

## **The Wednesday Word, Nov. 16, 2011: The Gospel and Authentic New Testament Ministry, Part 6: The Spirit and the Gospel**

In authentic New Testament ministry, the Holy Spirit and the gospel are never put into competition with each other. Paul writes,

*“Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so ---I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.” (Rom 15:19)*

To the Thessalonians he writes,

*For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, --” (1 Thess.1:5).*

The Spirit and the gospel, therefore, must not be seen as two truths competing for our loyalty. There is only one focal point - the Christ event: the Spirit comes to reveal, unfold, magnify its significance to us (Jn 16:13).

When Paul preached the gospel he preached in the power of the Spirit. Under Spirit anointed gospel preaching, God sovereignly commanded the light to shine in the darkness and people were supernaturally translated from the kingdom of Satan into the Kingdom of God's dear son (2 Cor 4:4-6; Col 1:13).

Through the years, I've observed, however, that much modern preaching lacks evidence of the Holy Spirit's work. There's a pretended power, but not a genuine one. 'Salvation' is now 'accomplished' by a personal decision, a raising of the hand or a giving of the heart to Jesus. This, however, is far removed from authentic New Testament ministry where the Lord majestically moves in authority. Years ago, I discovered that we can sometimes, in our own power, persuade people to follow so called salvation formulas. This, again, is far removed from salvation through the power of the gospel.

In addition, under Spirit empowered gospel preaching, saints are built up and established in Christ. Once more the Spirit and the gospel go hand in hand. Yet not everyone ministers this way. There are, as a result, many who sit under subjective, man centred preaching being taught to focus on their experiences and condition. However, here's something worth remembering, the Holy Spirit never causes us to be occupied with that which is happening within us (Jn 16:14).

When we are genuinely filled with the Spirit we are occupied with the Lord Christ, the very glory of heaven. He is our life (Col 3:4). As Spirit filled believers, the Spirit causes us to become absorbed with the One who laid aside His royal crown and humbled Himself to become one of us. Although He was the Majesty of heaven, He was placed in a feeding trough at birth. Although all things were made by Him, He was unrecognized, despised and rejected. Although He unfolded the identity and character of God, we esteemed him not. Even so, He lived, died and rose again in our name. By Himself He conquered sin, Satan and death. As he rose from the grave and ascended to glory he led captivity captive. He is now exalted and glorified and in him, this glorious one we live and move and have our being. It is in Him that we are now blessed with all spiritual blessings. It is the Holy Spirit Himself who draws us to Christ our life. Far from being in competition, with the gospel, the Holy Spirit draws us out of ourselves to where our life is hidden with Christ in God (Col 3:3). In fact the Holy Spirit delivers us from the wretched inward looking, self-focused life and releases us to be absorbed with the revelation of Christ.

Therefore, wherever and whenever the Spirit is moving in power, there we find believers occupied with gospel truths such as Christ our Representative, Righteousness and Redeemer; Christ our Substitute and

Surety; Christ the Way and the Truth; Christ our life; Christ our Good, Great and Chief Shepherd; Christ our High Priest and Intercessor; Christ our Prophet and Perfection; Christ our King ruling and reigning for His people; Christ guiding the affairs of human history toward the day of His coming in glory. When there is preoccupation with Christ Jesus, there is the true evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in power.

And that's the Gospel Truth!