

1 Cor 12:3b-13
“The Work of the Holy Spirit”

In my opinion, the Holy Spirit is the most misunderstood and undervalued person of the God Head. We sometimes treat the Holy Spirit as if he is a stepchild. Someone that happens to come with the package, but we could really do without. We treat the Holy Spirit as if we can simply place him in a corner and instruct him to be quiet. In my opinion, we fail to fully understand the utter importance that the Holy Spirit plays in the life of the church, in the life of every believer. In the New Testament, alone, there are some 261 passages that make reference to the Holy Spirit. In the Gospels he is mentioned 56 times, in the Book of Acts 57 times, in Paul’s letters 112 times, and in the remaining texts of the NT 36 times. The volume of written material in scripture, alone, makes clear the importance of the Holy Spirit. And as you study these 261 passages you soon learn that there would be no church apart from him. The Holy Spirit is as much God as God the Father and God the Son and therefore is due the same reverence we give to God and Jesus. Make no mistake about, we cannot do without him. With this said, in our text this morning I want to lift what I describe as the three primary works of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church.

First, it is the Holy Spirit that brings one to true confession of faith in Jesus. V3 “no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.” To proclaim Jesus is Lord is to declare he is in the place of divine authority and all creation, starting with you, is subject to him. We cannot reach such a conclusion by our mere intellect or human activity, alone. As much as we would

like to believe that we alone bring people to saving faith in Christ by our efforts (worship, outreach, evangelism, church school, etc.) we do not. God certainly uses this activity of ours to expose the lost to the glorious gospel of Jesus, but it is the Holy Spirit alone that brings about belief in one's heart. No one simply decides that Jesus is Lord and that it is right to follow him. This happens only by the power of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

John 6:42-44 ⁴²They said, "Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph? We know his father and mother. How can he say, 'I came down from heaven'?"⁴³ But Jesus replied, "Stop complaining about what I said. ⁴⁴For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up.

Eph 3:16-17 ¹⁶I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit.¹⁷ Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong."

John 16:12-14 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

Second, the Holy Spirit equips the church for the work of ministry. V 4-11 ⁴There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. ⁷But the manifestation of the Spirit is

given to each one for the profit *of all*:⁸ for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit,¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.¹¹ But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.” We are only able to do what we do because the Holy Spirit enables us by gifting us. He works in and through us to accomplish the will of the Father and Son for their glory. Whatever gift you have, you have it is because the Holy Spirit has given it to you for the building up of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. We can never forget this primary purpose of gifting by the Holy Spirit. None of us own our gifts and thus these gifts should not be used solely for our individual advancement, but for the benefit of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

1 Peter 4:10 “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

Acts 2:1-11 “On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place.² Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting.³ Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them.⁴ And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.⁵ At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem.⁶ When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their

own languages being spoken by the believers. ⁷They were completely amazed. “How can this be?” they exclaimed. “These people are all from Galilee, ⁸and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages! ⁹Here we are—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the areas of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome ¹¹(both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans, and Arabs. And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!”

Finally, the Holy Spirit unifies the church. He joins all believers to Christ and thus to one another. **V 12- 13** “¹²For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. ¹³For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” It may come as a surprise to you, but people are often shocked to find out that I pastor a predominately white congregation. Particularly persons from the South. How could a situation such as ours come about? The Holy Spirit. I am thoroughly convinced that my call to FPC is a glaring witness to this truth. The Holy Spirit joins us to Christ and, thus, to one another. Enabling us to lay aside the external things that so easily divide us.

Gal 3:27-29 “²⁷And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. ²⁸There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And now that you belong to

Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you."

Church, the work of the Holy Spirit. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.