

Week 13:

The Spirit

God is Spirit: **Work of the Spirit**

Throughout history there have been cultures and countries come and go. Some of them seem mystical and elusive. Who were the Aztecs, ancient Egyptians, and Sumerians? The ancient Babylonians, Greeks, and Chinese left us with wisdom. Who made the Easter Island statues or Stonehenge in Britain? So much has happened, yet we still have religion. For at-least over 4000 years' humans have killed in the name of a God. Religion just might be part of our DNA. Why else do the vast majority of the population believe in a higher power? Christianity aside, what have you always believed in like astrology and spiritual stuff?

We seem to be connected to the spiritual. You must admit that the dark or a scary movie has unnerved you a little. There are people we meet that prick something within us. Why is that? Déjà vu is real. We have been near, dreamed of, or seen things before they happen. I know at-least I have. I have said I knew that person was bad. I knew something bad was going to happen. I knew I was going to win today too. We feel things spiritually. It's by no mistake that God choses to connect us to him by his Spirit. It's a part of this world. Tell us some of your spiritual encounters?

God is Spirit. If you take into account that Jesus physical body died, then he is Spirit too. People forget that they call Jesus the incarnate Son. That means he came into flesh from: Spirit. Miracles, burning bushes, and the man called Jesus are physical things humans saw with their own eyes. Generally, the Spirit is invisible. We tend to say that invisible means it does not exist. Much of our lives are based on what we have seen and what we know through experience. The spiritual seems to enter in through evil things that go bump in the night. Tarot cards, psychics, and faith healers give us a picture of the spiritual. Is it a power we can wield or is it something more?

Ancient people attached spiritual things to being clean. The term baptizes or reborn are not new. A spiritual journey into the wilderness is not a new invention by Jesus. The readers of the Gospels knew what those terms meant. A battle between evil and good was real to them. It's only in the last 100 years that humans have begun to question the validity of God. The New Testament is like a focus of a lens. The Spirit of God has always been in the Bible, yet it was never central. These new books and letters make up the New Testament of the Bible because of a theme. The Spirit is here. The Spirit is used 18 times in Matthew, Mark 25, Luke 34, John 21, Acts 69, and Revelation 22. You get the picture. The Holy Ghost plays a central and prominent role in the lives of people before and after Jesus died. The Old testament had a wide lens view of the Spirit of God. In the New Testament the focus has moved in so that we can see the work of the Spirit more clearly.

To be spiritual is a powerful thing. To have God tell you something that others do not know is a powerful thing. To pray and heal; pray and see; pray and defeat evil are all powerful things. The problem is, are we being powerful or is the Spirit being powerful? Many a good person has been disappointed when they lose that power. In the story of Sampson is a chilling reminder. It says in Judges 16:20 **"But he did not know that the Lord had left him."** This spiritual journey we take is not ours to wield, use, or handle. God uses his Spirit to guide and empower. Still, this Spirit of God is within those who believe, and that means we have a connection to God if we are listening.

Extra reading is needed. Read John 1-4, Luke 24, Acts 1, Galatians 5:16-26, and Acts 20:7-12

1. John 1:29-34 is a big Daddy in the Bible. These few verses say a ton. We have Jesus being Baptized by the Spirit. This Spirit of God connects Jesus to heaven and to men. All men will be baptized this way as Jesus was. Secondly, Jesus baptizes with the Spirit and not just with water. To the Jews water baptism is a cleaning ritual. Spiritual cleansing was something new. Thirdly, John 2:6 has Jesus turning water for purification into wine. I believe it says Jesus has power over cleansing. In chapter 3 Jesus says to Nicodemus that you must be born again not by water but by Spirit. Jesus then meets a woman at a well who is considered an outsider. He tells her that she must drink of the Spirit. There is so much more in these verses. This Spirit is active in our lives like never before.
John 4:13-14 **"Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."**

2. In a way, Acts 1 and 2 are big daddies in the Bible too. Gee maybe they all are. This chapter repeats the fact that Luke has investigated these claims about Jesus. Luke also mentions that the Spirit of God is coming. The bridge between Spirit and flesh is coming. In ancient Greek philosophy, there is an argument over Flesh and Spirit. How can the two be one? I'll point out two things from this chapter 1 of Acts. First is that Jesus gives us a glimpse of our heavenly bodies. Luke 24 gives an in-depth version of Jesus appearing after his death. He is touched and eats. In Acts 1 he is there but ascends right before their eyes to heaven. Spirit and Flesh as one. Secondly, We see Peter and the boys make a godly decision without consulting God. The Spirit was not upon them yet. They were told to wait. Matthias was probably a good man, but not Gods pick. That was reserved for the Apostle Paul.

We have been trained to wish or pray. In reality, we expect an answer soon. We do not pray for next month. We do not wish for things to happen next year. Usually the need is

right in front of us now. Yes, the Spirit of God is within those who believe in Jesus. Yet, that Spirit is God. God is patient. The Spirit is available as a conduit. What are we saying to God. Conversely what is God saying to us. Either way, the Spirit is far more than just a power to use. Is it possible this Spirit wants to use us?

Acts 1:4 **“While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father.”**

2 Peter 3:9 **“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”**

3. Galatians 5 is another deep look into the plan of God. The Apostle Paul is arguing that we know traditions and laws. If we are forced, then we try. If we want to honor tradition, then we try. What happens if we should act like someone? What if the Spirit of God encourages good behavior? Paul makes it clear that there is a gap between old thinking and the new way of God. That way is connected by the Holy Spirit. All Jesus was on the inside (what drove him) is now available to us. It's like there is a new upgrade to our morality and brain. There are two points of view. Paul makes it clear that this is how we thought in the past. Then beginning in verse 22 Paul says the fruit of the Spirit are... It is true that once you have had an encounter with Jesus and received the Spirit. Nothing should remain the same.

The Spirit is far more than power. So many have called on this Spirit to smite their enemies because it can. So many have called on the power of God to heal. Why? Because it can. Yet, time after time God does not smite or heal. Why? It's because the Spirit is the knowledge of God. The Spirit is powerful like God. However, that is not primarily what the Holy Spirit is for.

Some trucks haul things. It could also pull or smash things too. What is it primarily for? The Spirit searches the mind of God for us. The Spirit does the work of God in us. What are you primarily for? I say the Spirit of God knows and wants to empower you to be the best of the best. This Spirit does that through you.

Galatians 5:25 **“If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.”**

4. I am ending this section of teaching. There is a lifetime to know God. There is though, little more I could say to convince you. In lesson 1, I said that *God did it*. God did what? God created, became personable in Jesus, and paved a way through the Spirit. Why? So, that we could know him better and know ourselves better. The reason all this has happened from Genesis 1:1 to Acts 20 is so that you could know and believe. This is not a text book to gain knowledge. We did gain that but we gained something else we did not expect. The Spirit filled life brings happiness and joy because we can know, feel, and can relate to God. To know why we exist is the primary Question. Through the Spirit and the teachings of Jesus we can know God and ourselves better.

I chose Acts 20 to end this section because it sums up the whole thing. To believe that God created us is important. To believe Jesus came to save us from Judgment is important. To believe that the Spirit of God is in you are important. Yet the Spirit works, enables, and inspires us. We become Holy wrecking balls on this earth just as Noah, Moses, Elijah did centuries before. Read Acts 20 knowing they never mention the Spirit because the

Spirit is working in Paul. He preached because the Spirit lead him to preach. When the man fell out the window he immediately, without hesitation, revived him. Paul then went back to work preaching. Christians never question God and they never stop doing what needs to be done through the amazing power of the Spirit within.

Acts 20: 22 **“And now, as a captive to the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there.”**

The Jesus connection

I will have available in the new year the next part to your journey. I have done a study in the book of Matthew. I feel Matthew is training us to believe in Jesus. In the intro to God I have barley mentioned Jesus. Isn't he the main thing? To Jesus, God the Father is the most important thing. Jesus defends the Spirit. Jesus whole ministry is to highlight the trinity of God: Father, Son, and Spirit. To know Jesus is to know the Father in Heaven. You get a better picture of who Jesus is by studying the Father in the Bible. We have done that.

I am connecting you to God the Father in order to connect you to Jesus. Yes, Jesus is the key. Yet, the Spirit of God stands between them both. Read the verses below. Religion is messy business. Within all that mess is God. Religion, church, and spirituality are bundled together within the mess. The main reason people say they don't believe is because of the mess. The cool part within the mess is Jesus. Check out my Matthew series. Matthew puts Jesus right in the middle of a religious mess. Jesus pulls through and stands for God and the Holy Spirit. Jesus calls on people to stand for God.

The Jesus connection is that he is God. The Spirit is God. The Father God works as one with both of these to give us a fuller understanding of life and the world he created. It's important to see the character of God. To fully understand Jesus, we need to know the Father. I have helped you see the Father in this 13-week series. Don't give up if your confused. We have a religious mess today as Jesus did then. Yet, God is still at work helping you to understand your place in his creation. You do have a place. Study Jesus, and you will gain help discovering yourself. You just might understand the religious mess better too.

1 Corinthians 2:10 **“these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.**

John 14:6 **“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”**

Deuteronomy 6:4 **“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one.”**

John 10:30 **“I and the Father are one.”**