

## THE HOLY SPIRIT – 4



### 1. THE PEOPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

So far in our series, we've looked at the:

- Ö Person of the Holy Spirit
- Ö Purpose of the Holy Spirit
- Ö Provision of the Holy Spirit

Today, we'll look, in our final session, at the '**People of the Holy Spirit**'.

### 2. INTRODUCTION

So, who are the people of the Holy Spirit? Well, everyone saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. This people of the Holy Spirit have been given a rich purpose, which is to serve the risen Lord through obedience to His Great Commission:

*Mat 28:18-20 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

When Jesus left the earth at His Ascension, He sent the promised Comforter to be with His church and to bring the empowerment of the 'charismata', i.e. the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

*John 16:7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor [AV 'Comforter'] will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.*

*1 Cor 12:7,11 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.*

The Great Commission was given to the church, in other words to the 'ekklhsia', not an institution, but the individuals in the Body of Christ - that is us.

#### a. '**Great Commission**' - for the whole church

Many Christians don't believe they can carry out this task. They are correct, in that the individual was not intended to do it. The task was given to the church and it is the church that Jesus addresses in His strategy.

1. He came as a perfect sacrifice.

Heb 2:17 *For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.*

2. He rose from the dead to conquer the power of Sin.
3. He created His church as the Body of all those who believed in Him as Lord and Saviour.
4. He sent the empowering of the Holy Spirit, who gave 'charismata' to individuals for the building up of the Body.
5. He created ministries to bring together and release His Holy Spirit-empowered people, who carried out all the interwoven tasks that resulted in the known world receiving the Gospel in a single generation.

## b. Priesthood of Believers

The early church tapped the great resource of every Believer being a priest and minister of the Gospel

- 1 Pet 2:5 *you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*
- 1 Pet 2:9 *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*
- Rev 1:6 *and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father--to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.*

Let's now look at the key scripture that concerns releasing the power of God's people back into the world, just as it was at the church's beginning.

## 3. GOD'S KEYS TO SUCCESS

Eph 4:1-16 *As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. 7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. 8 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." 9 (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? 10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) 11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. 14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men*

*in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

Let's now look at this passage in relation to its impact on today's church in today's society.

## a. Called

*1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received (Aor.)*

You received that 'once for all' call from God, the moment you became a Christian; it doesn't need to be repeated. Like a soldier, you have been 'called to arms'; you may not be on 'active service' at this exact moment, but you are 'in the reserves' – training for that day. This isn't a job or something to do **if** it suits us, it **is** a complete lifestyle that we willingly place under the command of the Lord Jesus Christ (see Isa 6:8 *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"*).

## b. Character Test

*2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

Gifts of power will never be effective when misused. Jesus sets a test of character to His church. We must live this way, or we cannot be entrusted with either the gifts of grace, or with the Commission itself. It's not how much power we can wield, but do we have the character of Jesus? Remember Luke 10:20, *"However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."* Let's look at this test.

## c. Grace as a gift

Eph 4:7 *But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift [dorea - totally free and always used as a spiritual gift in the NT] (NKJV).*

*8 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts [domata - stresses the character of the gifts] to men." (NIV)*

Verses 9 & 10 are an explanation of v 8: *9 (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? 10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)*

What, then, is this grace? Is it the gifts of the Holy Spirit - the charismata? No, this grace refers to the gift of ministries. Christ's gift ['dorea'] refers to the ministries that are intended to build up the Body of Christ.

Today's main passage (Eph 4:11-16) is broken down into five sections:

- v 11 lists the leadership ministries given by Christ
- v 12 shows their purpose and the outcome of their activities
- v 13 shows this continues until Christ's condition is met
- vv 14,15 identifies the proof or fruit of vv 11 & 12
- v 16 reminds us of Christ's position in all this

Let's look at these in greater detail.

## 4. THE KEY MINISTRIES

*11 It was he who gave **some** to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,*

A description of these leadership ministries is listed in the Appendix. However, what we need to discover is who this verse involves. Remember, these ministries are intended to bring the people of God into their role in the Great Commission.

God chooses some people to lead His church. But, why is it that so many want to be a leader in the church? There are many restrictions to this in the scriptures and many warnings given. Perhaps so many seek to be 'a leader' because church is often run like a business?

### a. Leadership

When faced with this subject, I always review four scriptures. Let's look at them:

#### 1) Authority

*Mat 8:9 "For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."*

You cannot be a leader until you have first placed yourself under the authority of another within the Body of Christ. Accountability is crucial to protecting the flock of God. The character of someone who works in the dark, and makes himself/herself accountable to no-one is the hallmark of error and even the mark of a sect.

*Acts 20:29-30 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.*

#### 2) Ordination (set apart for ministry)

Many in today's church declare, "*I am ordained/chosen by God alone, not by man.*" It sounds very spiritual, but it's unbiblical and very dangerous. This comes from the same seed as above, which finds its roots in independence and unaccountability. So, how does God intend 'ordination', or 'being chosen and set apart for ministry', to function?

Acts 13:2 *While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.*

God's principle is that God expects the church to be in an attitude of prayer and worship. The Holy Spirit then communicates God's desire to 'ordain'/'choose and set aside' Barnabas and Saul to the church, but it's the church who **does** the 'ordaining'/'setting aside'. This maintains perfectly the church's recognition of ministry, and the accountability of those 'sent out'.

### 3) Warnings

Being a leader is never a simple role. Those who desire the work should also note the consequences of not doing a good job. It's not the church, or the church meeting, that should be our main focus of attention/concern, but God Himself.

James 3:1 *Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.*

If that's not enough to make you check back with the Holy Spirit, this one should be enough.

Mat 18:6 *But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.*

The main focus of the church in identifying those to be released for the ministry described in v 11 is to ensure that the 'right people' are there.

#### b. Purpose

12 *to prepare* [i.e. 'set broken bones in place' or 'mend fishermen's nets'] *God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up*

Often a painful subject, but yes, the people of the church - including the leaders - are responsible for the Great Commission. You can see that the early church had all Believers working together. Yes, each one had a specific role, with no spare people. Do you know what your role or ministry is or could be? Have you asked the leaders to help you, to pray with you?

#### c. Continues until Christ's condition is met

How long do we operate in this 'all Believer' mode? Well there is a time you can escape from it, which is clearly explained in the next verse, 13.

13 *until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

So, when we attain the 'whole measure of the fullness of Christ', we can stop ... !

#### d. The fruit of the ministries

14 *Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.*

The purpose of the ‘**ministries**’ **equipping** the church is twofold: (i) to create stable spiritual lives; (ii) built on a firm knowledge of the Word. With this, we cannot be influenced or fooled by the cunning of false teachers. Remember the scripture in Acts:

*Acts 20:29-30 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.*

## e. Remember our source

*16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

Focus on the person for whom we do all this service. Without Jesus, we have no church. Without Jesus there is no salvation. As we serve Him, we grow and build ourselves up. As we grow, we build up the church, but only as we do this in an attitude of love and care, by each part of the Body doing its work. So many try to separate action from saving faith -- there is no such separation. We are required to actively serve. Look at the final scripture for today, from James.

*James 2:14-20,26 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. 18 But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. 19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder. 20 You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? 26 As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.*

What now? We must respond as people and as leaders. Eph 4:11 & 12 are not fashions in the Christians faith, but a direction that the church has lost. In recovering this purpose of Jesus for His church, we have to commit all that we have to His service. This also includes throwing out some of the things that we may even hold precious.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Whatever we do, must conform to the scriptures. Anything else becomes a road block to the Gospel. Obedience to the Word prepares us to be vessels available to the Holy Spirit.

But remember, in order to be used in this way, we have to devote ourselves to, and continue in, four keys areas – all four, not even three:

- The Word
- The Church body
- Communion

- Prayer

Remember Acts 2:42 ... *They devoted themselves to [lit. 'steadfastly continuing in'] the apostles' teaching and to **the** fellowship [koinwnia], to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

Appendix

The Ministries Of Ephesians 4:11

## 6. MINISTRIES IN THE BODY

In the church, there are two divisions of giftings, and yours may fall in one or both of these categories: leadership ministries and /or the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We dealt with the gifts of the Holy Spirit in a previous message, so we will now look at the key leadership ministries that the Holy Spirit wants to re-introduce into the church.

These ministries fall into the major categories, which are given to us in Eph 4:11. The apostle says that his [Christ's] gifts were that *"some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; so that we may no longer be children [immature], tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ..."* (Eph 4:11-15). Isn't that what you want? Maturity? As God intended human life to be lived? This is not talking about something religious; it is talking about the fulfilment and satisfying of human life.

In order to accomplish this, a definite pattern is prescribed. God is indeed a God of order. It is only as we understand and recapture that pattern that our church will ever become an effective, powerful, relevant, life-changing organism within human society. Now let us look at these ministries. They relate to the whole body very much as the major systems relate to the physical body.

## 7. BASIC STRUCTURE

- First, there is in your body, as you know, a basic structure system of muscles and bones. From that the body gets its support. You would be nothing but a rolling mass of gelatine if it were not for that. Our bodies have ability to move because of the bones and the muscles.
- There is then another system, the nervous system, by which these bones and muscles are stimulated to activity, galvanised to action, the directive system.
- Next there is what we call the digestive system, by which food taken into the body is assimilated and made available to the cells of the body. It is by this that the body grows; it is this system that propagates growth.
- Finally, there is the circulatory system, the blood with the blood vessels and lymph glands. It is by this system that the body is fed and maintained.

Remarkably enough, the structure of the body of Christ roughly parallels these systems within our human bodies. This is not the definite teaching of the Scriptures but there is a rough approximation of the gifts mentioned here to the major systems of the human body.

### a. Apostles

There is first the apostolic ministry. “Some are apostles,” Paul said. He was one of them himself. It was the job of the apostles to lay foundations, to lay major frameworks, to build the basic support structure around which the rest of the body would be built. That is why the apostles wrote the books of the New Testament, for it is this apostolic ministry that forms the basic support for the life of the body of Jesus Christ. I shall say more about this in later messages for this is only a quick survey.

### b. Prophets

Secondly, there are the prophets. A prophet is a man who speaks for God, who unfolds the mind of God. In the early church before the New Testament itself was written, prophets spoke directly by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, uttering the truths that are now recorded in our New Testament. They were men who unfolded what God taught and thus the body was galvanised and motivated to work. This parallels the nervous system in our human bodies.

### c. Evangelists

Thirdly, come the evangelists by which the body is built up and grows. They are Believers with a special gift for communicating the gospel in relevant, compelling terms to people who are not Christians. There is a sense in which every Christian is to be an evangelist in that he speaks as a witness of his faith. However, these evangelists are men and women with a specialised gift who have a wonderful attraction for and ability to speak to people. Billy Graham is outstanding in this field today. He is a true evangelist, for he compels people to listen to the good news of Jesus Christ.

### d. Pastors and teachers

Finally, there are pastors and teachers, or pastor-teachers depending on your interpretation of the last part of verse 11. These correspond to the circulatory system in our body, and are designed to maintain the life of the body, to feed it, to cleanse it and to maintain its life in vigour and vitality.

### e. Simplified a. to d.

- *apostles* = messengers
- *prophets* = inspired speaker - exhorts, encourages, consoles, motivates the Body
- *evangelists* = lit. a messenger of good; a preacher of the Gospel
- *pastors* = a shepherd, i.e. who guides, feeds and protects the flock]
- *teachers* = teacher or rabbi ... bringing instruction concerning the things of God

## 8. FUNCTION OF LEADERSHIP MINISTRIES

These leadership ministries exist for *the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry* (that is contact with the world) and *for the building up of the body of Christ* (that is maintaining the health of the church). Who is to do these two things? The saints, the people! That is God's intention. It is not the job of the pastors. Their work is something different. They are to train and equip, under gird and motivate the people to do this work. It is the people who are to do the work of the church. Anything less than this is a terrible distortion of what God intended the church to be like.

When this distorted idea crept into the church, it resulted in a terrible situation. The ministry was left to the professionals and the people came to church, not to learn what to do, but to listen, that is all. The pastor has to minister to them, talk to them, encourage them, and try to keep them spiritually healthy, and, at the same time, do all the work of contacting the world: There soon came into being a very destructive idea that the job of the people was to bring the world into the building to hear the gospel and the pastor's job was to preach it to them. Nothing has been more destructive of the life of the body of Christ than that concept.

Soon Christianity became a spectator sport, very much akin to the definition I recently heard of football -- eleven men down on the field, desperately in need of rest, and forty thousand people up in the grandstand desperately in need of exercise!

No wonder this awful burden has exerted a terrible, unbearable pressure upon the pastors. They have been unable to bear the role that they were never intended to have. Any one pastor who honestly attempted it found himself involved in endless, frustrating, demands so that he cracked under it. That is one of the reasons why there have been so many emotional failures in the ministry. We need badly to return to the simple principles of the life designed for the body of Christ. The result of its distortion has been a sadly impoverished body which has done little as far as the world is concerned, and has been largely an isolated section of life with a strong religious flavour to it that has turned people away. The world holds the church in contempt because it is not doing anything relevant and meaningful in human society. Our need, therefore, is to return to the original pattern.

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