

D. The Divine Ministry of the Holy Spirit

- In this session we will look at the divine work of the Spirit in the life of Christ. We won't spend too much time looking into the ministry of Christ as it was addressed in the subject of "Christology".
- We will also look at the divine work of the Spirit in the life of the unbeliever. We will spend some time addressing the "unforgivable sin".
- Next week we will look at the divine work of the Spirit in the life of the believer.

1. The Work of the Holy Spirit in the LIFE OF CHRIST

a. The Divine Work of Conception

Matthew 1:20 "...the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."

- Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **Conceive** = to bear, to beget, to be born, to bring forth.

John 1:14 "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

- **Only begotten** = The words "only begotten" are exclusive to Jesus Christ alone because He is the only one that has come forth from God by the power of the Holy Spirit.

b. The Divine Work of Anointing

Acts 10:36-38 "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) (37) That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; (38) How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

- 1) **Anointed** = to be anointed means that Christ was set apart to the work and recognized as the Messiah – The Holy One of God.
- Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit early in His earthy ministry, and He was enabled by God to do the work He was appointed to do.
 - John's Statement

John 3:30-35 “He must increase, but I must decrease.(31) He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.(32) And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.(33) He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.(34) **For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.**(35) The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.”

- **For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.** = The Spirit of God was given to Christ, not in a small amount, but fully and completely. Christ was filled, controlled, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit perfectly.

Henry said: “The Spirit dwelt in him, not as a vessel, but as in a fountain, as in a bottomless ocean.”

- Isaiah’s Prophecy

Isaiah 42:1 “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles”

Isaiah 61:1 “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek...”

- Jesus Affirms the Prophecy

Luke 4:18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor...”

2) Christ was filled and led by the Holy Spirit

Luke 4:1 “And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,”

3) Christ was empowered by the Holy Spirit

Luke 4:14 “And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.”

4) Christ finished His Work on the Cross by the power of the Holy Spirit

Hebrews 9:14 “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

5) Christ was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit

Romans 8:11 “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

6) Christ commissioned His disciples by the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:2 “Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen.”

John 20:21-23 “Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.(22) And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:(23) Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.”

2. The Work of the Holy Spirit in the LIFE OF SINFUL MAN

Note: It is absolutely imperative for every soul winner to understand the work of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of souls.

- We must fully depend upon the work of the Holy Spirit in our Gospel presentation if we are to see **fruit** and not just **results**, if we are to see **repentance**, and not just a **decision**.

a. The Holy Spirit Works through the Word of God.

Note: The Holy Spirit works in the heart of men when the Gospel is preached. The responsibility for every soul-winner is to present a clear Gospel.

- 1) We **PRESENT** the Gospel, but the Holy Spirit **PENETRATES** through the Gospel.

Ephesians 6:17 “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:”

1 Corinthians 2:4 “And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:”

Note: Paul is not rejecting persuasive preaching. It was common in Paul's ministry to persuade men by using the Scriptures. Paul is rejecting any confidence on the preacher's ability to persuade with human wisdom, with manipulative tactics.

CH Spurgeon said, “It is ours to speak the truth boldly, and in every case we shall be a sweet savour unto God.”

Acts 2:37-38 “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? (38) Then Peter said unto them, Repent...”

❖ Example: Nicodemus

- Nicodemus meets the Saviour – John 3:1-37

John 3:7 “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”

Note: We never see Jesus lead Nicodemus into a decision. Jesus thoroughly challenges him, points him to the cross, and gives him a solemn warning.

➤ Nicodemus makes a Stand – John 7:40-52

John 7:50-52 “Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) (51) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? (52) They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.”

➤ Nicodemus helps carry Jesus to Sepulchre – John 19:38-42

John 19:39-40 “And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. (40) Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.”

2) We **PREACH** Christ, but the Holy Spirit **POINTS** to Christ

John 15:26 “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.”

Acts 5:30-32 “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.”

3) We **CALL** men to repentance, but the Holy Spirit **CONVICTS** men to repent

John 16:8 “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:”

- **Reprove** = “to bring to light”

Robert Sargent said, “The Holy Spirit brings into the light the sins of men. This in turn results in conviction — a heartfelt acknowledgment of one’s true (lost) condition before a thrice-holy God.”

- The Holy Spirit thoroughly convinces men of their sinful state.
- The Holy Spirit works with the Word of God to bring about conviction. (The Law and The Gospel)

b. True Holy Spirit Conviction will convince men of the following:

1) **Sin** = Disobedience toward God – the sin that started it all.

- The Holy Spirit will convince men of the following:
 - Sin is rebellion against God. (Presenting the Gospel)
 - Sin is the transgression of God's Law. (Presenting the Law)
 - Sin is unbelief. People who do not repent and turn to trust Christ commit the sin of unbelief. John 3:18-21.

John 16:9 "Of sin, because they believe not on me;"

2) **Righteousness** = The righteousness of God is in Christ alone – not by works.

- The Holy Spirit will convince men of the following:
 - The NEED to get right with God.
 - Their great NEED for Christ.
 - Christ is the ONLY WAY.
 - Righteousness is through CHRIST and not the LAW – Romans 10:1-4, Galatian 2:21
 - Christ is the perfect Lamb of God that pleased His Father.

John 16:10 "Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;"

3) **Judgment** = Condemnation will fall upon all unbelievers. Satan's end.

- The Holy Spirit will make the following completely clear:
 - The rejection of Christ will only result in death and hell.
 - Without Christ they will perish.
 - The wrath of God will abide upon all unbelievers (followers of the Devil).
 - That Satan is judged, and all who follow him will be judged also.

John 16:11 "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

Romans 1:18 "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;"

- The convicting work of the Holy Spirit will cause man to think of the following:
 - I am a sinner (I stand condemned)
 - I cannot save myself (Only Jesus can save me)
 - I deserve hell (Judgment)

4) We **PERSUADE** men, but the Holy Spirit **PERSISTS** with men (but not forever)

Genesis 6:3 "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years."

c. **The Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit – The Unpardonable sin**

Matthew 12:31-32 “Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. (32) And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”

Mark 3:29 “But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:”

1) The Context of Scripture – Matthew 12:22-32

Vs 22, Jesus heals a man possessed with a devil who was blind and dumb.

Vs 23, All the people were amazed, and said “*Is not this the son of David?*”

- The people began to acknowledge that Jesus could be the Messiah.
- It was prophesied that Jesus would open the eyes of the blind... etc. (Isaiah 35:5)

Vs 24, The Religious rulers were attributing the work of Christ to the devil.

- This is not the first time that they accused Jesus of having a devil.
- Turn to: Matthew 9:32-34, 10:24-25

Vs 25-26, Jesus explains that Satan will not work against himself, and if he does, his kingdom will not last.

Vs 27, Jesus gives them something to think about, by asking them a question.

Vs 28, Jesus states that if His work was by the power of the Holy Spirit, He then is their Messiah.

- That is something that they did not want to expect.
- They were trying to deny His work, so they could deny His origin.
- Then, in essence, they would reject Him as being their Messiah.

Note: Remember, the “Works of Christ” were done to authenticate His ministry and His person.

Vs 29, Jesus explains that He came to destroy the works of the devil.

Vs 30, The Pharisees were against the Lord by demonstrating their blasphemous attitude toward Him **and the Holy Spirit.**

- Jesus makes it completely clear that there are two groups of people. You are either for Christ, or against Christ. There is NO neutral ground.

Vs 31, Jesus communicates that the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is a sin that can never be forgiven. Why? In reality, it was bold rejection and firm resistance of the Holy Spirit.

Vs 32, Jesus makes it very clear that if a person speaks against the Holy Ghost, they will never be forgiven.

- How many times do we hear people blaspheme God's name and directly curse Jesus Christ, and mock the words of Christ.

Note: To reject and resist the Holy Spirit is to reject and resist God in every sense of the Word.

- The Pharisees crossed the line.
- It is one thing to deny the words of Christ, His claims, and doctrines, but it is certainly another thing to attribute the works of God, done through Christ by the Holy Spirit, to the devil. That is going as far as the devil himself.

Question: Can a person commit the unforgivable sin today?

William McDonald

“There is forgiveness for other forms of sin and blasphemy. A man may even speak against the Son of Man and be forgiven. But to blaspheme the Holy Spirit is a sin for which there is no forgiveness in this age or in the millennial age to come. When Jesus said in this age, He was speaking of the days of His public ministry on earth. There is reasonable doubt whether the unpardonable sin can be committed today, because He is not bodily present performing miracles.

The unpardonable sin is not the same as rejecting the gospel; a man may spurn the Savior for years, then repent, believe, and be saved. (Of course, if he dies in unbelief, he remains unforgiven.) Nor is the unforgivable sin the same as backsliding; a believer may wander far from the Lord, yet be restored to fellowship in God's family.

Many people worry that they have committed the unpardonable sin. Even if this sin could be committed today, the fact that a person is concerned is evidence that he is not guilty of it. Those who committed it were hard and unrelenting in their opposition to Christ.”

Warren Wiersbe

“But what is this terrible “sin against the Holy Spirit”? Can it be committed today, and, if so, how? Our Lord said that God will forgive evil words spoken against the Son, but not against the Spirit. Does this mean that the Holy Spirit is more important than Jesus Christ, God's Son? Surely not. We often hear the name of God or Jesus Christ used in blasphemy, but rarely if ever the name of the Holy Spirit. How can God forgive words spoken against His Son, and yet not forgive words spoken against the Spirit?

It appears that this situation existed *only while Christ was ministering on earth*. Jesus did not appear to be different from any other Jewish man. To speak against Christ could be forgiven *while He was on earth*. But when the Spirit of God came at Pentecost as proof that Jesus was the Christ, and was alive, to reject the witness of the Spirit was final. The only consequence would be judgment.

When the leaders rejected John the Baptist, they were rejecting *the Father* who sent him. When they rejected Jesus, they were rejecting *the Son*. But when they rejected the ministry of the

Apostles, they rejected *the Holy Spirit* — and that is the end. There is no more witness. Such rejection cannot be forgiven.

Is there an “unpardonable sin” today? Yes, the final rejection of Jesus Christ. Jesus made it clear that *all* sins can be forgiven (Matthew 12:31). Adultery, murder, blasphemy, and other sins can all be forgiven; they are not unpardonable. But God cannot forgive the rejection of His Son. It is the Spirit who bears witness to Christ and who convicts the lost sinner (John 16:7-11).”

2) The Comparing of Scripture

Note: The sin against the Holy Spirit is a process.

- The Holy Spirit can be RESISTED by unbelievers.

Acts 7:51-52 “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. (52) Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:”

Question: How did they resist the Holy Spirit in the O/T?

- They rejected and killed the Spirit-filled Prophets that pointed to the coming Messiah.

Vs 52, which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them...”

- The very reason they killed and crucified Christ is because they resisted the work of the Holy Spirit.

Vs 52, “...which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:”

❖ **Question:** How does a person resist the Holy Spirit today?

- **Answer:** By making a final decision to reject Christ.

Hebrews 10:26 “*For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,*”

- God’s desire is that all men come to the knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:3-4 “*For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; (4) Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*”

- What happens to those that reject the truth after they come to know the truth.

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 “*And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (11) And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: (12) That*

they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

- Remember, the Holy Spirit is called the “Spirit of Truth” that testifies of Jesus.

John 14:17 *“Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”*

Acts 13:44-46 *“And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. (45) But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. (46) Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.*

Acts 18:5-6 *“And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. (6) And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.”*

3) The Conclusion

- The sin against the Holy Spirit was not just an expressed opinion. Their words expressed a deep rooted issue that revealed their heart. Jesus knew where they were going with their bold statement.

Matthew 12:25 *“And Jesus knew their thoughts...”*

Note: To help understand the heart of the passage I will impose a series of questions:

- ❖ **Question:** Why were the Pharisees saying that Jesus was working miracles by the power of the devil?
- The Pharisees rejected His words, but now they were rejecting His Works. In reality, it is rejecting Christ as their Saviour and Lord.
- ❖ **Question:** Is the unforgivable sin the only sin that leads to Eternal Damnation?
- **Notice the parallel passage in Mark 3:28-30**

Mark 3:28-30 *“Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: (29) But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost*

*hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:
(30) Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.”*

Turn to: 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9

- ❖ **Question:** Why is speaking against the Holy Spirit a sin that can never be forgiven?
- The Holy Spirit is the one that is promised by the Father and testifies of Christ. To speak against the Holy Spirit is to speak against the God-Head.

Remember the context, the attack by the Pharisees was directed at the “Works of Christ” because they desired to discredit the cause of Christ and the person of Christ.

John 10:19-21 *“There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. (20) And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? (21) Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?”*

John 10:24-26 *“Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. (25) Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. (26) But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.”*

- **Next week we will look at the Divine Work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's Life.**
- **Memory verse:** Luke 12:10