May the Holy Spirit lead you and guide you always.

I pray you are well in the Lord Jesus. Always looking to Him in all things. He is a very present help in time of trouble and He is the means to life everlasting. He gives us the strength we need in this life and deals with impossible situations. More importantly, whatever we deal with in this life will be as nothing compared to what is coming. Heaven and the new creation will be beyond our wildest hopes and dreams.

Cling to Christ, do the work He gives you, and look forward to that wonderful day when His Kingdom arrives.

In Christ’s love

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 6-13-21

1 Thessalonians 5:19

As we continue looking at this section on worship, in particular, worship in the church setting, I want to spend some time on verse 19: *Do not quench the Spirit*. Now some of the translations of the Bible say something like: *Do not put out the Spirit’s fire*. This is because the Greek word for quench has the specific meaning of putting out a fire, so some translators add the word fire in the sentence. Either way, the idea is that we do something to hinder the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives or in the life of the church.

Let’s begin with a brief overview of what the Bible tells us about the Holy Spirit. One of the primary Christian doctrines is that we believe in one God who exists as three persons or personalities. We need to go ahead up front and accept that we are incapable of grasping how this can be. All attempts at describing this so we can understand gives us an incorrect view of God. In some respects, this is comforting to us: if we understood everything about God, then He wouldn’t really be God, He would be just like us. It also gives us reason to reverence Him as far above us in every way.

The Holy Spirit is one person of the Trinity that is God. He is, in fact, God. When we think of all the attributes of God such as omnipotence, omnipresence, infinite wisdom, mercy, grace; these all apply to the Holy Spirit. We know that worship is to be given to God alone; we often think of worshiping God the Father and God the Son, but God the Holy Spirit is to be worshiped also.

In this triune God, all three persons are involved in everything because there is one God; but each person in the trinity plays a certain part in redemption and each have roles in God’s plan. This is mind bending stuff and that’s why we need to believe in the Bible as the inerrant word of God. There are many now who will reject the parts of the Bible that don’t make natural sense and explain them away as myths of primitive people. These people end up making a god of their own design instead of the true God who designed us.

Being able to accept the Bible as the word of God is a sure sign of the indwelling Holy Spirit. As Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 1:18, “*For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God*.” To the nonbeliever, the cross doesn’t make any sense; neither does the trinity or the love and justice of God. The Bible doesn’t make sense to them.

So, briefly, what roles does the Holy Spirit fill in the plan of God? For one thing, power comes from the Holy Spirt. He is the one who gives life. In John 6:63 Jesus said, “*It is the Spirit who gives life*”. The Holy Spirit brough about the life of the man Jesus, as we are told in the first chapter of Luke. When Mary asked how she could be with child, the angel Gabriel responded, “*The Holy Spirit will come upon you*”. This meant that He would create the other half of the DNA required to form the baby in her womb and provide the spirit that gave life to Jesus.

In John chapter 3, Jesus speaks with Nicodemus. He explains to him that it is necessary to be born again. Jesus is referring to a spiritual birth; a birth that restores our spirit to God after it has been separated from Him by sin. In verse 6 Jesus says, “*that which has been born of the Spirit is spirit*”. The Holy Spirit creates life; He is the breath of physical life; He is the source of spiritual life.

The Holy Spirit is not only powerful to give life, but He gives power to God’s people to act in God’s service. We see this throughout the Old Testament and the New. In the Old Testament we read of God the Holy Spirit empowering Joshua to lead the people of Israel into the Promised Land and get them established. He raises up all the judges of Israel, gives David the ability to rule the vast people of Israel, He gives Solomon untold wisdom. The Holy Spirit certainly spoke through the Old Testament prophets.

In the New Covenant time, first off, He was given to Jesus without measure and Jesus was able to do miraculous things and offer the perfect sacrifice in accordance with the perfect will of God. The Holy Spirit is the one who gives ministries to the disciples of Jesus. In Acts 1:8, Jesus said to His disciples, “*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 as far as the remotest part of the earth*.” And in 1 Corinthians 12:11 we read, “*But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills*.” The Holy Spirit provides the gifts and ministries needed for the church, the body of Christ, to advance the Gospel and build the Kingdom.

Secondly, the Holy Spirit purifies the Christian. When we accept Jesus as our Saviour, the Holy Spirit dwells in us in order to sanctify us; in other words, to make us more like Jesus. And we know that Jesus is absolutely pure. The Holy Spirit is a restraining influence in all the world against sin; that’s why everyone doesn’t act as evil as they are capable of. But in the life of a Christian is that special gift of strength to resist sin and temptation. Not that we always succeed, but the ability is there, because Jesus broke the power of satan on the cross.

He gives us strength to resist, and He gives us the desire to be pleasing to God. As we work with Him, we are given all the fruits of the Spirit that are listed in Galatians. Again, these fruits are qualities of God. The more we have them, the more we are like Jesus.

Thirdly, the Holy Spirit gives revelation. As we read the Bible, God reveals Himself to us; this is the work of the Holy Spirit. Through the law given through Moses, the Old Testament writings He inspired, and the Old Testament prophets, the Holy Spirit has revealed what God is like and what He expects of His people. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit reveals God through the Scripture written by the apostles. Obviously, when He caused Jesus to live in Mary’s womb, we were given a perfect revelation of God.

In addition to revealing God, the Holy Spirit also gives revelation in the form of understanding. Without His help, we cannot understand or even believe the Scriptures. Paul speaks of the Scriptures in 1 Corinthians 2:8, “*the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory*”. The term “rulers” applies to both human rulers such as Herod and Pontius Pilate, and spiritual rulers such as satan. Many can read the Bible, but if the Holy Spirit does not illuminate the word, it can’t be understood.

As a word of encouragement, remember Luke 10:21. “*At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, “I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for doing so was well pleasing in Your sight*.” If we are willing to humbly listen to the Holy Spirit, He is happy to open up the word to us.

The Holy Spirit also reveals God’s will to us. This is most often done through the use of Scripture. But it is also done by a tugging on our heart and mind. Recognizing this pull by the Holy Spirit can take some practice; we must not be deceived by a misguidance from satan. We test our pull, first by Scripture; the Holy Spirit will never call us against His own word. Additionally, we pray and seek council from other mature Christians. We must be patient; God’s will is revealed in the Lord’s timing, not ours.

Lastly, the Holy Spirit brings unity. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples and they preached the Gospel. Over 3000 people turned to Christ that day and the church was born. We read in the book of Acts that the Christians shared with those in need and worked out any problems in Christian love. The church had unity.

Not long ago, we studied the book of Ephesians. One of the primary messages of that book was unity in the church. That is never unity at the expense of truth, but unity in the truth. Paul spoke of how Jesus tore down the dividing wall so that Jew and Gentile could become one people. In 2:21-22 Paul compares us to a building “*being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit*.” In 4:3 Paul admonishes us to be “*diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*.”

We read in the Bible of how each of us has our own ministry; each of us is given a gift or gifts that are to be used for the upbuilding of the church. We are given different gifts so that we can come together and form a whole. We become a body, the body of Christ, each of us a different but necessary part. The Holy Spirit helps us to maintain the unity we need to function as one body.

These are the main headings that might describe what the Holy Spirit does. He is happy to bring blessings on us as individuals and as a church. The thing is, He won’t force us to do anything. As Christians, we are called to cooperate with Him. He will add blessings or take them away according to how we respond to Him. This brings us to todays verse: *Do not quench the Spirit*. This is also brought up in Ephesians 4:30, *Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God*.

This is really heavy stuff and we need to take it very seriously. In the Old Testament times, the Holy Spirit could come and go. King Saul had the Holy Spirit when he first became king. But he was disobedient to God and the Holy Spirit left him. Worse still, an evil spirit was sent to torment him. In Psalm 51:11, David begged God: *Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me*.

In this time of the New Covenant, when we truly accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, we are given a gift: It is the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 1:13 Paul tells us, “*you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of the promise*”. It is so important to see that upon receiving Christ, we were sealed with the Holy Spirit, not by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit did not apply the seal, He is the seal. Once we have the Holy Spirit as a Christian, we will not lose Him; He will not be taken away from us.

Now, this is almighty God who has condescended to actually live within us. Remember that God is perfectly happy and complete without us; He doesn’t need us. But He has chosen to love us and once we are His that love is unending. Along with this, He has chosen to allow Himself to be hurt by us; He allows Himself to be grieved by what we do. That should give us pause. We can cause grief to the God who suffered and died in our place.

We have briefly covered the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit and touched on the ramifications of being indwelt by Him. There is much more to consider in this verse. Lord willing, next week we will consider more of the applications of blessings of the Holy Spirit and the consequences of grieving Him.

Prayer

Lord God, we thank You for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus told us that it was to our benefit for Him to leave so that the Spirit could come and guide us. We understand that as a man, Jesus was limited in where He could be and what He could do. But the Holy Spirit is unlimited; He can be everywhere and do all things.

How gracious and loving You are Lord, to allow Yourself to be so attached to us. We will grieve You during our lives, but Your care for us is so strong that You will accept that grief in order to have fellowship with us.

We praise You; we worship You; God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Creator of all things, who made all things good. You still rule over Your creation and will one day restore all things in Jesus Christ. Restore us and sanctify us, so that we may spend eternity with our Saviour; in the presence of our triune God.

In Jesus’ name we pray

Amen