Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 431.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Ibid., 432.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 429.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 431.

known languages.¹⁰⁶ The gift of tongues was “the ability to speak in a language of earth that is unknown to the speaker. Interpretation of tongues is the ability to interpret that message in a language understood by the hearers.”¹⁰⁷ Regarding tongues Edgar concludes that the gift of tongues was speaking a legitimate foreign language, was not “ecstatic” speech, was to be a sign for unbelievers (1 Cor 14:22), and was on the lower priority of gifts, giving priority to teaching and other gifts.¹⁰⁸ This was a foundational gift that is no longer in operation today. Exhortation is the ability to “encourage, comfort, and admonish people.”¹⁰⁹

Service Gifts

The service gifts seem to be gifts that do not necessarily involve proclaiming a message from the Lord or communicating to other believers but rather are actions that are done for the encouragement and edification of the church. These include the gifts of faith (1 Cor 12:9), healing (1 Cor 12:9, 28), working of miracles (1 Cor 12:10), helping or service (1 Cor 12:28; Rom 12:7), administrating or leading (1 Cor 12:28; Rom 12:8), giving (Rom 12:8), and showing acts of mercy (Rom 12:8). These gifts can be divided into two groups, those that are foundational and are thus limited to the times of the apostles and those that continue working in the church today.

Those foundational gifts that were given to authenticate the gospel message during the times of the apostles were healing and miracles and are not in operation today.¹¹⁰ Healings and miracles were gifts that apostles had, like Paul or Peter, and could be used only when it was the will of God (Acts 19:11-12). Therefore, these gifts were

¹⁰⁶Edgar, *Satisfied by the Promise of the Spirit*, 126.

¹⁰⁷Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 431.

¹⁰⁸Edgar, *Satisfied by the Promise of the Spirit*, 196.

¹⁰⁹Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 431.

¹¹⁰Edgar, *Satisfied by the Promise of the Spirit*, 118.

“the ability to perform special signs, including physical healings.”¹¹¹

The remaining service gifts are still in operation today and show the work of the Spirit in the lives of believers. Faith is “the ability to believe God for the supply of specific needs.”¹¹² Helping or service is “the ability to help or serve in the broadest sense of the word.”¹¹³ Administrating or leading “is the ability to rule in the church.”¹¹⁴ Giving “seems to be the ability to be very generous with what means one has.”¹¹⁵ Showing acts of mercy is having compassion on those who are in great need of assistance “particularly those who are sick and afflicted.”¹¹⁶ With the utilization of these gifts, God’s people are able to speak and serve as Christ’s body on the earth.

Believers Can Be Confident in Prayer Now and of the Glory of Final Sanctification That Is to Follow

Believers live as exiles in this world (1 Pet 1:1-2). But the confidence that they can have is the guarantee of their salvation and ultimate glorification. While believers fight and battle sin in the flesh, the devil, and the world, there is a yearning and a groaning that not only believers experience but creation also yearns awaiting the new creation (Rom 8:23). The believers’ groaning and waiting are aided by the Spirit of God.

The Spirit and Prayer

Believers wait and groan for the glorification that awaits the elect. Believers are to bring their burdens to the throne of grace (Heb 4:16), to be in a spirit of prayer always (Luke 18:1), and to cast their cares upon the Lord (1 Pet 5:7). Sometimes,

¹¹¹Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 429.

¹¹²Ibid., 431.

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 432.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

believers have weakness and when they pray to the Father, they do not know what to pray for (Rom 8:26).¹¹⁷ Schreiner notes this weakness is “due to their general incapability.”¹¹⁸ Paul tells that the “Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words” (Rom 8:26). The Spirit intercedes for the saints. The word *συναντιλαμβάνεται* is in the middle voice and most likely “indicating not merely that the Spirit joins in helping but also that the Spirit himself and alone renders the assistance believers need.”¹¹⁹ He does this perfectly because He intercedes “according to the will of God” (Rom 8:27). Thus due to the not yet realized glory that is to follow and the desire to pray but the lack of knowledge of exactly what to pray for, the Spirit intercedes bringing peace, rest, and assurance to the believer.

The Spirit and Glorification

Believers have as their hope their future glory. In Romans 8:18, Paul shows the comparison between the suffering that believers now have and compares it with the glory that is to follow. He states that these are “not worth comparing.” Elsewhere Paul states, “For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” (2 Cor 4:17). Moo notes that these sufferings are not only “trials” such as “persecution” “but encompass the whole gamut of suffering, including things such as illness, bereavement, hunger, financial reverses, and death itself.”¹²⁰

Not only do believers experience this groaning, but all creation does as well (Rom 8:22). Creation is longing to be set free from the corruption, longing for the new

¹¹⁷Schreiner, *Romans*, 443. The view of believers not knowing ‘what’ to pray for is the view of Schreiner above along with the rendering found in the KJV and NIV as well as scholars such as Cranfield, MacRae, O’Brien, Dunn, Moo, and Fee. The other view is that believers do not ‘how’ to pray meaning the ‘manner’ in which they are to pray is reflected in the RV and NEB and is held by some scholars such as Sanday and Headlam.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 442.

¹¹⁹Schreiner, *Romans*, 442.

¹²⁰Moo, *Romans*, 511.

creation. Believers groan “inwardly” as if in a “sigh” at the corruption of the fallen state of the world and humanity.¹²¹ This is “frustration at the remaining moral and physical infirmities that are inevitably part of this period between justification and glorification (see 2 Cor 5:2, 4) and longing for the end of this state of ‘weakness.’”¹²²

Believers are yearning for their glorification. Because of this, they groan in anticipation. The cause of the groaning is not found in themselves but rather is evidence they possess the Spirit.¹²³ Believers groan and await their full sanctification, and the guarantee they will receive it is they have the Spirit.¹²⁴ Paul states that what believers are yearning for here is the full realization of their adoption as sons (Rom 8:23). Though they already understand their position as sons and daughters, they have not fully realized it. Because true believers have the Spirit, they long for their final glorification and the possessing of the Spirit is the guarantee they will receive it. The Holy Spirit is the guarantee that true believers in Christ will one day receive the fullness of their adoption as sons, the “redemption of their bodies” (Rom 8:23). They have the great hope that their groanings, sighs, pains, and sufferings will indeed turn to glory.

Conclusion

When Jesus left the disciples, He promised He would not leave them alone but would send Someone in His place (John 14:16). He sent the Holy Spirit. Believers cannot and must not ignore the Holy Spirit. To neglect the Holy Spirit in doctrinal knowledge and in practical life is to ignore the very One Jesus sent in His place. It has been argued that God has revealed Himself, the Spirit is God and a Person Who is knowable. It was shown the Holy Spirit is the God of creation and the new birth, the One Who gives

¹²¹ Moo, *Romans*, 519.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Schreiner, *Romans*, 438.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

security, brings blessing of adoption, and works obedience in believers' lives. He changes believers' affections, is the Author of Scripture and illuminates Scripture to conform believers into the image of Christ. Believers are to walk by the Spirit exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit, properly using the gifts given by the Spirit of God. Finally, believers can be confident in their prayer lives and also be confident of their final glorification. For believers to grow into the likeness of Christ, they must know truth and experience the blessings of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED
TO PREACHING THE PERSON, POWER, AND
WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Introduction

The Holy Spirit is vital to the Christian not only for regeneration, but also for continual Christian growth. A proper understanding of Who the Holy Spirit is, His power, and His work enables believers to better understand how they grow in sanctification. I will consider four areas for Christians' sanctification regarding the Holy Spirit: first, the Holy Spirit and Christians' communion with God; second, the Spirit's use of the Scriptures in Christians' sanctification; third, the Spirit's use of prayer in Christians' sanctification; and fourth, the Spirit's work in Christians' sanctification. Christians need to rightly understand the purpose of the Holy Spirit in their lives and the right relation of the Spirit's work and their work in sanctification.

The Spirit and Christians Communion with God

From the beginning, people were created by God and for God to know God. Man is not whole and complete without communing with God. Adam walked with God and communed with God in the Garden (Gen 1-2). But sin entered and broke the communion of God and man. Therefore by nature man is not in fellowship with God, making him God's enemy (Gen 3; Eph 2:1-3).

However, Christ redeemed His people that they might be restored and now have fellowship with God again (Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:18). A Christian therefore is one who communes with God in relationship. God has always met with His people. However, the NT believer has the Holy Spirit dwelling within himself. As James Hamilton

observes, “Whereas in the old covenant God dwelt in a temple, in the new covenant His people are His temple.”¹ Jesus explained in John 17:3 that eternal life is not merely living forever but because of saving faith, eternal life is knowing God. Believers are God’s people and He is their God. J. I. Packer rightly notes that believers know God and are known by God. He writes, “What matters supremely, therefore, is not, in the last analysis, the fact that I know God, but the larger fact which underlies it – the fact that *he knows me*” (italics original).²

Believers’ joy is now in God Himself. The fullness of this joy will be in glorification but until then believers have the indwelling Spirit “as a sealing, sanctifying promise of the presence of God to be enjoyed when Jesus comes.”³ John Piper states, “Saving faith is the cry of a new creature in Christ. And the newness of the new creature is that it has a new taste. What was once distasteful or bland is now craved. Christ himself has become a Treasure Chest of holy joy. The tree of faith grows only in the heart that craves the supreme gift that Christ died to give: not health, not wealth, not prestige, but God.”⁴ With the relationship restored, the next step to consider is the work of the Holy Spirit regarding communion with God and believers.

Views of the Spirit’s Purpose

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would come (John 14:16). Through the Spirit’s power and work, Christ would work in believers’ lives (John 16:13). He would influence not only believers but the world also (John 16:8). Nevertheless, the Spirit plays a vital

¹James M. Hamilton, *God’s Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old & New Testaments*, NAC Studies in Bible & Theology (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 121.

²J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, 20th anniversary ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 41.

³Hamilton, *God’s Indwelling Presence*, 126.

⁴John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 1998), 68.

role specifically in believers' lives. Packer lists various views Christians have regarding the purpose of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Holy Spirit power. The first view is the main purpose of the Holy Spirit is to give power. Packer notes that this is power “in the sense of God-given ability to do what you know you ought to do and indeed want to do, but feel that you lack the strength for.”⁵ He notes this would be power to say no to things that are normally difficult to do, such as “sex, drink, drugs, tobacco, money, kicks, luxury, promotion, power, reputation, adulation, or whatever” and also “being patient with folks who try your patience, loving the unlovable, controlling your temper, standing firm under pressure, speaking out boldly for Christ, trusting God in face of trouble.”⁶ Indeed the Lord has granted the Holy Spirit for great power (Luke 22:49; Acts 1:8; 4:33; 6:8; 10:38).

Christians are right to understand power as coming from the Holy Spirit. Sometimes this power is emphasized in the so-called “Higher or Victorious Life” movement found in Keswick teaching. The teaching of Keswick is the Holy Spirit’s power is available but only experienced through consecration and faith. It is built on the idea of two blessings. The idea is that a Christian moves from the first blessing of “being saved” to a greater and higher or second blessing which is Jesus being your Master.⁷ This second blessing is the full surrender of believers to Christ as Lord and unleashes the victorious life.⁸ The greater one’s faith to let God take control and consecration to God, the greater the power from the Holy Spirit. The popular phrase “Let go and let God” rightly sums up their belief in tapping into the power of the Holy Spirit. For the Higher

⁵J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit: Finding Fullness in Our Walk with God*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 23.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Andrew Naselli, “Why ‘Let Go and Let God’ Is a Bad Idea,” *Tabletalk Magazine*, August 1, 2011, accessed May 23, 2016, <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/why-let-go-and-let-god-bad-idea/>.

⁸Ibid.

Life Movement, this is the main purpose of the Holy Spirit. While the Holy Spirit indeed does give power to believers, this is not His main purpose.

Holy Spirit performance. The second view is the Holy Spirit's purpose is seen through the believer's performance. Packer writes, "There are those who see the doctrine of the Spirit as essentially about *performance*, in the sense of exercising spiritual gifts"⁹ (italics original). The purpose of the Holy Spirit is for believers to be gifted to perform (1 Cor 12:7). Therefore, the more gifts believers display, the more controlled or Spirit-filled they are.¹⁰ They are able to say not only that they have the Holy Spirit but also that they are able to actually show it by the performance of their gifts.¹¹

While it is indeed a role of the Spirit to give gifts, the use of gifts is not the central role of the Spirit or even a verification of the Spirit's presence. In the OT, the Spirit gifted men for service, yet the magicians of Pharaoh duplicated many of the signs but certainly were not gifted by the Spirit (Exod 7:11). For example, a man may be gifted at teaching, but that does not indicate he has the gift of teaching from the Holy Spirit, for it may be that he is a false teacher (2 Tim 4:3). The Spirit's central role is more than just empowering with gifts.

Holy Spirit purity. A third view is the Holy Spirit's purpose is to present purity. Packer writes, this understanding is "God's work of cleansing his children from sin's defilement and pollution by enabling them to resist temptation and do what is right."¹² This is the view that the Holy Spirit's main purpose is to help the believers to be pure in the Christian life.

⁹Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, 27.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 639.

¹²Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, 31.

The Holy Spirit does help believers to become pure in their lives (2 Cor 3:18; Col 3:5). For Christians to be Christ-like, they need the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit people are not even true Christians (Rom 8:9). God hates sin and calls believers to be holy even as He is holy (1 Pet 1:15-16). Grudem notes, “After the initial break with sin that the Holy Spirit brings about in our lives at conversion, he also produces in us growth in holiness of life. He brings forth the ‘*fruit of the Spirit*’ within us (‘love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control,’ Gal. 5:22–23), those qualities that reflect the character of God.”¹³

Believers are called to cleanse themselves from all sorts of sinfulness “bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God (2 Cor 7:1). Scripture states that believers are actually sanctified by the Spirit of God (1 Cor 6:11). While holiness is commanded of the Christian and is made possible by the Holy Spirit, pursuing purity is not the complete purpose of the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit leading. A fourth view is that the Holy Spirit is given to lead believers. It is a common saying to hear in the church by everyday Christians, “The Lord led me to do this” or “The Spirit led me to say this.” Erickson rightly notes, “The Holy Spirit, dwelling within the church, also creates a sensitivity to the Lord’s leading.”¹⁴ One can regularly hear Christians in churches speak of being sensitive to the Spirit’s leading. There is a common belief that the Holy Spirit leads Christians to do certain things such as make a phone call to someone, to give a gift to a person in need, or to even share the gospel with a specific person.

The Bible speaks of the Spirit leading Jesus in Matthew 4:1 and Luke 4:1 into the wilderness. It further speaks of being led by the Spirit as being an evidence of being a

¹³Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 640.

¹⁴ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 1050.

son of God (Rom 8:14). Paul states in Galatians 5:18 that those who are led by the Spirit are not under the law. There is ample evidence that indeed believers are called to be led by the Spirit. The leading, however, seems to be a result of the Spirit being given and not the central reason.

Central Role of the Holy Spirit

While the views mentioned already reflect partial aspects of the purpose of the Holy Spirit, they do not explain the central purpose of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives. The central role of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ in the lives of believers by enabling communion with the risen Christ.

When Christ left the disciples, they were distraught over the thought of Jesus leaving, yet the Lord encouraged them saying it was to their advantage that He would go away because He would send the Spirit (John 16:7). The advantage would be they would have the Spirit. It was by the giving of the Spirit that the disciples and all NT believers would experience the risen Christ. Ferguson writes "The Spirit's coming inaugurates a communion with Christ in which the Spirit who dwelt on Christ now dwells on and in believers."¹⁵

Having the Lord "with you" was a significant blessing in the Scripture (Gen 39:2; Exod 3:12; Josh 1:5; Isa 43:2, 5). The angel visiting Joseph told him Jesus's name would be "Immanuel" which is "God with us" (Matt 1:23). When Jesus was leaving the disciples, He comforted them by saying, "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt 28:20). If Jesus has promised to be with believers always, but is not here in the flesh, He must be speaking of communing with believers always through the sending of the Holy Spirit as He promised (John 14:16-17).

Since the central role of the Spirit is to glorify Jesus (John 16:14), Jesus sent

¹⁵Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1997), 71.

the Spirit to the world to dwell with believers to accomplish this purpose. Packer remarks on the meaning of “glorifying Christ” stating “he [the Spirit] shall make me [Christ] glorious in people’s eyes by making them aware of the glory that is mine already and that will be enhanced when I have gone back to the Father via the cross and resurrection and ascension to be enthroned in my kingdom.”¹⁶ It is the role of the Holy Spirit to reveal to believers the glory of their redemption by Christ. John Owen states, “A soul does never glorify or honor Christ upon a discovery or sense of the eternal redemption he has purchased for him, but it is in him a peculiar effect of the Holy Ghost as our comforter. ‘No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.’”¹⁷

The disciples were afraid of being left alone and greatly enjoyed the presence of Christ. They needed the comfort of being in the presence of and communing with God Himself. The Spirit is sent to be with the people, to dwell in them, to make the presence of Christ known to them (John 14:16; Eph 3:16-17). As Ferguson states, “The coming of the Spirit is the equivalent of the indwelling Christ.”¹⁸ The Spirit glorifies Christ by making His people aware that He is with them.

The work of the Spirit is the work under the new covenant. It is the Spirit’s role to “mediate” the presence of Jesus with believers continually.¹⁹ When the Holy Spirit does this, Packer notes three things that happen.²⁰ First is a very real, personal fellowship with Jesus. While the disciples enjoyed the in-flesh personal relationship with Christ, believers today commune with the resurrected and ascended Lord in a very personal way because of the work of the Holy Spirit. Second, as believers live in communion with

¹⁶Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, 46.

¹⁷John Owen, *Communion with the Triune God*, ed. Kelly M. Kapic and Justin Taylor (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 377.

¹⁸Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 71.

¹⁹Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, 43.

²⁰Ibid.

Christ they are changed in their character becoming sanctified like the Lord Jesus Whom they are following. Third, the Spirit gives them assurance they are indeed children of God, “heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ” (Rom 8:17). Because of the Holy Spirit, their election and adoption are made sure. Each of these is because of the central role of the Spirit to glorify Christ by intimately communing Christ’s presence with the believer.

In summary, believers are regenerated by the Spirit of God.²¹ The Spirit of God now changes believers’ hearts and affections so that believers now desire to know and commune with God. This is made possible because of the central role of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in every believer. He is to focus on Christ not Himself.²² The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus by making communion not only possible for the believer but a delight for the believer to do so. It is this central work of the Holy Spirit that allows the Christian to pursue God.²³ Flowing from this communion with God comes the power, purity, performance, and presentation of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit’s Use of the Scriptures in Christians’ Sanctification

The Spirit is the Author of the Scriptures (2 Pet 1:21), and He uses the Scriptures to sanctify believers. Since the Scriptures are the revelation of God and reveal how believers are changed into holiness, it is vital that believers search and study the Scriptures in a manner that is conducive to holy living. Hendricks offers three reasons Bible study is essential. It is essential for Christian growth, for spiritual maturity, and for

²¹Bruce A. Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 120

²²*Ibid.*, 107–8.

²³Piper, *Desiring God*, 298. Piper states, “It is worth musing over the implications that the Holy Spirit is the divine Workman who gives us a new heart of faith and is himself the personification of the joy that the Father and the Son have in each other. We might say the change that must occur in the human heart to make saving faith possible is the permeation by the Holy Spirit, which is nothing less than a permeation by the very joy that God the Father and God the Son have in each other’s beauty. In other words, the taste for God that begets saving faith is God’s very taste for himself, imparted to us in measure by the Holy Spirit.”

spiritual effectiveness.²⁴ Regarding 1 Peter 2:2 Hendricks states, “What is the aim of the Bible? The text tells us: in order that you might grow The Bible was written not to satisfy your curiosity but to help you conform to Christ’s image.”²⁵

For sanctification to occur, both believers and God have roles.²⁶ In Philippians 2:12-13 Paul tells the believers to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” Therefore, believers must put forth effort but recognize that God Himself will do a great work in them.

The Believer’s Role

To show the importance of the Word of God, Jesus told Satan, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God'" (Matt 4:4). Jesus was being tempted to turn a stone into bread for His earthly survival, yet Jesus stated that spiritual life is sustained by the Word of God. Believers must understand that it is the Word of God that will give them sustained life and growth. Therefore, believers must take steps to make the Word of God a priority in their lives.

Daily Bible reading. In order for the Spirit to use the Word of God in Christians’ lives, Christians need to read the Bible.²⁷ A call to renew their minds can only be accomplished by setting and disciplining themselves to actually read the Word of God consistently. Donald Whitney explains the purpose of daily Bible reading and the other

²⁴Howard G. Hendricks and William D. D. Hendricks. *Living by the Book* (Chicago: Moody, 2007), 18–22.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 19.

²⁶David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *God the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, IL: Crossways Books, 1997), 205–9.

²⁷It should be noted that for those who are unable to read, listening to the Word or hearing solid, expository preaching of the Word of God is adequate.

spiritual disciplines is “where we may expect to encounter the transforming grace of God.”²⁸ He notes, “The most critical Discipline is the in-take of God’s Word.”²⁹

Whitney offers several insights on reading and studying the Bible. The first he offers is to “find the *time*”³⁰ (italics original). Here he sets forth the first major reason people do not read their Bibles. They encounter discouragement at the sheer number of pages in the Bible and do not fulfill the task of reading the Bible daily. Having the discipline of having a set time, preferably not right before bed, will be the first step.³¹ By being consistent in reading, one can read through the Bible in its entirety in a year spending only fifteen minutes a day.³²

The second insight is “to find a Bible-reading *plan*”³³ (italics original). Here Whitney explains the importance of planning. Many who simply choose “random” passages quickly stop their consistent reading.³⁴ There are many specific plans available and easily accessible for the modern reader to find. Whitney explains that if one simply reads three chapters a day and five chapters on Sundays one will finish the entire Bible in a year. For the purpose of reading, believers must plan.

The third insight Whitney gives is “to find at least one word, phrase, or verse to *meditate* on each time you read”³⁵ (italics original). Without this discipline to remember what one has learned, it is unlikely that change will occur. Whitney explains

²⁸Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, updated rev ed. (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2014), 28.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., 29.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid., 30.

when the Scripture is meditated on, “Your insight into Scripture will deepen, and you’ll better understand how it applies to your life. And the more you apply the truth of Scripture the more you’ll become like Jesus.”³⁶

Daily Bible study. Not only do Christians need to read the Bible, they also need to study the Bible. Whitney shows the comparison between reading and studying the Bible. “If reading the Bible can be compared to cruising the width of a clear sparkling lake in a motorboat, studying the Bible is like slowly crossing the same lake in a glass-bottomed boat.”³⁷ However most Christians do not actively participate in the study of Scripture. Sproul suggests the reason is not a lack of intelligence but rather Bible study takes work and laziness is the real culprit.³⁸ One needs only “pen and paper” to begin studying the Bible, recording thoughts, questions, and insights as one reads.³⁹ There are thousands of Bible helps available to Christians such as cross-references in Bibles, concordances, study Bibles, and commentaries. Studying the Bible in a deep way will make the truths of Scripture become a part of believers’ hearts. To the believers, Whitney encourages this discipline will allow them to “experience the joy of discovering Biblical insights firsthand through your own Bible study.”⁴⁰

The right attitudes. Believers must approach the Bible with right attitudes. Jerry Bridges suggests three essential attitudes that believers must have when approaching their Bible reading.⁴¹ The first is an attitude of humility. Believers must

³⁶Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 30.

³⁷Ibid., 31.

³⁸Ibid., 32. Whitney quotes R. C. Sproul, *Knowing Scripture*, rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009), 17.

³⁹Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 33.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Jerry Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace: God’s Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness*, new ed. (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2006), 170–73.

understand they do not know everything there is to know about God. God has not revealed everything to everyone (Luke 10:21). Bridges states, “However knowledgeable about Scripture we may be, we need to approach it each day as little children asking the Holy Spirit to teach us.”⁴² “Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law” and “Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart” were the prayers of the Psalmist, and all Christians should demonstrate the same attitude of humility when approaching the Scriptures (Ps 119:18, 34).

The second attitude is an attitude of mental discipline.⁴³ Mental discipline is having a serious attitude about the pursuit of sanctification through the Scriptures. Diligence is required for this task. Bridges explains this is found in the wisdom of Proverbs 2:1-5. Noting especially verses 2 and 4 which states his plea, “making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding . . . if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures (Prov 2:2, 4), Bridges states, “The thought of searching the Scriptures with the same intensity that one would search for hidden treasure suggests the value that we should put on the teaching of Scripture.”⁴⁴

The third attitude is an attitude of dependence.⁴⁵ Seeking to gain wisdom from another source other than themselves shows believers are dependent upon God. Proverbs 2:3 states, “If you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding.” Bridges notes, “‘Calling out’ and ‘crying aloud’ denote an almost desperate sense of dependence; an attitude far different from a more unusual perfunctory prayer for God to teach us as we begin our weekly Bible study.”⁴⁶ Christians must have an attitude of dependence upon God if they are to understand wisdom and grow in grace. Bridges shows the importance

⁴²Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace*, 170.

⁴³Ibid., 171.

⁴⁴Ibid., 172.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

of these attitudes:

It is difficult to maintain an attitude of both diligence and dependence, but we must do this if we want to learn from the Holy Spirit. He does not reward either indolence or sinful self-confidence. He does bless diligence when it is pursued in a sincere attitude of dependence on Him. What we are talking about here is not just acquiring more knowledge of Biblical truth, but rather the development of Bible-based convictions by which we are to live.⁴⁷

Approaching Bible reading with the proper attitude is a major factor in the Spirit impressing His Word upon Christians' hearts resulting in believers progressing in their sanctification.

The Holy Spirit's Role

One of the roles of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers is to illuminate the Scriptures to them.⁴⁸ This of course can be done only if Christians read the Scriptures. As Christians seek to understand the text being read and studied with a proper attitude, they need to depend upon the Holy Spirit for illumination of the Scriptures. Believers should take their reading and study a step further and pray the text asking for the Spirit to illuminate the passage to them.

The Psalmist prayed in Psalm 119:18, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law." This should be the great desire and dependence of believers when reading the Scriptures. Whitney states, "The Holy Spirit is the Great

⁴⁷Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace*, 172.

⁴⁸Owen, *Communion with the Triune God*, 386-87. Owen explains, "So was the great promise of the Comforter, that he should 'teach us (John 14:26) – that he should 'guide us into all truth' (John 16:13). This of teaching us the mind and will of God, in the manner wherein we are taught it by the Spirit, our comforter, is an eminent part of our unction by him; which I shall instance in. Give me leave to say, there is a threefold teaching by the Spirit." He then lists the threefold teaching by the Holy Spirit. The first is teaching of conviction and illumination which is "So the Spirit teaches the world (that is, many in it) by preaching of the word; as he promised to do (John 16:8)." The second teaching is of sanctification where the Spirit is "opening blind eyes, giving a new understanding, shining into our hearts, to give us a knowledge of the glory of God in the faces of Jesus Christ; enabling us to receive spiritual things in a spiritual light (1 Cor. 2:13); giving a saving knowledge of the mystery of the gospel: and this is in several degrees is common to believers." The third is of consolation which is "making sweet, useful, and joyful to the soul, the discoveries that are made of the mind and will of God in light of the Spirit of sanctification."

Guide into God's truth (see John 14:26).⁴⁹ Ware notes, just as the Holy Spirit revealed the truth to writers of Scripture, the Spirit continues the work of illumination to believers as they read the written words.⁵⁰ Whitney states, "Praying your way through a verse of Scripture submits the mind to the Holy Spirit's illumination of the text and intensifies your spiritual perception. The Bible was written under the inspiration; pray for His illumination in your meditation."⁵¹

It is the Holy Spirit who knows believers and uses the Scriptures to conform them to the image of Christ. Believers cannot grow in sanctification without the Scripture and without the Holy Spirit's illumination of the Scripture to their lives. This proves to be insightful in having not only right doctrine but also right living. As believers humbly and prayerfully approach the Bible in their reading and study, the Spirit will illuminate the text to them, showing them areas of their lives that are not in accordance with His will and even revealing hidden parts of the heart to believers.⁵² As Bridges states, "So we should approach the Scriptures in humility and expect the Holy Spirit to humble us even further as we continue to be taught by Him from His Word."⁵³

Preaching and Sanctification

Believers are not only to experience the Word of God in private devotion but also in the public preaching of God's Word. The Spirit uses the Word of God mightily through the preaching of the Word of God in the sanctification of believers. The Spirit calls people to salvation and sanctifies believers through the preaching of the gospel (Rom 10:14; 2 Thess 2:13-14). As Perkins states, "Through preaching those who hear are

⁴⁹Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 71.

⁵⁰Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, 111.

⁵¹Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 71.

⁵²Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace*, 171.

⁵³Ibid.

called into the state of grace, and preserved in it.”⁵⁴

When the preacher is proclaiming the Word of God, Perkins suggest two things occur: “(i) The hiding of human wisdom, and (ii) the demonstration of the manifestation of the Spirit.”⁵⁵ The preacher is not proclaiming his thoughts or his wisdom but rather the Holy Spirit is demonstrating His power upon the hearers (1 Cor 2:4-5). When the Word of God is delivered by a humble preacher who is dependent upon the Spirit to a willing people desiring to be holy, there is fruit in the preaching. Paul described it to the Colossian believers this way, “Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing – as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth” (Col 1:5-6). It is not the mere influence of the preacher that works but the Word of God preached in the Spirit that bears fruit in the ears of the hearers.

While the hearers are responsible to have open hearts to receive the Word, preachers too have a great responsibility. It is important for preachers to know the Word of God and faithfully preach the text, but that is not enough. Keller makes a keen observation when he writes, “We have said that your listeners will be convinced by your message only if they are convinced by you as a person.”⁵⁶ People cannot divorce the character of the man and the content of the message. But there is even more. Specifically Keller is saying the people listening must have a “sense of the Holy Spirit working in and through you.”⁵⁷ Keller observes this in Colossians 1:25-29 where Paul states in verse 29, “For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.” This is the power of the Holy Spirit working in Paul as He proclaims the gospel. It is this kind

⁵⁴William Perkins, *The Art of Prophesying*, (Pavlik Press, 2012) loc. 59, Kindle.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Penguin Books, 2016), 191.

⁵⁷Ibid., 192.

of Spirit-powered preaching that yields fruit in believers for their salvation and sanctification.

For many believers, they search for what they call a “good church.” To many that may mean a good praise and worship band, a good teen program, or even a good small group ministry. But none of these can take the top importance of attending a church where the pastor is a Spirit-filled man who walks with God and when he preaches, it is evident the power of the Spirit is upon his preaching. If Christians will sit under the preaching of a Spirit-filled man with a willing heart and desire for the Spirit to teach them, they will grow in their sanctification.

In summary, it is the goal of believers to be conformed to the image of Christ. Since the Spirit is the Agent of regeneration, He is also the Agent of sanctification. The most essential way believers grow in sanctification is by the means of the Word of God. This cannot be done without believers’ efforts in reading the Scripture, studying the Bible, and having the proper attitudes towards the Word of God. When believers read, study, and meditate on the Word, the Holy Spirit probes the depths of believers’ hearts and illuminates the Scriptures to them. Believers are to have not only private devotion to the Lord but are also to grow in their sanctification by attending a Bible-believing church with a Spirit-filled preacher who preaches the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit. Believers then are able to see their needs and obey the prompting of the Holy Spirit in faith. When this process is continuously done, it allows believers to be conformed more and more to the image of Christ.

The Spirit’s Use of Prayer in Christians’ Sanctification

God not only speaks to His people through His Word but His people have the blessing to speak to Him through prayer. Prayer is a means the Spirit uses to conform believers to the image of Christ. The God of Heaven is a hearing God Who hears every

prayer no matter how faint or small.⁵⁸ Whitney rightly states, “That’s why of all the Spiritual Disciplines, prayer is second only to the intake of God’s Word in importance.”⁵⁹ If believers are going to be conformed to the image of Christ, they must be people of prayer. The Holy Spirit uses prayer for Christians’ sanctification.

Biblical Mandate on Prayer

Many believers treat prayer as optional. They may offer a quick prayer at meals or when serious trouble comes, but it is not the norm for Christians to be committed to prayer. Yet the Bible reveals that Christians are to be people who are serious about prayer.

Since the beginning and all through the Bible, the people of God prayed. Abraham and Isaac prayed to the Lord (Gen 20:17; 25:21). Moses prayed to the Lord regarding Pharaoh (Exod 8:30). Hannah prayed to the Lord in her distress (1 Sam 1:10). Elisha and the prophets prayed in the various situations they found themselves in (2 Kings 6:17; Jer 32:16; Dan 6:10).

Perhaps the most compelling is the understanding that the Lord Jesus Himself prayed (Matt 26:36; Luke 3:21, 11:1). Christians should be like the twelve disciples who when they saw Jesus praying, recognized the importance of prayer, and asked Jesus, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples” (Luke 11:1). Many however do not recognize the importance of prayer. Whitney states, “But we must come to grips with the fact that to be like Jesus we must pray.”⁶⁰ Notably, Jesus expected His followers to pray (Matt 6:7, 9; Luke 11:9; 18:1).

We also see the New Testament reveals believers’ responsibility and blessing

⁵⁸Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 80.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

to partake in prayer. Paul encourages the Romans to “be constant in prayer” (Rom 12:12). Believers are encouraged to be “praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication” (Eph 6:18). Christians are to “continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving” (Col 4:2) and are to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess 5:17). All believers are to keep themselves in the love of God by “praying in the Holy Spirit” (Jude 1:20). Prayer is not only essential but also expected to be a regular part of believers’ lives.

Scripture Reading and Prayer

Though there are many ways to learn about prayer such as sermons and books, prayer is something that one must do in order to learn. This is one of the roles of the Holy Spirit. Whitney states, “The Holy Spirit teaches praying people how to pray better. That’s one of the applications of John 16:13 where Jesus said, ‘When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.’ Just as a plane is guided more easily when it’s airborne than when it’s on the ground with its engines off, so the Holy Spirit guides us in prayer better when we are airborne in prayer than when we are not.”⁶¹

Whitney states that many times Scripture reading and prayer are viewed as two different Spiritual Disciplines existing apart from one another.⁶² When in fact they should be joined through meditation.⁶³ Consider Psalm 19:14, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.” David is praying that his meditation on God’s law (v. 7) would be acceptable in the sight of God. In other words, here we see the example of moving from reading God’s Word, to meditation, to prayer. Whitney concludes, “We learn to pray by meditating on Scripture, for meditation is the missing link between Bible in-take and

⁶¹Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 86.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid.

prayer.”⁶⁴

The Spirit’s Work in Prayer

Prayer is a Spiritual Discipline Christians practice and the Spirit uses prayer to accomplish Christ-likeness in believers’ lives. On the duty of prayer and communing with God Owen states, “The soul is never more raised with the love of God than when by the Spirit taken into intimate communion with him in the discharge of this duty; and therein it belongs to the Spirit of consolation, to the Spirit promised as a comforter.”⁶⁵ This occurs in various ways. The first way the Spirit works through prayer is to enable believers. The Psalmist wrote in prayer to God in Psalm 119, “Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end. Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart” (vv. 33-34). It was the Psalmist’s desire to gain understanding from the Lord by obeying the Word of God.

Further, the Psalmist recognizes his dependence upon God for obedience to the Word. In v. 37 he asks, “Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways.” Bridges states, “We need to lay before the Lord any areas of persistent sin in our lives: sins such as gossip; irritability; impatience; lack of love; impure thoughts; and undisciplined, wandering eyes. These sins need to be the object of earnest prayer that God would work in us and enable us to deal with them.”⁶⁶ This is spiritual warfare and enablement by the Holy Spirit through prayer is the key. Bridges notes, “We are the ones who must deal with these sins, but the Holy Spirit must enable us to do it.”⁶⁷

Bridges notes that Paul stated in Romans 8:13, “For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will

⁶⁴Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 92–93.

⁶⁵Owen, *Communion with the Triune God*, 388.

⁶⁶Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace*, 140–41.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 141.

live.”⁶⁸ Believers must have the enablement of the Holy Spirit in order to live lives of sanctification. Bridges continues, “This means continual, fervent prayer for the work of the Holy Spirit to enable us to do what is our duty to do. As John Murray said, ‘The believer is not endowed with a reservoir of strength from which he draws. It is always ‘by the Spirit’ that each sanctified and sanctifying activity is exercised.’”⁶⁹

The second way the Spirit works in prayer is through intercession. Paul writes of this work of the Spirit in Romans 8:26-27. Sometimes when Christians pray, they do not understand how they should be praying. This can be frustrating and discouraging for any Christian. This is where the Holy Spirit brings comfort through intercession. Carson notes,

There are countless situations in which we simply do not know what to pray for. Then the Christian who is diligent at prayer learns what Paul means when he writes that “the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God” (Rom. 8:26-27). When we pray our petitions may be off the mark; on many matters we do not know the Scriptures well enough, we do not know God well enough, to be confident about what we should be praying. The Holy Spirit helps us by interceding for us with unuttered groanings offered to the Father while we Christians are praying.⁷⁰

To know that the Holy Spirit intercedes for believers when they pray is a great comfort to Christians. They do not have to know everything, for they know the One Who does know everything. It is their hearts’ desire to be praying in the will of the Father; that is what is most important. If believers do not pray, intercession is not made. This is why prayer is so important for Christian sanctification.

In summary, prayer is not simply a command of God but is for believers’ sanctification. Believers are to be people of prayer that God would teach them the Word

⁶⁸Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace*, 141.

⁶⁹Ibid., 140–41.

⁷⁰D. A. Carson, *Praying with Paul: A Call to Spiritual Reformation*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 15.

and would enable them to live the Word they are taught. This is accomplished by the work of the Holy Spirit. Further, believers are assured when they do pray, and the circumstances are such that they are at a loss for words, the Holy Spirit will pray on their behalf, making the prayer effectual before God according to His will. If believers are to be changed into the image of Christ, they must do what Christ did, and that means pray.

The Spirit's Work in Christians' Sanctification

The Holy Spirit has the specific work to sanctify believers conforming them to the image of Christ. He is the One who regenerates them and thereby indwells them. They are now “Spiritual.”⁷¹ All true believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. John Murray states, “Sanctification is specifically the *work* of this indwelling and directing Holy Spirit.”⁷² Murray continues, He “is the controlling and directing agent in every regenerate person.”⁷³

Holy Spirit's Work and Believer's Work

It has already been mentioned that sanctification is not either the Holy Spirit working or the believer working but rather is both the Holy Spirit working and the believer working (Phil 2:12-13). The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God and prayer in believers' lives to bring about sanctification. The focus was on the work believers do in these Spiritual Disciplines. The focus now turns to the work of the Holy Spirit. What is important to understand is the nature of the relation between the work of the Holy Spirit and Christians' work in sanctification.

As the Spirit is the One at work in regeneration, so it is the Spirit who effects godliness in sanctification.⁷⁴ Murray writes, “God works in us and we also work. But the

⁷¹John Murray, *Redemption, Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 177.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid., 178.

⁷⁴Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, 122. “This fourth area where we see the Spirit taking the

relation is that *because* God works we work. All working out of salvation on our part is the effect of God's working in us, not the willing to the exclusion of the doing and not the doing to the exclusion of the willing, but both the willing and the doing."⁷⁵ So even the work that believers do is enabled and a result of grace and is a work of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives.

The purpose of this working is for the sanctification of believers and ultimately the glory of God. Murray writes, "And this working of God is directed to the end of enabling us to will and to do that which is well pleasing to him."⁷⁶ God is being faithful in accomplishing in believers' lives what He promised to do (Rom 8:29). The believers' work in holiness is not to be a source of pride or self-righteousness. Rather it is to be a realization of the grace of God and power of the Holy Spirit in one's life. Murray states, "The more persistently active we are in working, the more persuaded we may be that all the energizing grace and power is of God."⁷⁷

The Agent of Sanctification

Paul writes that the Holy Spirit is the One who sanctifies believers (Rom 15:16; 1 Cor 6:11). Since the Holy Spirit is the Agent of sanctification, various aspects of His work must be considered. Murray considers three specific aspects of His work being the Agent of sanctification that are vital to consider.

The first consideration concerns the mode of the Holy Spirit effecting sanctification in the life of the believer. Murray argues this "is encompassed with

backstage position to both the Father and the Son is in relation to our sanctification. Notice that while Scripture tells us clearly that the Spirit works in believers to bring about their increasing holiness and restoration, the Spirit works not to make the believer into *his* own image but rather into the image of *Christ* (Col. 3:9-10). Sanctification, it is clear, is the work of the triune God." Italics original.

⁷⁵Murray, *Redemption, Accomplished and Applied*, 185.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid.

mystery.”⁷⁸ He states, “We do not know the mode of the Spirit’s indwelling nor the mode of his efficient working in the hearts and minds and wills of God’s people by which they are progressively cleansed from the defilement of sin and more and more transfigured after the image of Christ.”⁷⁹ While we can see the fruit of the Spirit, how He is actually working is a mystery. The mode of His working is secret, mysterious, and beyond human comprehension. Like regeneration, one can see the effects but no one knows how the Spirit is working (John 3:8). Murray comments, “In every and distinct and particular movement of the believer in the way of holiness there is an energizing activity of the Holy Spirit, and when we try to discover what the mode of that exercise of His grace and power is when we realize how far we are from being able to diagnose the secret workings of the Spirit.”⁸⁰

The second consideration concerns the believer’s dependence upon the Holy Spirit. While believers must work out their own salvation (Phil 2:12) ultimately they are to see sanctification as a work of grace. They must show complete dependence upon the Holy Spirit to conform them into the image of Christ. It is only by God’s grace they will hate sin and “walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (Rom 8:4). Any sense of self-effort can lead to pride and self-righteousness. Murray states, “It is by grace that we are being saved as by grace we have been saved.”⁸¹ He continues, “We must rely not upon the means of sanctification but upon the God of all grace. Self-confident moralism promotes pride, and sanctification promotes humility and contrition.”⁸²

The third consideration concerns the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ and the

⁷⁸Murray, *Redemption, Accomplished and Applied*, 182.

⁷⁹Ibid., 185.

⁸⁰Ibid., 183.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid.

Spirit of the resurrection of Christ. Murray notes, “We may not think of the Spirit as operative in us apart from the risen and glorified Christ. The sanctifying process is not only dependent upon the death and resurrection of Christ in its initiation; it is also dependent upon the death and resurrection of Christ in its continuance.”⁸³ Paul notes this connection in 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 when he states, “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” Murray argues regarding this passage, “It is apparent that the sanctifying work of the Spirit not only consists in progressive conformation to the image of Christ, but is also dependent upon the activity of the exalted Lord.”⁸⁴ As the Holy Spirit shows the greatness and glory of the resurrected and ascended Christ to believers, they are changed into the image of Christ Himself. Regarding this great passage on the work of the Spirit, Ware remarks, “Clearly the Spirit’s central focus and unfailing activity is to bring honor and glory to Christ. And here, He does this by working in the lives of believers to transform them increasingly over time so that they are more like what God has saved them to be.”⁸⁵

In summary, the Holy Spirit indwells all believers and works in them effecting godliness in their lives for the glory of God. The mode of the Spirit however is mysterious and unknown but the fruit is visible. Believers must be dependent upon the Holy Spirit for sanctification for holiness is a work of grace. The Spirit shows believers the glory of the resurrected Christ allowing them to behold His glory and therefore being changed into the image of Christ by the power of the Spirit. This is all of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

⁸³Murray, *Redemption, Accomplished and Applied*, 183.

⁸⁴Ibid., 184.

⁸⁵Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, 123.

Conclusion

The Holy Spirit is the agent not only of regeneration but also of sanctification. It is important for Christians to understand the Holy Spirit's power and work in order to grow into the likeness of Christ. The Holy Spirit's main role is to glorify Christ to Christians that they may behold His glory, knowing He is with them, allowing them to commune with God. From the communion with Christ flows power, purity, performance, and presentation of the Holy Spirit that is evident in believers' lives. Believers are to "work out their own salvation" by means of communing with God through Scripture reading and study, prayer, and proper attitudes. The Spirit illumines the Scriptures to believers enabling them to behold their own sin and the glory of Christ. Through prayer, bridging Scripture reading with meditation, the Spirit enables believers to obey the risen Christ and intercedes on their behalf. But ultimately even these means are by grace. For salvation, which sanctification is a part, is all of grace. The Holy Spirit mysteriously works sanctification in believers, causing dependence upon His grace, as He reveals the glorified Christ. As Murray states, "It is the peculiar prerogative and function of the Holy Spirit to glorify Christ by taking the things of Christ and showing them unto the people of God (*cf.* John 16:14, 16; II Cor. 3:17, 18). It is as the indwelling Spirit that he does this and as the advocate with believers (John 14:16, 17)."⁸⁶ God has predestined that those who are His will be "conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom 8:29), and it is the Holy Spirit who does this work ensuring the glorification of the people of God.

⁸⁶Murray, *Redemption, Accomplished and Applied*, 184.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Overview

This chapter will describe the project of using expository preaching to preach and teach the person, power, and work of the Holy Spirit to Fort Howard Community Church. The purpose of this project was to bring a greater awareness of the biblical doctrine of pneumatology to the people of FHCC. The overall project consisted of a 25 question survey, a 10 week sermon series consisting of sermons that had been evaluated, and a follow up survey to evaluate a statistical change in the participants' views.

The Project and Participants

This project began on September 11, 2016 with an announcement in the weekly church email and a letter in the bulletin. Willing participants of regular attendees and church members were given advanced notice of two dates when the pre-surveys could be completed – Sunday September 11th and 18th.¹ On those two days there were a total of 29 participants who filled out the survey. The general consensus of comments I received was this was going to be a good series that people were looking forward to, and they anticipated learning a lot.

The Sermon Series

The sermon series was developed with a systematic theological approach. The overall concept was to take a passage which dealt with a specific aspect of the Holy Spirit and exegete it, comparing Scripture with Scripture, and then form it into a simple theme

¹See appendix 3.

(ie. big idea) then to be communicated through expository preaching. Knowing the people are not theologians, I wanted them to know the passages and the overall thrust of the text giving them a greater understanding of the Holy Spirit. It was suggested by a seminary advisor that the first sermon be, not on the Holy Spirit in particular, but rather on the overall need for theology.

The first sermon dealt with the fact that God can be known, has revealed Himself to man in both general and special revelation, and that eternal life is knowing God. It drove home the point that we were made by God to know God. The title of the message was “The God Who Reveals: Knowing God” based on the text Galatians 4:8-9. The theme was “Because God has revealed Himself to man, people have the opportunity to have the greatest joy and fulfillment in life which is knowing God and being known by God.” Three main points were considered: First, God made mankind to know Him (Gal 4:8); second, God has revealed Himself to man (Ps 19:1; Rom 1:25; 2 Pet 1:20-21; etc.); third, God is known through the Gospel (Gal 4:9).

The second sermon was intended to show that the Holy Spirit is God and that He is a Person, not a mere force. The title of the message was “The God Who Exists: The Third Person of the Trinity” based on the text John 14:15-17. The theme was “The Holy Spirit was given by Christ as the Comforter for the disciples and is to be our Comforter as well.” Three reasons the Holy Spirit is our comfort were given: First, the Holy Spirit is God (John 14:15-17); second, the Holy Spirit is a Person (John 14:1); third, the Holy Spirit is active (John 14:15-17).

The third sermon was intended to detail the doctrine of regeneration or the new birth. The title of the message was “The God Who Creates: Regeneration” based on the text Titus 3:1-10. The theme was “The Holy Spirit alone is the One who gives new life.” Three fundamental truths were given to support this: First, regeneration is desperately needed (vv. 1-3); second, regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit (vv. 4-7); third, regeneration results in a changed life (vv. 8-10).

The fourth sermon was intended to biblically explain Spirit baptism and sealing. This was particularly meant to show that baptism of the Spirit happens at the time of regeneration and is experienced by all true believers and is not something to be sought after salvation as the charismatic movement wrongly teaches. The title of the message was “The God Who Secures: Spirit Baptism and Sealing” based on the texts Matthew 3:11 (and 1 Cor 12:13) for Spirit baptism and Ephesians 1:13-14 for Spirit sealing. The theme was “Christians should feel emboldened and secure knowing Christ has baptized them with the Spirit who guarantees their eternal salvation.” The security was looked at in two aspects: First, Jesus baptizes believers with the Holy Spirit (Matt 3:11); second, the Holy Spirit is the seal of the Christian’s salvation (Eph 1:13-14).

The fifth sermon was intended to show salvation is more than “just being saved from hell” but is God taking us as orphans and making us His sons through adoption. The title of the message was “The God Who Embraces: Adoption” based on the text Romans 8:14-17. The theme was “The Holy Spirit confirms to believers they are now adopted as sons of God.” In this passage three ways the Holy Spirit confirms believers are sons of God were shown: First, the Spirit leads believers to live (v. 14); second, the Spirit enables believers to relate (v. 15); third, the Spirit gives believers assurance (vv. 16-17). The point was driven home that the spirit of adoption is not the Holy Spirit per se but is contrasted with the spirit of slavery. But it should be recognized that the spirit of adoption comes by the means of the Holy Spirit.²

The sixth sermon was intended to show that sanctification is not “optional,” but is the natural result of regeneration. Also, distinguishing points between sanctification and justification were made. The title of the message was “The God Who Transforms: Sanctification” based on the text Romans 8:1-9. The theme was “The Holy Spirit actually

²This was a pointed sermon in our small church as the church has really supported our own adoption of a little girl from China that was finalized right after the conclusion of these ten sermons.

changes Christians to be holy like Christ in their daily lives.” Three aspects of how the Holy Spirit sanctifies believers were given: First, the Holy Spirit has sanctified believers in the past (Titus 3:4-5; 2 Thess 2:13); second, the Holy Spirit is sanctifying believers in the present (Rom 6); third, the Holy Spirit will sanctify believers in the future (Rom 8:29-30).

The seventh sermon was intended to show that all true believers have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them and that He uses Scripture to show them truth. The title of the message was “The God Who Shines: Indwelling and Illumination” based on the text Romans 8:9 and 1 Corinthians 2:11-13. The theme was “The indwelling Holy Spirit reveals and applies the truth of the Word of God to believers.” Three truths were given to show this theme: First, the Holy Spirit is the Author of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21); second, the Holy Spirit indwells every believer (John 14:27; Rom 8:9); third, the Holy Spirit reveals and applies Scripture (1 Cor 2:11-13).

The eighth sermon was intended to show that because true Christians have the indwelling Holy Spirit, they will bear fruit. The title of the message was “The God Who Confirms: Fruit of the Spirit” based on the text Galatians 5:16-26. The theme was “Believers are to walk in the Spirit which produces fruit in our lives.” Three outcomes were shown when believers are obedient to the command to “walk in the Spirit.” First, walking in the Spirit gives victory (vv. 16-17); second, walking in the Spirit gives validation (vv. 18-22); third, walking in the Spirit gives direction (vv. 25-26).

The ninth sermon was intended to show that because the Spirit indwells each believer, He has given each believer at least one gift to be used for His glory. Special attention was given here to argue for the cessationist position. The title of the message was “The God Who Empowers: Gifts of the Spirit” based on the text 1 Corinthians 13:4-11. The theme of this message was “The Holy Spirit empowers each believer with spiritual gifts to be used for the glory of God in the church.” The main points of the gifts were: First, the Holy Spirit grants gifts (v. 4-6); second, the gifts are for specific purposes

(1 Pet 1:10, 4:11; 1 Cor 12:7; Eph 4:12); third, the gifts, divided into speaking and serving gifts, are to be used (1 Pet 4:10-11). Furthermore some gifts such as tongues, miracles, and healings were temporary and are not in operation today.

The tenth sermon was intended to give hope for the future glory awaiting believers by the Holy Spirit. The title of the message was “The God Who Assures: Hope for Future Glory” based on the text Romans 8:18-30. The theme was “The Holy Spirit helps believers by giving them assurance of future glory.” Three important works of the Holy Spirit that give the believer assurance of future glory were shown: First, the Spirit assures the future glory of new creation (vv. 18-25); second, the Spirit assures the future glory by intercession (vv. 26-27); third, the Spirit assures the future glory of glorification (vv. 28-30).

The Sermon Evaluations

Each sermon was evaluated by three key individuals chosen for distinct reasons. The first evaluator was James Mook, Associate Professor of Theology and director of the Ph.D. program at The Master’s Seminary. Mook formerly taught at Capital Bible Seminary, where I attended and earned my M.Div.; he was instrumental in my coming to FHCC. He has a long history with FHCC and knows the people well and is a scholar in theology. Mook primarily focused on the theological aspects and content of the sermons.

The second evaluator was John Banks, Senior Pastor of Tabernacle Bible Church in Honesdale, Pennsylvania. He has been a pastor for several years and attended seminary with me. Banks has a heart for expository preaching and pastoring; he primarily focused on the homiletical aspects of the sermons.

The third evaluator was Joshua Heins, who has served as an elder at FHCC for over 6 years and is a long-time member. He knows the people of FHCC very well and has a heart to make the Word of God apply to their lives. Heins primarily focused on the

practical applications of the text to the hearers of the sermon.

The sermons were sent to each of the each of the evaluators along with a sermon evaluation sheet with ratings of 1 (insufficient), 2 (requires attention), 3 (sufficient), 4 (exemplary). Each evaluator was to rate the written sermon in each in the following categories: use of expository principles, clear “big idea” (theme), biblical soundness, proper use of analogy of faith, proper illustrations, proper applications, clarity of the sermon, and relevance to the hearers. Evaluators were also encouraged to give comments if they desired. Each evaluator was to return the sermon evaluation sheet to me before the sermon was to be preached to ensure the sermon met the goal.

The Project Results

The project began on September 11, 2016, and had 29 members and regular attenders fill out the surveys. Overall, the comments were that the survey was tough and challenging. I was pleased to hear this as it indicated that most people were not familiar with the topics, and the series should prove to be needed. Most expressed an eagerness to hear the upcoming sermons and a desire to learn. One woman, a mature believer in our congregation, specifically remarked that she was looking forward to two specific aspects: Spirit illumination and Spirit of adoption.

The first sermon preached was on September 25. Due to a previously scheduled event, the following week was a guest speaker. Sermon 2 was preached on October 9, and then the following week was the annual church retreat. The series resumed on October 23 and for the following 8 weeks, concluding with sermon 10 on December 11.

For most of the sermons, the evaluators were on time with getting the sermon evaluations back. The sermons were given to the evaluators at least two weeks in advance. However, there was at least one week where there was one evaluator who was late in returning the evaluation. It was determined to go ahead and preach the sermon. If,

when the outstanding sermon evaluation was returned, it did not meet the goals of overall 90 percent then the sermon would have to be reworked and possibly preached again. This however did not occur. Every sermon met the overall 90 percent goal.

Each sermon had to have a combined score of at least 90 percent or above “sufficient” to proceed.³ When the sermon evaluations were returned, every comment was addressed by either adding, deleting, or clarifying content in the sermon. Most times, adding some supporting texts, clarifying comments, or illustrations seemed to make the sermon stronger.

The first sermon scored 8 – 3’s “sufficient” and 16 – 4’s “exemplary” combining for a 100 percent of sufficient or above. A few of the comments were as follows: “Explore ‘knew God’ in Rom 1:19-21. Develop specifics of supporting references more. Explain how eternal life can consist in knowing God”; “Relating to the gospel was very clear”; and “Draws out the logic of the specific texts; yet the logic of the BT is not always connected.”

The second sermon scored 4 – 3’s “sufficient” and 20 – 4’s “exemplary” combining for a 100 percent of sufficient or above. A few comments included the following: “In introduction and in the body of sermon, need more illustrations from general human experience and your own personal experience”; “Distribute applications to the people’s lives and to the Church throughout”; “It [theme] was clear –however compound themes can express 2 ‘big ideas’ rather than 1 ‘big idea’”; “In what way does the Holy Spirit guide? Is guidance in regard to the doctrinal teaching Christ taught his disciples, or in the day to day decisions of life? Do I hear a ‘still small voice’? This is a hot topic”; “The Spirit isn’t to be neglected, and this sermon clarified the fact that the Spirit is a person, not just some force.”

The third sermon scored 4 – 3’s “sufficient” and 20 – 4’s “exemplary”

³See appendix 5 for the completed sermon evaluation forms.

combining for a 100 percent of sufficient or above. A few comments included “Be careful to explain that Ezekiel 37:1-14 deals [with] bodily resurrection. It seems in your introduction you see spiritual regeneration here. See especially verse 12 See above note on Ezekiel 37. Later in your sermon it seems that you are using bodily resurrection to illustrate spiritual resurrection, but some more clarity in your introduction would help”; “The skin illustration being dead is a good example for all ages to understand”; “Under I.e. – the “excuses” people rely on to institute change in their life are empty & it was good to clearly explain how *True* change occurs” (italics original).

The fourth sermon was the only sermon that had any 2’s “requires attention” in it. These issues were either dealt with or further explained in the sermon to correct it. Overall it still scored over the 90 percent threshold scoring at 91.6 percent of sufficient or above. The scores on this sermon were 2 – 2’s “requires attention,” 6 – 3’s “sufficient,” and 16 – 4’s “exemplary.” A few comments were “Briefly prove why the baptism happens at conversion and not afterwards. Address the Pentecostal and Charismatic doctrine of subsequence of the baptism. Also, why is the Spirit the element of the baptism rather than the means of the baptism”; “In application, really emphasize that every Christian has already been baptized and need not and should not seek to be baptized by the Spirit. People need to be definitely warned against the dangers of the Pentecostal / Charismatic doctrine of subsequence”; “The illustrations helped keep the point clear”; “If Jesus baptizes us with the Spirit when we are saved, then why is it also necessary for Christians to get baptized. Might need a little clarification.”

Sermon 5 scored 5 – 3’s “sufficient” and 18 – 4’s “exemplary” combining for a 100 percent of sufficient or above. It should be noted that one of the evaluators did not score one of the categories leaving a total of 23 responses rather than the normal 24. A few comments were “Very moving human analogy to current adoptions. First, try relating to the realities of ‘son placing’ (*huiiothesia*) in Paul’s time and cultures.” In a comment for relevance – “You always bring down the cookies to the children.” Regarding the “big

idea” – “much improved.” “This sermon message is very timely. The illustration of what goes through the mind of an orphan as they transition to their new family was good”; “Lots of good Scripture references to back up your points.”

Sermon 6 scored 2 – 3’s “sufficient” and 22 – 4’s “exemplary” combining for a 100 percent of sufficient or above. A few comments were as follows: “Also, show that sanctification was eternally determined in God’s decree (as in 1 Pet 1:2). Some call this ‘prevenient’ sanctification.” Regarding expository principles “excellent” and for big idea “well-stated.” For illustrations – “The stock market is a perfect example of how a Christian’s life can be. It’s the long-term trend that we want to see in life as we grow in Christ.” And for being clear – “Good clarification on justification and sanctification.”

Sermon 7 scored 1 – 3 “sufficient” and 23 – 4’s “exemplary” combining for a 100 percent of sufficient or above. A few example comments are “Good, home-grown illustrations”; “Phil 2:12 is difficult to wrap one’s head around. Did well”; “Several good examples/illustrations & Scripture ref’s to reinforce the main theme”; “The application is great. The Bible is not just another book. Christians have the Spirit living within to enable understanding”; “I feel the listeners will easily understand this sermon.”

Sermon 8 scored 1 – 3 “sufficient” and 23 – 4’s “exemplary” combining for a 100 percent of sufficient or above. A few comments were “suggest briefly showing the remedies when a believer commits a sin (e.g., 1 John 2:1)”; “Your illustrations are very pastoral. Keep trying for ‘home grown’ illustrations.”

Sermon 9 scored 2 – 3’s “sufficient” and 22 – 4’s “exemplary” combining for a 100 percent of sufficient or above. A few comments were “I suggest cutting off prophecy for today, since it involved direct verbal revelation. Also, you might handle the words on miraculous gifts come from the longer ending of Mark (which was in the majority of MSS, but which is not in many modern versions). Also, you might note that while 1 Cor 12 is clear that every member has at least one gift, it is not clear that a Christian receives *only one* gift”; “I suggest also stressing that one does not need to know his/her spiritual

gift to serve Christ, but should begin serving and let the serving and other people indicate one's gift(s)"; "Good closing illustration."

Sermon 10 scored 1 – 3 "sufficient" and 23 – 4's "exemplary" combining for a 100 percent of sufficient or above. A few comments were "I suggest bringing in future events of eschatology – rapture and kingdom"; "Tie in other passages on home, future events, and glory (e.g. I Cor 15; 2 Thess 2:13-14; 2 Tim 2:10; Heb 2:10)." Regarding the big idea – "It was awesome!"; "The correlation of Emma's adoption and Christ's adoption of us the believers really hits home"; "There's great comfort knowing the Spirit is working in us & interceding for us, esp. when we get frustrated with our wrongdoings."

Two important things can be noted. First, all the sermons scored over the 90 percent of satisfactory with most scoring 100 percent. Second, as the sermons progressed, they received stronger reviews. For example, sermons 1-5 had a total of 2 – 2's "requires attention," 27 – 3's "sufficient," and 90 – 4's "exemplary" while sermons 6-10 had a total of 0 – 2's "requires attention," 7 – 3's "sufficient," and 113 – 4's "exemplary."

Upon the conclusion of the final sermon, those who took the survey were encouraged to take the survey again on December 11. Nineteen members and regular attendees filled out the forms. Due to the Christmas holidays and because my wife and I were going to China for our adoption, the final forms were filled out on December 18 and January 1. A total of 26 took the survey. This meant of the 29 who originally filled out the pre-survey, only 3 did not fill out the post-survey.

The survey consisted of 25 questions or statements. Each participant selected a 4-digit code which was matched to compare the pre-and post-surveys. Each question was designed to understand the participant's view of either a doctrinal belief or practice. There were 6 options for the participant to choose: strongly disagree, disagree, disagree somewhat, agree somewhat, agree, strongly agree. For scoring purposes, each answer was assigned a value with strongly disagree equaling 1 and strongly agree equaling 6.

Each question was intended to elicit either a strongly disagree or a strongly

agree response. For example, question 4 “The Holy Spirit is a force” was to gain a strongly disagree response whereas question 5 “The Holy Spirit is a Person” was to gain a strongly agree response. In the final analysis, it was important to see if the scores moved lower or higher depending on the intended result.

Since there were 26 total participants, with either a desired response of 1 or 6, the target goals were for a negative answer (strongly disagree) 26 or for a positive answer (strongly agree) 156. Overall, for every question except one, question 22, the participants moved toward the target. The survey revealed that for some questions the church had a pretty good understanding already. For example, question 3 “The Holy Spirit is God”: The pre-survey showed a score of 152 and the post showed a score of 154 showing a difference of only 2 points toward the target. However, some questions revealed a large change indicating the participants had a poor understanding but moved toward a good understanding. For example, question 6 “I can explain ‘regeneration’”: The pre-survey showed a score of 89 and a post-survey showed a score of 129 showing a difference of 40 points toward the target.

To understand which questions showed the most movement toward the target, the results of comparing the answers from pre- and post-tests of all 26 participants are divided up into four groups: 1-10 points, 11-20 points, 21-30 points, 31-40 points.

The questions that changed only 1-10 points are questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 12, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22, and 24. These questions showed the lowest impact of the sermons or showed this was information they already knew or practiced. Again, it should be noted that question 22 is the only question that moved in the opposite direction away toward the intended target.⁴ The questions that changed by 11-20 points are questions 17, 18, 19, 25. The questions that changed by 21-20 points are questions 5, 7, 11, 16, and 23. The

⁴The reason for this is probably a lack of time spent in the sermon on the subject and especially the phrase “let go and let God.” Most people did and probably still do interpret it as let go of my problems and let God take control rather than the Keswick theological understanding.

questions that changed by 31-40 are questions 6, 9, 10, 13.⁵

In conclusion, the pre-survey phase went extremely well and indicated the participants needed this series. The sermons were evaluated and showed themselves to be strong in both theological content and practical application. The sermons were judged to be sound theological expository sermons. At the conclusion of the sermon series, the post-survey showed a change in almost every question towards the goal which indicates the overall sermon series on preaching the person, power, and work of the Holy Spirit was a needed series and a success.

⁵See appendix 5 “Analysis of Questions” Tables A3 - A7.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT EVALUATION

Introduction

The project was intended to teach doctrine through expository preaching. Specifically, the person, power, and work of the Holy Spirit was preached to the congregation at Fort Howard Community Church so they could grow deeper in their understanding of the Holy Spirit and to apply this knowledge to their lives.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

This project had three goals: (1) to assess the knowledge and attitude concerning the person, power, and work of the Holy Spirit to FHCC members and committed attendees; (2) to develop a ten-week expository sermon series on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit; (3) to preach a ten-week sermon series to introduce the doctrine of the Holy Spirit to the congregation of FHCC.

Evaluation of Goal 1

The first goal of assessing the knowledge and attitude concerning the person, power, and work of the Holy Spirit was measured by having a minimum of twenty members and committed attendees complete the pre-surveys. This first goal was successfully met since twenty-six members and committed attendees completed both the pre- and post-surveys.

Evaluation of Goal 2

The second goal of developing a ten-week expository sermon series on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was measured by having a theologian, pastor, and an FHCC

elder evaluate each sermon with a minimum of 90 percent of all rubric evaluation indicators meeting or exceeding the sufficient level. This goal was met with 9 sermons evaluated at 100 percent meeting or exceeding the sufficient level factor and 1 sermon evaluated at 91.6 percent meeting or exceeding the sufficient level.

Evaluation of Goal 3

The third goal of preaching a ten-week sermon series to introduce the doctrine of the Holy Spirit to the congregation of FHCC was measured by a minimum of twenty members and committed church attendees completing the post-survey and a t-test for dependent samples demonstrates a positive statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-survey scores. This goal was met in two ways. First, a total of twenty-six members and committed church attendees completed the post-survey. Second, the t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference: The t Stat -6.02947892 (absolute value of 6.02947892) is larger than the t critical two value of 2.059538553 indicating the expository preaching made a statistical difference.¹

Strengths of the Project

The project exhibited at least three strengths. The first strength was that it brought about an introduction to theological preaching to the folks at FHCC. While the people of FHCC are used to verse-by-verse exposition, they are not used to focused and detailed theological exposition.

The second strength was that it brought about a greater understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit to the people of FHCC. While they were aware of the Holy Spirit in their lives, they now have a firmer grasp on Who He is and what He does. They also have a greater understanding of the implications of having the Holy Spirit in their lives.

¹See appendix 6 for T-Test: Paired Two Sample Results

The third strength was in the area of my own preaching. Preaching theology proved to be extremely challenging and beneficial. Submitting the sermons for evaluation helped to build skills to sharpen my overall preaching and resulted in solid sermons. For example, I was challenged to work to make the “big idea” of each passage simple and concise rather than complex and wordy. This will prove as a future strength in my sermon development.

Weaknesses of the Project

The project also demonstrated a few weaknesses. The first weakness was the length of the project. In our church, as in most, some people can miss one, two, or even three weeks in a ten-week time frame. This is typically not due to lack of commitment but is simply due to work, schedules, vacations, and illness, not to mention nursery rotation, children’s church rotation, and other church duties that many of the members have. As a result, having the 26 individuals actually hear all ten messages was challenging.²

A second weakness of this study was it was too broad. For example, it was too much to have just one sermon on “spiritual gifts.” As one of the evaluators suggested, that sermon should have or could have been developed into two or three sermons. In an effort to pack all the necessary information into the sermons sometimes they became too dense. It may have been a bit too theologically “heavy” at times. It would have helped to maybe have done a project on one or two aspects of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit like gifts or regeneration and unpacked those concepts. Nevertheless, they will have some foundation for future studies on topics covered.

A final weakness was the timing of the study. In an effort to do this study before Christmas it had to be worked around various other activities such as our church

²It should be noted that all sermons and notes were posted on line for people to listen to if they missed a sermon. However, it is unknown how many actually took advantage of this.

retreat and another commitment I had which actually made the study 12 weeks long. In addition to that, I had to finish as I was up against Christmas, and everyone had to finish their surveys either the final day of the series or up to three weeks later. That factor may have affected some of the answers for those who filled out their post-surveys later rather than sooner.

What I Would Do Differently

If I had to do the project over, I would do some things differently. First, I would perhaps start with giving the church some basic definitions ahead of time, like regeneration, Keswick theology, illumination, etc. I gave these definitions in the sermons, but not ahead of time and not in the sermon notes. Having them sent out ahead of time and in print would have given a foundation for the sermon and would have been helpful. Second, I would probably shorten the number of sermons to eight. Third, though this is and was out of my control for this project, I would choose a different time of the year to implement the series. For our church the busiest times are October – December, so it seemed rushed.

Theological Reflections

The Bible speaks to the spirit of adoption. It is the Spirit who adopts but it is also that we no longer have the ‘spirit of slavery’ but we have the ‘spirit of adoption’ since we are adopted as sons (Rom 8:15). This came out several times in several sermons. Many times people feel as though the final aspect of salvation is that God simply saves us. Yes, He rescues us from death and hell but He does so much more than that. He does not save us from hell only to allow us to be “homeless” in heaven. As I stated in my sermon, God does not save us and then say, “I saved you, and I will allow you to live out in the back yard in my shed!” God, by the Holy Spirit, adopts us into His family, giving us a new relationship with God, who is now our Father, and gives us all the blessings of being His child! It is the Holy Spirit who testifies to this great truth in our lives. The great

security of the Holy Spirit through adoption was and is the greatest joy to ponder.

Personal Reflections

This project has helped me in three ways. First, this project allowed me to think through systematic theology in a deep way, but also to find a way to communicate theology in sermons to the people. In other words, it helped me to simplify my theology to bring it down from the ivory towers of academia to the pews. Second, this project allowed me to share my love of theology with the people whom I love, my church. We went on the journey together, and we all learned. It was immensely satisfying to see them grow in their theological knowledge and hopefully in their personal application of it as well. I hope they, in turn, desire to have more theological series in the future. Third and finally, this project helped me to carefully plan sermons with great oversight. The knowledge that each sermon was not merely going to be heard by people at FHCC, none of whom have been to seminary, but rather by men who are scholars, pastors, and elders, and that each point would be evaluated caused me to be even more careful not only in my exegesis but in my homiletical approach. Overall this project helped me to grow into a better preacher and the people to grow in their knowledge of the Triune God.

Conclusion

I set out to do this project joining two great loves of mine: systematic theology and preaching. To many, these two do not seem to go together, but I believed they could and should. Even when mentioning to several professors at SBTS I would hear comments at how tough the joining of those two would be. But the excitement at church continued to run high, people spoke highly of the series, there is now more talk of the Holy Spirit in the church than in the past, and the statistics show real growth in knowledge and application.

Though the time frame I had to do this series ultimately was too short, it will serve as a launch pad not only for going even deeper into the texts on the Holy Spirit in

the future, but hopefully will set a thirst in the people of FHCC for other doctrines as well. In many ways, the Holy Spirit is either overemphasized or neglected in our churches. Yet He is the One residing in believers. He is in us not to speak of Himself, but to show us Christ. It is my hope that people at FHCC will recognize and live in the great promise of Christ when He said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you" (John 14:15-17).

APPENDIX 1

DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT SURVEY

This survey was administered by Michael Shafran to 26 members / faithful attendees of Fort Howard Community Church. There are about 100 regular attendees with about 60 adults. The participant must profess faith in Christ alone for his or her salvation in order to participate in the survey.

Agreement to Participate

Unique 4-digit code _____

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to show strengths and weaknesses in the understanding and practice of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit at FHCC. This research is being conducted by Michael Shafran for the purposes of collecting data for a Doctoral ministry project for The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In this research, you will answer the survey before the 10-week sermon series. You will answer the same survey at the conclusion of the sermon series. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Directions: Please give your opinion of the following statements by selecting the following scale.

SD = strongly disagree

D = disagree

DS = disagree somewhat

AS = agree somewhat

A = Agree

SA = strongly agree

1. God can be known	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
2. I actively seek knowing God	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
3. The Holy Spirit is God	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
4. The Holy Spirit is a Force	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
5. The Holy Spirit is a Person	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
6. I can explain "regeneration"	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
7. All believers are baptized by the Holy Spirit	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
8. Believers should pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
9. I know what Spirit adoption is	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
10. Spirit baptism is a reason to feel secure about my salvation	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
11. When a person is saved, the Holy Spirit changes the person's desires	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
12. A person can be saved and not have the Holy Spirit	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
13. I can explain what Spirit illumination is	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
14. I spend specific time in prayer every day	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

15. Walking in the Spirit is optional, primarily for only really spiritual Christians	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
16. I can explain the various spiritual gifts	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
17. I know the purpose of the spiritual gifts	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
18. I know my spiritual gift(s)	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
19. The “miraculous” gifts such as tongues and healings are in existence today	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
20. I depend on the Holy Spirit when sharing the gospel	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
21. The Holy Spirit intercedes for me	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
22. I must “let go and let God” for my sanctification	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
23. Confidence for future glory today comes through prayer in the Holy Spirit	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
24. I seek to be filled by the Spirit	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
25. I spend time reading the Scriptures each day and ask the Spirit to teach me	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

APPENDIX 2

PREACHING RUBRIC

Preaching rubric

This preaching rubric evaluation was sent to three men in church leadership: an elder, a pastor, and a theologian. They examined each sermon to verify they exhibited expository principles, biblical faithfulness, clarity, and relevance.

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to evaluate the sermons on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit at FHCC. This research is being conducted by Michael Shafran for the purposes of collecting data for a Doctoral ministry project for The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In this research, you will evaluate each sermon and carefully fill out the preaching rubric. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By completion of this rubric, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Preaching Rubric Evaluation

Evaluator 1: Name _____ Date _____

DOCTRINE OF HOLY SPIRIT SERMON EVALUATION TOOL					
Sermon One Evaluation: Sermon Title _____					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The sermon exemplified solid expository principles					
The sermon's "big idea" was clear					
The sermon was biblically sound					
The sermon demonstrated proper use of analogy of faith					
The sermon included proper and appropriate illustrations					
The sermon properly applied the text to the lives of the hearers					
The sermon was clear					
The sermon was relevant to the hearers					

APPENDIX 3

LETTER TO CHURCH

September 9, 2016

Dear Church Family,

This past couple years I have had the privilege of attending The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to pursue my doctorate in expository preaching. I am now entering the final stage of this program and am asking for your help.

For part of my final Ministry Research Project I will be preaching a 10-week series on the Holy Spirit. I need all adult regular attendees and members to be willing to do two things:

First, take a short, 25 question survey (You will remain anonymous) before the series begins on September 25 and the same survey again after the sermon series concludes in December. The survey is very simple and will take no more than 10 minutes each time. Whether you know a lot or a little, your input is vital.

Second, I need you to commit to being here to hear the sermons. If you miss a week or two that is fine. You can catch up with the sermons posted on line or we can have a cd for you. I am asking that you hear at least 8 of the 10 sermons.

The survey will be given at the following times in the conference room:

September 11, 10:35 - 10:50 am –After Bible Fellowship Group

September 11, 12:30 – 1pm – After the Worship Service

September 18, 10:35 - 10:50 am – After Bible Fellowship Group

September 18, 12:30 – 1 pm – After the Worship Service

September 18, 6 pm – Before Bible Fellowship Group

Thank you so much for your help and support. I am endeavoring on this project so we can grow as a church to understand the Holy Spirit better and grow in our faith.

For His Glory,

Pastor Michael Shafran

APPENDIX 4

SERMON EVALUATION RESULTS

The following are the results of the sermon evaluations. The letters in the box indicated the following marks from these evaluators:

M = Dr. James Mook

B = Pastor John Banks

H = Elder Josh Heins

Example comments are not shown here but rather are given in chapter 4 of this project.

Preaching Rubric Evaluations

DOCTRINE OF HOLY SPIRIT SERMON EVALUATION TOOL					
Sermon One Evaluation: Sermon Title - The God Who Reveals: Knowing God					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The sermon exemplified solid expository principles			MH	B	
The sermon's "big idea" was clear			BH	M	
The sermon was biblically sound				MBH	
The sermon demonstrated proper use of analogy of faith				MBH	
The sermon included proper and appropriate illustrations			M	BH	
The sermon properly applied the text to the lives of the hearers			BH	M	
The sermon was clear			H	MB	
The sermon was relevant to the hearers				MBH	

Preaching Rubric Evaluation

DOCTRINE OF HOLY SPIRIT SERMON EVALUATION TOOL					
Sermon Two Evaluation: Sermon Title - The God Who Exists: The Second Person of the Trinity					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The sermon exemplified solid expository principles			M	BH	
The sermon's "big idea" was clear			M	BH	
The sermon was biblically sound				MBH	
The sermon demonstrated proper use of analogy of faith				MBH	
The sermon included proper and appropriate illustrations			M	BH	
The sermon properly applied the text to the lives of the hearers			M	BH	
The sermon was clear				MBH	
The sermon was relevant to the hearers				MBH	

Preaching Rubric Evaluation

DOCTRINE OF HOLY SPIRIT SERMON EVALUATION TOOL					
Sermon Three Evaluation: Sermon Title - The God Who Creates: Regeneration					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The sermon exemplified solid expository principles			M	BH	
The sermon's "big idea" was clear				MBH	
The sermon was biblically sound			M	BH	
The sermon demonstrated proper use of analogy of faith			H	MB	
The sermon included proper and appropriate illustrations			M	BH	
The sermon properly applied the text to the lives of the hearers				MBH	
The sermon was clear				MBH	
The sermon was relevant to the hearers				MBH	

Preaching Rubric Evaluation

DOCTRINE OF HOLY SPIRIT SERMON EVALUATION TOOL					
Sermon Four Evaluation: Sermon Title - The God Who Secures: Spirit Baptism and Sealing					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The sermon exemplified solid expository principles		M		BH	
The sermon's "big idea" was clear			MB	H	
The sermon was biblically sound		M		BH	
The sermon demonstrated proper use of analogy of faith			H	MB	
The sermon included proper and appropriate illustrations			M	BH	
The sermon properly applied the text to the lives of the hearers			H	MB	
The sermon was clear			H	MB	
The sermon was relevant to the hearers				MBH	

Preaching Rubric Evaluation

DOCTRINE OF HOLY SPIRIT SERMON EVALUATION TOOL					
Sermon Five Evaluation: Sermon Title - The God Who Embraces: Adoption					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The sermon exemplified solid expository principles			M	BH	
The sermon's "big idea" was clear				MBH	
The sermon was biblically sound			M	BH	
The sermon demonstrated proper use of analogy of faith			MH	B	
The sermon included proper and appropriate illustrations			M	BH	
The sermon properly applied the text to the lives of the hearers				MBH	
The sermon was clear				MBH	
The sermon was relevant to the hearers				MB	H did not mark this

Preaching Rubric Evaluation

DOCTRINE OF HOLY SPIRIT SERMON EVALUATION TOOL					
Sermon Six Evaluation: Sermon Title - The God Who Transforms: Sanctification					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The sermon exemplified solid expository principles				MBH	
The sermon's "big idea" was clear				MBH	
The sermon was biblically sound				MBH	
The sermon demonstrated proper use of analogy of faith			MH	B	
The sermon included proper and appropriate illustrations				MBH	
The sermon properly applied the text to the lives of the hearers				MBH	
The sermon was clear				MBH	
The sermon was relevant to the hearers				MBH	

Preaching Rubric Evaluation

DOCTRINE OF HOLY SPIRIT SERMON EVALUATION TOOL					
Sermon Seven Evaluation: Sermon Title - The God Who Shines: Indwelling and Illumination					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The sermon exemplified solid expository principles			M	BH	
The sermon's "big idea" was clear				MBH	
The sermon was biblically sound				MBH	
The sermon demonstrated proper use of analogy of faith				MBH	
The sermon included proper and appropriate illustrations				MBH	
The sermon properly applied the text to the lives of the hearers				MBH	
The sermon was clear				MBH	
The sermon was relevant to the hearers				MBH	

Preaching Rubric Evaluation

DOCTRINE OF HOLY SPIRIT SERMON EVALUATION TOOL					
Sermon Eight Evaluation: Sermon Title - The God Who Confirms: Fruit of the Spirit					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The sermon exemplified solid expository principles				MBH	
The sermon's "big idea" was clear				MBH	
The sermon was biblically sound				MBH	
The sermon demonstrated proper use of analogy of faith				MBH	
The sermon included proper and appropriate illustrations				MBH	
The sermon properly applied the text to the lives of the hearers				MBH	
The sermon was clear			B	MH	
The sermon was relevant to the hearers				MBH	

Preaching Rubric Evaluation

DOCTRINE OF HOLY SPIRIT SERMON EVALUATION TOOL					
Sermon Nine Evaluation: Sermon Title - The God Who Empowers: Gifts of the Spirit					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The sermon exemplified solid expository principles			M	BH	
The sermon's "big idea" was clear				MBH	
The sermon was biblically sound				MBH	
The sermon demonstrated proper use of analogy of faith				MBH	
The sermon included proper and appropriate illustrations				MBH	
The sermon properly applied the text to the lives of the hearers			M	BH	
The sermon was clear				MBH	
The sermon was relevant to the hearers				MBH	

Preaching Rubric Evaluation

DOCTRINE OF HOLY SPIRIT SERMON EVALUATION TOOL					
Sermon Ten Evaluation: Sermon Title - The God Who Assures: Hope of Final Glorification					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The sermon exemplified solid expository principles				MBH	
The sermon's "big idea" was clear				MBH	
The sermon was biblically sound				MBH	
The sermon demonstrated proper use of analogy of faith			M	BH	
The sermon included proper and appropriate illustrations				MBH	
The sermon properly applied the text to the lives of the hearers				MBH	
The sermon was clear				MBH	
The sermon was relevant to the hearers				MBH	

APPENDIX 6
OBJECTIVE DATA FROM PRE- AND POST-
SURVEYS

Table A1. T-Test: Paired two sample result

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	104	116.2307692
Variance	117.76	84.98461538
Observations	26	26
Pearson Correlation	0.478613657	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	25	
t Stat	-6.02947892	
P(T<=t) one-tail	1.33945E-06	
t Critical one-tail	1.708140761	
P(T<=t) two-tail	2.67889E-06	
t Critical two-tail	2.059538553	

Table A2. Pre- and post-test results

Participant	Before	After
1	107	117
2	110	119
3	96	98
4	98	126
5	93	105
6	120	120
7	123	119
8	111	114
9	105	120
10	102	103
11	106	124
12	108	124
13	119	129
14	112	116
15	114	122
16	117	126
17	96	103
18	87	128
19	109	125
20	98	119
21	101	106
22	94	105
23	78	110
24	111	124
25	94	102
26	95	118

Table A3. Total scores questions 1-5

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
PRE	145	140	152	80	105
POST	153	148	154	78	127
CHANGE	-8.00	-8.00	-2.00	2.00	-22.00
TARGET	156	156	156	26	156

Table A4. Total scores questions 6-10

	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
PRE	89	129	90	102	109
POST	129	150	84	137	145
CHANGE	-40.00	-21.00	6.00	-35.00	-36.00
TARGET	156	156	26	156	156

Table A5. Total scores questions 11-15

	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15
PRE	125	40	80	128	43
POST	146	33	119	134	35
CHANGE	-21.00	7.00	-39.00	-6.00	8.00
TARGET	156	26	156	156	26

Table A6. Total scores questions 16-20

	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
PRE	114	123	117	52	146
POST	138	143	135	37	152
CHANGE	-24.00	-20.00	-18.00	15.00	-6.00
TARGET	156	156	156	26	156

Table A7. Total scores questions 21-25

	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25
PRE	147	96	104	136	112
POST	154	102	125	136	128
CHANGE	-7.00	-6.00	-21.00	0.00	-16.00
	156	26	156	156	156

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ABSTRACT

USING EXPOSITORY PREACHING TO INTRODUCE THE HOLY SPIRIT'S PERSON, POWER, AND WORK TO FORT HOWARD COMMUNITY CHURCH, FORT HOWARD, MARYLAND

Michael Anthony Shafran, Jr., D.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Michael E. Pohlman

This project was designed to instruct the congregation of Fort Howard Community Church in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit through expository preaching. Chapter 1 introduces the need to teach systematic theology in general, and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in particular, to the congregation through expository preaching and includes the purpose and goals of the project. Chapter 2 examines the biblical and theological basis for the doctrine of the Holy Spirit by studying ten aspects of the Holy Spirit. Chapter 3 details the theoretical and practical issues of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit focusing on the Spirit's primary role today and the Spirit's and Christian's roles in sanctification. Chapter 4 details the implementation and results of the project. Chapter 5 assesses the project and shares a personal reflection of the project.

VITA

Michael Anthony Shafran, Jr.

EDUCATION

B.A., Bob Jones University, 1998
M.A. Bob Jones University, 2003
M.Div., Capital Bible Seminary, 2007

ORGANIZATIONS

The Evangelical Theological Society

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Adjunct Faculty, Washington Bible College, Lanham, Maryland, 2008-2013
Adjunct Faculty, Lancaster Bible College, 2013-

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Pastor-Teacher, Fort Howard Community Church, 2010-