

STONE HARBOR

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Dear Readers,

What follows is one man's weekly attempt to know the truth of God's Word and bring it to His people for their good and ultimately for His glory. Please regard these only as notes belonging to a busy pastor uploaded as they stand (for better or for worse, complete or incomplete, almost always with grammatical errors, and always with room for refinement in content, structure, presentation...) to support the ongoing study of God's Word. I firmly believe that the community of faith which is the body of Christ can and should bring their gifts to bear for the good of the rest of the body and that any one teacher can be taught by the others with an understanding of the truth. Therefore, should you have insight that would sharpen any of the thinking expressed here, know that I would be pleased to receive it. Clearly, the input that is most welcome and most helpful is that which is more concise than verbose, Biblically grounded and expressed with the goal of displacing misunderstanding and apprehending the truth of God's Word. Your thoughts of that nature are most welcome, certainly appreciated and will be thoughtfully considered. You are invited to send those insights to me at johnny@stoneharborchurch.org.

In pursuit of truth and growing a shepherd's heart,
Johnny

Transformation Card

This page provides an overview of the message and resources for individual and group study.

Date: Apr 11, 2010
Series: The Church of God's Intention
Part: Part 1 – What God Intends the Church to Be
Section: The Church of the Spirit
Topic: The Church
Message Title: **The Church is the Church of the Spirit - 1**
Short Title: The Church of the Spirit - 1
Text: Acts 1-2
Key Words: Church, Spirit

Message Outline

The Church is the Church of the Spirit - 1

- I. The Spirit **Forms** the Church
 - A. **Preparation** for Spirit's Role
 - B. The Spirit is the Spirit of **Christ**
 - C. The Spirit **Joins** us to God in Christ

Related Scripture

1. Joel 2:28-32
2. Acts 1
3. Acts 2
4. Psalm 16:8-11
5. Psalm 110:1

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. How did God prepare His people for the coming of His Holy Spirit?
2. In what way can we say the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ?
3. In what way did the Spirit form the church in the first century?
4. What is the Spirit's role in the ongoing formation of the church today?

Memory and Meditation Verse

“but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” Acts 1:8 (NASB)

C. God Intends the Church to Be the Church of the Spirit

We have seen in the last section that the church is the body of those people who have been joined by faith to Christ and therefore by virtue of His union to the Father our union to Him yields our union to God. Pastor Kit Culver says we are “sons in the Son,” i.e., in our union with Christ we are brought into a restored relationship with God – and that relationship is a father-child relationship. We pray, “Our Father...” not loosely speaking but correctly acknowledging our close familial dependent unified relationship with God. We are sons and daughters of God because we are joined by faith to Christ who is His Son and one with God in every way.

Today I'd like us to take note of how it is that people like us, born in sin and separation from God, dead to Him spiritually and thereby incapable of coming to God on our own even if we wanted to -- how it is that people like us become people joined to Christ and therefore/thereby to God.

This consideration brings us to the absolutely necessary role of God's Holy Spirit.

We can't see Him with our natural eyes, but it is the Spirit of God who is rightly credited as the one who joins us to Christ. He has done that work for each believer in this room and for each believer everywhere. None of us are saved, none of us are joined to Christ, none of us are a part of Jesus' Church apart from the work of God's Holy Spirit joining us to Christ.

So let's understand the role of the Spirit and let's give credit where credit is due celebrating that He has joined us to Christ and therefore to God. If we are to be the church of God's intention we must be the church of the Spirit.

Over the next few weeks we will try to grow in our understanding of the Holy Spirit and particularly His important role in Christ's church. Today we will consider the fact and the implications of the fact that...

1. The Spirit Forms the Church

The Church is not formed by humans like the formation of a business organization or an athletic team or a social club... The church is formed by God's activity and most properly by the work of the Holy Spirit. That the Holy Spirit is the agent who fulfills God's purposes is nothing new.

a) Preparation for the Spirit's Role

(6) OT on the Spirit

See Sacred Space pp.197ff

(a) The Spirit was God's Agent of Creation

- **Genesis 1:2** -- The **earth** was formless and **void**, and **darkness** was over the surface of the deep, and the **Spirit** of God was moving over the surface of the waters. See also Psalm 104:24-31

- Gen 2:7 – God gave life to man by His breath and this breath can be seen as the Spirit of God. Ruah, pneuma. God's Spirit-Breath gave Adam life – unique life, life as the Son of God (Lk 3:38), life in communion with God.

(b) The Spirit was Active in the Formation of Israel

- Isaiah 63:7-14

(c) The Spirit Empowered Craftsmen to Build God's Tabernacle – His Dwelling Place with Man

- Ex 25:1-8; 31:1-11; 35:30-35

(d) The Spirit was with Israel's Judges, Kings and Prophets Preserving the God's Dwelling with His People

- Kit: "The Spirit...was also responsible for sustaining and preserving..." Yahweh's ongoing dwelling with the His people. Numbers 11:1-29; 27:15-21; Judges 3:10, 6:34, 13:24-25; 1 Sam 16:13-14; 2 Chronicles 15:1, 18:12-27, 20:14, 24:20; Nehemiah 9:30

(e) The Spirit is Seen as the Agent of Restoring Fallen/Dead People to Life

- Ezekiel 36:22-37:14...; Joel 2:28-29

(f) The Spirit was Even Prophesied to be Put within the People of God and thereby Give Life

- Ezek 36:27; 37:5,9,10,14

(7) Jesus on the Spirit

Jesus, Immanuel=**God with us**, before He ascended and took the throne of the Kingdom of God (KOG) at the right hand of God, told His disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit who would, as we will see, become **God in us!**

Acts 1:4 records that Jesus gathered His disciples together and "commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised." Jesus went on to define that promise as that which, "...you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5).

He had previously told them:

- [John 15:26](#) – "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me,"
- [John 16:7](#) – "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you."

The Spirit of God is Jesus' Spirit; He is Jesus' to send to His church. The Spirit of God has always been God's life giving agent of creation, the One who enabled God's tabernacle to be constructed worthy of the Lord's presence, the one who

equipped the leaders of His people to rule for their preservation and the One whom the prophets spoke of as He who would give new life to those who were dead. Most ultimately Jesus Himself said that He would send the Spirit to His disciples and the Spirit's coming would be better for His disciples than if He Himself stayed with them. So the POG should have been well prepared for the coming of the Holy Spirit. I think it particularly important to note that...

b) The Spirit is the Spirit of **Christ**

- In 1 Peter 1:11 Peter calls the Holy Spirit “the Spirit of Christ.”
- Paul also refers to the Holy Spirit as “the Spirit of Christ.”
[Romans 8:9](#) – “However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have **the Spirit of Christ**, he does not belong to Him.”

(6) *Why is this important?*

That the Holy Spirit is one and the same with “the Spirit of Christ” also speaks to the essential unity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, i.e., the Trinity. And the thought that God is bringing us into this perfect eternal loving relationship which He has always enjoyed between the Father, Son and Spirit is truly incredible.

Jesus is so clearly and completely joined with God as His son and as God Himself that it becomes easier for me to see that if we are filled with and indwelt by the Spirit of Christ Jesus, we have Christ in us and in our union with Christ we are thus joined to God the Father. And if we are joined to God we have been reconciled to Him and are now who God has always intended us to be. We are no longer broken, estranged, people disconnected from Him and His plans; but we are healed, intimate, those re-joined to Him and His purposes for our lives.

Let's look at the unity of Jesus Christ and God the Father.

- Col 2:9
- John 1:14
- [John 10:30](#) -- "I and the Father are one."
- John 14:7-10 -- 7 “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.” 8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." 9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.”

Jesus and God the Father are inextricably unified so much so that Jesus can say, “I and the Father are one.” But go with me to the first century and put yourself in the

shoes of Jesus' disciples. They were in a period of major paradigm shift where their understanding of the world and God and their relation to Him must have been thoroughly shaken. They were fishermen raised in Jewish culture looking for the Messiah to come who, according to popular conception, would unseat the Roman occupiers in a great act of judgment and sit on the throne of David reestablishing the national sovereignty of Israel under a King faithful to God. Then came Jesus, the Messiah indeed but not the Messiah according to their expectations. He called them to Himself and began to convince them by demonstrations of power that He was the Messiah but not at all like the Messiah they had expected. He came not as a conquering king but as a suffering servant. He came not to bring judgment but to bear it. He came not to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many. But even though He was different than they had expected they came to see Him as the Christ, and they grew to love Him and be devoted to Him. Then He was captured, despised by the leaders of their own religious community, crucified by the ones they thought He would deliver them from. Their hopes were dashed. The shaking of their understanding continued. Then came His resurrection and His appearing to them. Hope was restored and then confounded as they watched Him ascend to heaven and heard the angelic assurance, "This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watch Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11b). Now what? Now they were separated from the Jesus whom they had come to know as the Christ, the One who when they were with everything seemed so right, the One with the power, the One who could deliver, heal, forgive, the One they had grown to love. Now what? Now they must believe in what He had said but in what they could no longer see with their own eyes. What had He said? [John 16:7](#) – "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." He was going away but He would send the Holy Spirit. Wait for what the Father had promised (Acts 1:4). So they waited and they discovered in a convincing way that...

c) The Spirit **Joins** us to God in Christ

(6) The Promise of the Spirit was Fulfilled in History

(a) First for the Jews

(i) Acts 1:12-14

(ii) Acts 2

(iii) 2:1-8, 11b-13 – The coming of the Spirit upon all Jesus disciples

(iv) 14-16 – Peter steps up to explain the Spirit's coming to the Jewish pilgrims and Jerusalem residents witnessing the event

(a) 17-21 – Peter identifies the coming of the Spirit with what Joel had prophesied in Joel 2:28-32

(b) 22-24 -- Peter tied the Holy Spirit to Jesus and His resurrection

(i) 25-28 Messiah's resurrection and presence and life spoken of by highly regarded David in Psalm 16:8-11

(ii) 29-35 Peter declares that the Messiah is Jesus and He, enthroned in heaven, has poured forth the Spirit.

(iii) 36 – Conclusion: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified."

The conclusion Peter draws in regards to the coming of the visible audible coming of the Spirit on Pentecost is that Jesus is the enthroned Christ. Do not miss what Peter saw: that the coming of the Spirit testified to the identity of Jesus! This explains the action Peter advises those who witnessed this miraculous proof (that Jesus is Lord and Christ) to take.

(c) 37-39 Peter's advised response to the reality of Jesus attested by the coming of the Spirit –

- "...repent" of v.38 indicates the 'receiving the word' Peter preached of v. 41 and the 'believing' of v. 44.
- "...be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ"

(d) 38 -- The respondents expected result

- Forgiveness of sins
- Receipt of the gift of the Holy Spirit

(e) 39 -- Who this forgiveness and gift of the Spirit is for

- "...as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."

(f) 40 - Peter's further exhortations

- "Be saved from this perverse generation..." – it is as if Peter was calling them away from those who did not rightly recognize that Jesus the Nazarene was God's Christ. And to see the coming of the Spirit as Jesus making good on His promise to send Him when He went to the Father.

Not only did the Holy Spirit come to the Jewish disciples of Jesus but in Acts 10 we see that He also came to the Gentile believers as well.

(b) The for the Gentiles

(i) Acts 10:34ff

- Acts 10 records that when Peter preached the gospel of Jesus as the Messiah to the Gentiles in Caesarea, they too received the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- This clinched it for Peter that this purpose of God to join people to Himself through faith in Christ and the indwelling Spirit was intended for a larger population than just the nation of Israel. God intended that all men without respect to their ancestry would be saved.
 “I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.”
- Later after preaching Jesus to the Gentiles and after observing the Holy Spirit coming to them just as it had to Jesus Jewish disciples in Jerusalem on Pentecost, Peter concluded,
 “Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did.”
- Then still later explaining to his Jewish believing brothers back in Jerusalem who at first took offense that he had gone to the Gentiles with the good news of Jesus recounted the whole story of how he had been directed by God to do so and even how Jesus had predicted this baptism with the Holy Spirit (11:16) which had taken place, Peter concluded,
 “Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?”
 (11:17)
- Peter’s presentation to his Jewish believing brother’s in Christ in turn satisfied their concerns and they concluded saying,
 “Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life” (Acts 11:18).

So we see the risen ascended enthroned Jesus had sent His Spirit upon the believers in an unmistakably miraculous way that testified that God was calling Jews and Gentiles alike to repentance and faith that leads to life. The Holy Spirit was coming into believers joining them to Christ and therefore to God. We see this not only in history but also in...

(7) Direct Teaching about the Spirit as the Means of Union with Christ

(a) 1 Cor 12:13

Speaking of the body of believers that make up the church of Jesus, Paul says, "For **by one Spirit** we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."

(b) Eph 2:18

NASB: "for through Him we both have our access **in** one Spirit to the Father."

NIV: "... **by** one Spirit"

Through Him [Jesus]
We have access
in/by one Spirit
to the Father.

In both of these passages we see that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, is the agent by which our union with Christ is brought about.

(c) Picture the Invisible Spirit

- God the Father in Heaven
- Jesus enthroned at His Right Hand
- Jesus sending His Spirit to 'rest' 'on' His disciples and actually 'fill' them (John 16:7; Acts 2:4).

The Spirit of Christ dwells in the heart of the believer. This was not just for Jesus disciples in the first century.

(8) The Indwelling Spirit is Normative for all Christians

Ephesians was written to be read amongst the several churches of Asia minor.

(a) [Ephesians 1:13-14](#)

"In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our

inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.”

(9) The Indwelling Spirit is Determinative of all Christians

(a) Romans 8:9

The Spirit in the Christian determines that the person is a Christian. By definition we can say that a Christian is one who has the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him.

(10) The Indwelling Spirit is Indicative of the Fulfillment of God's Greatest Purposes with Man

What is the big picture according to God? Redeeming mankind from estrangement to intimacy with Him by means of One special man who would Himself be both God and a descendent of King David. That One would build a house for God. What we see as we consider Jesus seated as King in heaven and serving also as priest by giving to His disciples the Spirit God had given to Him is nothing less than the fulfillment of God redeeming mankind into the relationship of His original intention! This is huge and we will spend next week looking at the importance of Pentecost. For God has done more here than I have understood in the past. There is a fulfillment in Christ sending His Spirit into the lives of believers that I sense is paramount for us to understand. Next week we will pull it out of the cloud that obscures its meaning by listening more to God's word on this in particular.

Paul's questions can call us to remember and think rightly about the Spirit, ourselves and the church:

- 1 Cor 3:16 -- “Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”
- 1 Cor 6:19 -- “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?”
- Gal 3:1-9 – More pointedly calling us to consider the importance of the Spirit both in our initial union with Christ and in our ongoing transformation and our new life in Him Galatians 3 begins: “You foolish Galatians...” [read 1-9]

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