

1) ¹ THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

a) Introduction

- i) Modern American society has become more and more secular. And yet many people seem to feel something of a void and seek to fill it.
 - (1) The "New Age" movement.
 - (2) Meditation in one form or another
 - (3) The fascination with UFO's and other worldly creatures in films and on TV
 - (4) The fascination with super heroes with power beyond that of normal humans.
 - (5) Guthrie feels that they are in effect groping in the dark and what they yearn for is what Christians call the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life.

b) Who (not what) is the Holy Spirit?

- i) The Holy Spirit is Personal
 - (1) Not an energy or power like electricity
 - (2) The Holy Spirit is God interacting with us "Person to person".
 - (3) Some suggest we should use the pronoun "she" in the sense that this person of the Trinity is what is reflected in the female side of humanity. Interestingly enough *ruach* the Hebrew word for spirit is feminine.
- ii) The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the God of Israel.
 - (1) God at creation in Genesis
 - (a) The Spirit of God moved across the waters
 - (b) And the Lord God breathed into the man the breath of life
 - (2) "Who spoke through the prophets..."
 - (3) In the OT the Spirit is the source of wisdom as well as justice for the oppressed and helpless
 - (4) The Spirit of God works outside Israel as well
- iii) Jesus and the Holy Spirit

- (1) He received the Spirit
 - (a) At his baptism
 - (b)** Performed his mission "full of the Holy Spirit".
- Jesus is our model of the "Spirit-filled person"**
- (i) He "came eating and drinking..."
 - (ii) He sought the lost and ate with sinners
 - (iii) He believed human need had priority over strict observance of the Law.
 - (iv) He believed human reconciliation took precedence over formal worship.
 - (v) He loved enemies
 - (vi) He came to serve and to sacrifice himself
 - (vii) He trusted in God no matter what.

- (2) Jesus sends the Spirit to his disciples
 - (a) In John Jesus speaks of sending "another advocate"
 - (b) He is the Risen Christ continuing his work
 - (c) She teaches what Jesus taught and helps the disciples remember all he did and said.

c) Authentic Christian Spirituality

- i) It begins by looking outside ourselves, not inside
 - (1) It does not look inward trying to get in touch with the divine within us.
 - (2) I look to interpret my story in the light of the story of God's people in the Scripture
 - (3) This means we have to get out of ourselves not focus inward on ourselves all the more. We look at Jesus' activity for others
 - (4) Christian spirituality is not self-centered, self-focused; it is God-centered, Christ-centered.
- ii) Christian Spirituality is this-worldly not other-worldly
 - (1) It is not some private experience

- (2) It takes place as we pray, study scripture, worship, and work with other believers.
- (3) Christian Spirituality is never world or body denying.
- (4) Christian Spirituality leads us out into the world working for social and economic justice for all. It is active rather than contemplative.
- (5) It recognizes the work of the Spirit in everyday life not just in "miraculous" happenings.
- (6) It recognizes the presence of God with us in bad times as well as good.

d) The Gifts of the Spirit

i) The ability to love...our new relationship with God leads to new relationships with others. It opens us to others, gives us a new sensitivity and deeper understanding of them.

- (1) This is a gift of the Spirit; we cannot force it
- (2) We can, however, open ourselves to it. We can place ourselves in situations in which our attitudes might be changed. We can give the Spirit something to work with!

ii) The Gift of the New Truth

- (1) Having the Spirit so to speak is not just about feelings.
- (2) The Holy Spirit does "warm our hearts" but also enlightens our minds.
- (3) Studying together is therefore just as important as praying together. It is important to seek the truth with other Christians, not just alone.
 - (a) We study the Bible looking for the truth that God would want us to know. We study it with an openness to change, as opposed to looking for things which confirm our ideas and prejudices.

(b) We are not afraid of truth which comes from other sources; we are not hostile to science and other learning disciplines.

(c) We don't confuse God's truth with what we hold to be true. Humility is necessary if we are to find the truth and have wisdom.

iii) The Gift of the New Community

(1) The gift is a new community; the Spirit comes to the gathered disciples on Pentecost, not to isolated individuals.

(2) All gifts of the Spirit are for the common good, not individual personal benefit

(3) The fellowship of the Holy Spirit is a fellowship of diverse people united in their service to Jesus Christ. They have different gifts but the same Spirit who gives them. The Spirit overcomes the barriers we erect against one another.

(4) In the NT the gifts of the Spirit are promised to the organized Church, not to groups of "like-minded people".

(5)

2) WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

a) The doctrine of Justification

i) Introduction

(1) How are Christian faith and life related

(2) What is the connection between what God gives us and does for us, and what the Lord requires us to do?

(3) The next two chapters on Justification and Sanctification seek to answer those questions.

ii) The Problem of Justification

(1) Luther fought a losing battle trying to "get right with God".

- (2) He finally realized that we could not nor did we have to save ourselves. We did not need to earn God's saving love. We did not have to "earn" salvation through good works. We are justified (made right with God) by what God has done in Jesus Christ.
 - (3) We are made right with God not by what we do but by what Christ has done for us. Salvation is a gift to be received not a prize to be won.
- iii) The Modern "ho-hum" reaction to the doctrine. Why?
- (1) We do not take our sin or God's righteousness seriously.
 - (2) We may be very concerned about dying but not about our "eternal destiny".
- iv) The Modern form of "works righteousness".
- (1) We try to justify our existence through work, by striving to be successful in the eyes of those whose opinions we value.
 - (2) We frantically try to stay young and fit in order to be "lovable" or "attractive".
 - (3) We chronically criticize others as if by making them "bad" we make ourselves "better" by comparison