

Spiritual Peace

1 Corinthians 2:9-14 NIV

Preface

This time of the year I find myself yearning for springtime. It has been a cold rainy winter. Many of the days have been grey and still with a damp chill penetrating into my bones. We've had a few warm sunny days that have really wet my appetite for spring.

Sometimes our spiritual life feels much the same way. We know God loves us and we understand Christ died for our salvation and we are eternally grateful. In spite of this we have a lonely feeling, like somehow God is distant. Such days seem cold and grey; lacking the sunshine of God's presence.

So what is missing in our life when we feel this way? It is in these seasons we need to call upon the Holy Spirit of God. When life reaches a somber lull and our love for Christ grows lukewarm, we desperately need the Holy Spirit of God to revive our hearts, restore us to our first love and restore spiritual peace.

Scripture

⁹ However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" ¹⁰ but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹ For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. ¹³ This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. ¹⁴ The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

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Introduction

The Trinity is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. It is God the Father's grace that initiates our salvation. It was planned for us from the beginning.

It is God the Son's loving sacrifice that facilitates our salvation as He went to the cross for the sins of everyone. Christ died for all so that all whosoever believes might be saved.

It is God the Holy Spirit that convicts us and calls us to a saving belief in Christ. The work of the Holy Spirit continues to work in the life of every believer as it leads us to mature and grow in our faith.

When the Bible speaks of "working out your salvation", it is referring to growing in our relationship with God through the Holy Spirit. In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul explains the important work of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers.

1. The Spirit Reveals

The Holy Spirit reveals the things of God to all men and women whose hearts are open to its speaking. It begins with salvation and continues throughout our Christian life.

It is the Holy Spirit that initially convicts us of our sinful state and reveals to us the need for a Savior. It is the Holy Spirit that assures us that accepting Christ is that for which our soul has been searching.

The Holy Spirit ministers to us and makes the Father real to us. The Holy Spirit reveals to us the power to love and serve our Lord. In writing to Timothy, Paul states "*For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but of power, of love, of self-discipline.*" 2 Timothy 1:7 NIV.

Through the revealing ministry of the Holy Spirit, we become a participant in the very life of God. We become His body and servants; taking own His love and power.

The Holy Spirit leads us in understanding the scripture. It opens our hearts to the meaning and instructs us in how God's word impacts our life. The Holy Spirit knows the deep things of God.

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" ¹⁰ but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit." Vs. 9-10

I have heard that text used at funerals many times. While it probably includes the things we will discover in heaven, it is specifically referring to our time now on earth.

For “those who love him”, the deep things of God are available through the Holy Spirit of God. God wants us to know today the blessings and grace He has planned for us.

“The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”
Vs. 14

Illus: Suppose all of you were blind and I put a famous painting up on the projection screens and asked you to critique it. You could not tell me one thing about it because you could not see it. In the same way, man has no ability to understand the mind and personality of God without the Holy Spirit to reveal these things to us.

But for the believer, the Holy Spirit is eager to reveal the ways and things of God.

2. The Spirit Searches

The Holy Spirit searches the things of God and the hearts of man. It searches our hearts and exposes the areas of our life that need to be more Christ-like.

We find ourselves searching for answers to life’s challenges. But sometimes we need to stop and just listen to the Holy Spirit who has already searched the answers if we will just open our hearts and listen.

One of the marks of maturity in a Christian is discernment, which is the ability to penetrate beyond the surface of life and see things the way they really are. Unsaved people walk by sight and see only that which is before them - surface sight. They are spiritually blind. The maturing Christian grows in the spirit and is able to understand things from God’s perspective and will. The Spirit helps us to understand the mind of God.

For example, the unsaved sees abortion as a “woman’s right to choice.” The maturing Christian sees abortion as the termination of life, something far more important than ones personal convenience or rights. The spiritually blind do not recognize temptation and see sin as something society accepts. The

spiritually mature Christian recognizes Satan’s temptation and realizing that sin tarnishes our relation with God and hinders our path of discovering His plan for our life.

The spiritually blind cherry picks the Bible and only accepts the words of peace and goodwill without every understanding the concepts of God’s judgment and grace. The Christian walking in the Spirit knows the entire Word of God is the truth by which we should thrive to live our lives.

Illus: William Randolph Hearst was a famous and wealthy newspaper publisher in the 1920s. He loved art and had a huge collection of valuable art. One day he read about a painting and decided he must own it. He sent two men to Europe to find the painting and buy it at any price. The two men scoured for the world for the painting for seven weeks. They finally located it and notified Mr. Hearst that He already owned it. It was in his warehouse in California.

Such is the way of the *spiritually immature* - those not growing and walking in the Spirit of God. The answers are to be found if we will just allow the Holy Spirit to do the searching for us and listen to its leading us.

3. The Spirit Teaches

The Holy Spirit reveals, it search and it also teaches us. We have all heard the saying, “you are never too old to learn new things.” This certainly applies to the Christian life. If we listen to the Holy Spirit we will never stop learning, growing and maturing.

Jesus promised in John 14:26 that the Holy Spirit would teach us and guide us into truth (John 16:13). Through the Holy Spirit, we learn to understand life from the Savior’s point of view. We will learn to have His values and desires ever before us.

“¹³ This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.”

We talked about this Wednesday night in our Bible study. Have you ever read something in the Bible that you had read or heard before but this time it was different? It is like it all of a sudden clicked and made sense to you. Suddenly you understood exactly what God was saying to you and exactly how it applied directly to your life. That is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The spirit filled Christian learns the vocabulary of the Spirit and makes use of it. The Christian walking in the Spirit understands the meaning of justification, sanctification, inspiration and so forth. They know what it means to be washed clean and to have a newness of life. They are walking in the Spirit of God and experiencing and applying its teachings daily.

The Holy Spirit teaches us to live by faith and trust in God for our daily sustenance. For Christians desiring to walk with God, everyday can be a day of excitement and growth. The Spirit relates the truth to something new every day. It leads us into new truths and new applications of old truths.

The Holy Spirit teaches us to have faith when others are giving up.

The Holy Spirit teaches us patience to wait upon God and others.

The Holy Spirit teaches us to love as Christ loved.

The Holy Spirit teaches us to recognize sin and make right choices.

Illus: Imagine going into someone's home and them bringing out there most treasured valuables to show you and share with you. This is what the Holy Spirit does in the life of a Christian. Matthew 13:52 says, *"Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."*

The Holy Spirit can bring out the treasures of God and share them with you. It is constantly teaching the believer who will seek God and walk in the Spirit of God.

Conclusion

Sadly, many Christians never experience the peace of living in the Spirit of God. Notice that Paul was writing the words to the church at Corinth - believers. The trouble is many Christians are too busy for the kind of quiet meditation and Bible study that is required to allow the Holy Spirit to speak to us.

Without the Holy Spirit even a Christian is not at peace. In fact a Christian who is not walking in the Spirit of God is a miserable Christian because they know God has more meaning in life for them. They are frustrated because they can't seem to discover it no matter how hard they try.

⁷"But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. ⁸He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit." Jeremiah 17:7-8 NIV

Illus: I remember watching a good movie on the Hallmark channel titled "The Note." Three weeks before Christmas there is a plane crash with no survivors. At the crash site a reporter finds a note in a sandwich bag. The note reads "T - All is forgiven." She sets out to meet with survivors of each person on the plane when it crashed. In her quest across the country to find the intended recipient of the note, the reporter is confronted with her own personal issues and problems. She discovers insight and answers to finding happiness in her own life.

The Holy Spirit is much like the note. If we will trust the Spirit, it will lead to understanding God and ourselves, we will find happiness beyond that which we seek.

If we will spend less time questioning God and petitioning God and more time allowing the Spirit of God to search us, reveal to us and teach us, we will find real spiritual peace.