

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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What I Know About the Holy Spirit

This article would be too long if I were to try to tell you what I do not know about the Holy Spirit. Besides, I cannot tell you what I do not know about it; for I do not know what all I do not know. So I am setting forth a few things that I do know concerning the Holy Spirit.

I know, that the Holy Spirit is not an "it" or "an influence" or "the mind of God" or "the New Testament." Rather, the New Testament, and the Old Testament, as well, plainly set forth that the Holy Spirit is a person. Attributes ascribed to the Holy Spirit belong only to a person or persons. For instance, The Holy Spirit has knowledge. This is declared in 1 Cor. 2:10-11. The Holy Spirit knows the mind of God. But the Holy Spirit wills to do certain things (1 Cor. 12:11). And the Holy Spirit has a mind (Rom. 8:27). Persons know, and will, and have a mind. Hence the Holy Spirit is a person.

The actions of the Holy Spirit declare in no uncertain terms that He is a person. The Holy Spirit hears (John 16:13); He speaks (1 Tim. 4:1); and he makes intercession (Rom. 8:26-27). But a person can hear and speak and make intercession. So, I repeat, the Holy Spirit is a person.

I know that the Holy Spirit has a sword and that this sword is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17). It is evident, therefore, that the Spirit works through the word.

I know that to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18-19) is the same as letting the word dwell in us (Col. 3:16). These are parallel passages, as everyone can plainly see.

I know that God dwells in us. The Bible tells me so (1 John 4:13, 15). But I also know that Christ dwells in us (Eph. 3:17). The Bible tells me that the Holy Spirit also dwells in us (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16).

I know that Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (Eph. 3:17). In the absence of any teaching to the contrary, I know that the Holy Spirit as well as God also dwells in our hearts by faith.

I know the Holy Spirit testifies (John 15:26), but that he testifies through the word (John 5:39). I know the Holy Spirit saves (Titus 3:5), but that he saves through the Word (Jas. 1:21). I know the Holy Spirit teaches (1 Cor. 2:13), but that he teaches through the word (2 Tim. 3:16-17). I know the Holy Spirit comforts (Acts 9:31), but that he comforts through the word (1 Thess. 4:18). I know I could go on and on showing that whatever the Holy Spirit does, he does it through the word. I know, therefore that while the Holy Spirit works, he works only through the word of God. And I know that while the Holy Spirit dwells in us, he does so only through the word of God.

I know that a lot of people are doing a lot of speculating about the Holy Spirit and his words and his deeds. But I know that we had better confine our teaching concerning the Holy Spirit to just what the Bible says on the subject and give more heed to what we should do to obey our Heavenly Father than what He (The Holy Spirit) has done, is doing, or shall do.

Let us all strive to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:19), to be led of the Spirit (Gal. 5:18), and to walk after the Spirit (Rom. 8:1). But let us be reminded that we can accomplish this if we will follow the teachings of the New Testament.

- A. C. Grider, via Truth Magazine, January 23, 1975

Do Not Be Ashamed!

Paul stated to Timothy, "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher." (2 Timothy 1:8-11).

The admonition to young Timothy was to maintain his fixed attention on the lofty spiritual blessings of Christ and not allow any feeling of shame or humiliation to enter his heart upon suffering hardship for preaching and defending His gospel. Further, Timothy was urged to remain strong and not give in to those temptations concerning any trials related to the fact that Paul had been imprisoned for "the testimony of our Lord." The reason for

such trials would be the social stigma, the reactions of a godless society as they attempted to discredit and permanently stain these evangelists. The Lord's revelation to Paul had indicated that it is the "wisdom of God" to provide salvation to man through a preached message that the worldly wise would regard as "foolishness." The preaching of a crucified Christ would be, "to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." (1 Corinthians 1:21-24).

In the Roman letter Paul indicated, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes," (Romans 1:16). In this letter to Timothy, he stated his reason for enduring such suffering in order to preach and teach the message of the One "who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel": "For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day." (2 Timothy 1:10-12). Paul, by faithful fulfillment of his commission, would receive a glorious eternal reward on the day Christ returns. Whereas "Phygelus and Hermogenes" had turned away from Paul, dear Onesiphorus had not, "for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains;" (2 Timothy 1:15-16).

Why were there people who, having heard the gospel of Christ, felt a sense of humiliation or shame? There are several reasons. What we understand from this letter to Timothy is that those who obeyed the doctrine of Christ were persecuted. Their goods may have been stolen or destroyed (cf. Hebrews 10:34). They suffered emotionally and physically. They faced the threat of imprisonment or even a horrible death. Such things happen when the forces of darkness fear exposure of all their hidden deeds of evil by the light of the gospel (John 3:19-20).

Christians today face persecutions, although in this country at the present time they are not life-threatening. However, the pressures of opposition to the gospel remain with Christians. Our peers dislike our telling them that they may be mistaken or wrong about anything as we move their attention toward the Scriptures. In a world where practically everyone sets their own standard of right and wrong, suggesting the foolishness of such a course (Jeremiah 10:23) can be met with great resentment and opposition. People resort to name calling, snubbing, saying ugly things and making false accusations against you when you try to help them by introducing them to the Savior. Entire families have disowned members who have become believers in Christ. Being converted to Christ will result in lost friends. If you happen to be making a living in the business world you will lose revenue in retribution. These are people that we attempt to help, but the god of this world has blinded their minds (2 Corinthians 4:4; cf. 1 John 2:11). Their behavior is wrong, but if we shrink back in humiliation and shame, the forces of evil score a victory. We must

never align ourselves with these unrighteous people by giving in to such temptations. They oppose God!

Paul would certainly admonish us: "Do not be ashamed!" Knowledge of the truth of the gospel has been given to us, and we must hold it fast. Let us be determined to stand, come what may! It was the purpose of God through a holy calling to offer us this grace in His Son by bringing immortality to light! Our Lord taught, "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." (Mark 8:38). The popular reject Jesus. He will reject them when they need Him most.

This introspection might sting: Am I ashamed of Christ? Do I allow the ugly statements of others, the intimidation, and the humiliation, to change my righteous behavior into the works of the flesh? Do I allow others to prevent me from being the salt of the earth and the light of the world as a Christian? Further, do I avoid having others learn that I am a Christian by failing to speak against evil and say what is right? Do I try to blend in with the world so no one will notice any difference? Have I already fallen for our culture's anti-biblical views? Am I just too uncomfortable to talk to others about Jesus Christ?

Answering these pointed questions honestly will be revealing to you. Are you ashamed of Him?

- Gary Smalley

* "A clean conscience makes a soft pillow!"

* "Worry is the darkroom in which negatives can develop!"

* "Deciding not to choose Jesus is still making a choice!"

* John Bunyan said, "Wilt thou have thy sins and go to hell or leave thy sins and go to heaven?" It's just that simple!

* "A man's conscience, like a warning line on the highway, tells him what he shouldn't do - but it does not keep him from doing it - that requires an act of the will!"

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)