

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST (2)

(Sermon Summary)

Reading: John 3: 22-36.

We have seen that Christ's humanity is important for our salvation. We cannot be saved from our sin unless He is fully human, as well as fully divine. His humanity is part of what it means to be a Servant and a Mediator. He has to stand in the place of sinners and fully represent them. This also means that He has to live perfectly as a man and therefore has to show faith in God and reliance upon Him for all things. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is seen in the life and ministry of Christ because a perfect human would have to rely upon the Holy Spirit to please God. Our Lord therefore has to show this in His own life, even though He is the Son of God.

1. The Bible's witness.

The Bible witnesses to the importance of the Holy Spirit in the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is to be found frequently prophesied in the Old Testament. We find it in Isaiah 11: 1-5, 42:1 and 61:1-2.

There are frequent references in the New Testament to the place of the Holy Spirit in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit is involved in the conception of the Lord and the supplying of His humanity (Luke 1:34-35). In growing up, the whole process of Christ's maturing and developing is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as hinted in Luke 2: 39-40; 51-52. The Holy Spirit would have been the help needed by the Lord when, as the carpenter's son, he showed obedience in a time of hidden-ness and obscurity. The Spirit was there to help as He learned patience and the timing of His heavenly Father.

At His baptism, there was a new effusion of the Holy Spirit given to Him for the work that lay ahead (Matthew 3:16-17). The Spirit was given to Him without measure (John 3:34), not so that people could marvel at His humanity, but so that they would see that He was divine. God would not entrust such wonder-working power to any but His own Son. So now we see increasingly His glory, yet also His submission. We now see clearly His high office, yet see Him lowly and humble. He is the one who is above yet who is also with us. He is the One who is outside of time yet also with us in time.

The Spirit takes Him into the wilderness to endure temptation (Luke 4:1). His submission to the will of God has to be tested and the Spirit is His help in this. He does not rely upon fresh revelation and His own divine resources to stand against the devil, but uses the weapon of the Word of God, as an obedient servant of God. His miracles which reveal His true identity are worked in the power of Holy Spirit (Luke 4: 14-15; Matthew 12: 26-28; and Acts 10:38). This is not to put His humanity on a pedestal but so that His divinity could be confirmed.

The Spirit is there to assist in the weighty matter of His death (Hebrews 9:14). There is support and strength for the Son, as the Servant of the Lord, which He needed, and the Lord supplied this need by the Holy Spirit. All of this was part of our Lord's perfect obedience, without which, there would be no salvation for us.

The Spirit was also to be found at work in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus too (Romans 1:4).

2. Lessons to learn.

The work of the Holy Spirit in the life and ministry has lessons for us too.

Firstly, we must see the error of some of a charismatic persuasion who believe that we can work the same signs and wonders because we too are human beings like Him. This is to miss the point that the Spirit was given without measure only to the Lord Jesus because of who He was. Such a measure of the Spirit could only be given to one who was divine, not to anyone else, however important a person they might be. These signs and wonders are not a pattern for us all to follow but were uniquely attesting to His identity as divine.

We are, however, to learn to rely upon the power and the help of the Holy Spirit in all our Christian service. If the Lord Jesus did, in His humanity, how much the more we should. We often rely too much upon ourselves and are not found often enough praying for help and guidance. His humanity is real and shows us the way we are to live as human beings, relying upon our heavenly Father.

We are also to learn from the humility which He showed at every point. He could have insisted, as the Son of God, that He would dispense with all these helps to His humanity. Instead, He acts with great humility (Philippians 2:7-8). That same mind as was in Christ is to be in us as well. This means that we, like Him, will be tried and tested. And we, like Him, should desire all the help of heaven.