

The Indwelling Spirit

In the last two devotions, we learned that the Spirit is a gift from God and that the Spirit makes Christ's presence real in our lives. Today we will see that the Holy Spirit actually indwells us as believers. Again, we look to the words of Jesus in John 14.15-18: "If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."

The Holy Spirit indwells believers. In referring to the Spirit, Jesus said, "He lives with you and will be in you" (vs 17). When the disciples went out to do ministry during Jesus' life, the Spirit was with them. Otherwise, they could not have done any miracles or proclaimed the gospel effectively. Yet, on the day of Pentecost the Spirit came to dwell inside of the disciples. He became a living presence in their lives. This is why Paul refers to believers as "a temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 6.19). Instead of dwelling in an earthly temple or sanctuary, God now dwells in the lives of believers. We are God's temple and thus we should live accordingly.

Some people talk about having Christ as our example. And this is true. Yet, if all we had were Christ's example I would feel great despair because I can't live up to Christ's example. I try but I always fail. Yet, that's where the Holy Spirit comes in. He lives inside of us to empower us to become like Jesus. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 3.17-18, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." Notice it is the Spirit of the Lord that transforms us into Christ's image, and also notice that this is an ongoing, progressive work ("with ever-increasing glory").

William Temple once gave a beautiful example of what I'm talking about. It had to do with Shakespeare. What if I asked you to read a few of Shakespeare's works and then write a play on the same level of Shakespeare? I don't know about you, but there's no way. Shakespeare was one of a kind. Few, if any, can write plays like him. The example of Shakespeare or his plays are not enough. But what if somehow I could take

the mind or genius of Shakespeare and put it into you? Then could you write like Shakespeare? Yes, you could because you would have his mind. The Bible says that we have the mind of Christ. It says that we have the Spirit of Christ. With the Spirit's empowerment, we can progressively become more and more like Jesus. Thankfully, we have Christ's example recorded in the New Testament, but also thankfully we have the empowerment of the Spirit to help us live by his example.

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