

## The Jesus Series: RELY, Part 4

Sunday, November 4, 2018

### John 7:37-39

I want this idea - RELY - to be a **foundational value of this church**. If people were to ask, tell me about Agape and what Agape strongly values? I want reliance on the Spirit of Christ, to be at the forefront of our minds. I want that to be such a part of who we are corporately, that it spills over to us individually. And I want it to be such a part of who we are individually, that it informs who we are corporately.

#### Big Ideas in the first 3 weeks of RELY:

**Big Idea #1:** We will only seek help to the degree that we realize our need for it. We must have our eyes opened that Spiritual maturity is found as we come to TOTAL reliance on Christ.

**Big Idea #2:** When we do seek help, where does it come from? Everyone has longings in their soul. To find what we are reliant on to satisfy those longings, we ask What do I diligently pursue and passionately defend? We can trace our passions to find our object of reliance.

**Big Idea #3:** Jesus promises those diligently pursue Him in faith, will have the source of satisfaction placed in them. The very same Spirit that rested upon and anointed Jesus during His earthly ministry will now abide in us. Jesus actually teaches us that it is MORE advantageous that HE leave the earth and send the Spirit; than if he had remained here in physical form.

So next week, **Nov 11th**, we are planning to explore the topic of what it means to **Be Filled with the Spirit**, and then we will wrap up this little mini-series on **Nov 18th** speaking on the **Gifts of the Spirit and the call to Christian Service**. Today, I want us to look at some of the **specific works of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who believe**. This will not be an all inclusive list, but hopefully will greatly inform us.

*I can remember locking my keys in my vehicle one time. I probably have done it more than once, but I remember once. I locked my keys in my truck at the gas station, right in front of the pump. I was mortified that people were staring at me and that I was costing this gas station business. The most inconvenient place you can possibly imagine, at least in my mind. I was in my early 20's and so I did what I knew to do - I called my dad. I called my dad because I knew he loved me, I knew he would answer, and those things are important. But here is what was more important, I knew that he had **the ability and willingness** to help me. The intangible characteristics of how my dad related to me, love and faithfulness - were only truly beneficial to me because of the reality that he would tangibly send me help. And that is what my dad did - out of his great love for me he paid for and sent a helper, in this case a locksmith who showed up and unlocked my door.*

I desperately want us to grasp this: God loves us and He is faithful. When we call, He listens. And here is how we know He listens: He sends help. This help is not intangible. It is not just rhetoric or a figure of speech. It is not mystical. **This help is as real and as practical, as the locksmith who opened the door to my truck. It is a person** - The helper, God the Spirit. And our interactions with him come by faith AND through tangible experience. The Hebrew and Greek words for Spirit are very descriptive; one of the meanings is **wind, like a gale**. Jesus even references this in **John 3**, when he says **"The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit"**. Like a mighty gale we cannot see the Spirit, but we can feel Him and we can see his impact and effect.

John Piper, who is not apart of what people would call the modern pentecostal or charismatic movements; but rather a Baptist pastor said this in a sermon on the Holy Spirit: *Christianity is not merely an array of glorious ideas. It is not merely the performance of rituals and sacraments. It is the life-changing experience of the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ the Lord of the universe. it is right to stress the experiential reality of receiving the Spirit. When you read the New Testament honestly, you can't help but get the impression of a big difference from a lot of our contemporary Christian experience. For them the Holy Spirit was a fact of experience. For many Christians today it is (only) a fact of doctrine. (Sermon: How to Receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit - Piper 1984)*. I grew up in churches that pursued experience with God at the expense of knowledge of God. But it is possible to be out of synch in the other direction as well. I want us to be a place that unwaveringly pursues to know and worship God as He is. But that our knowledge of Him would not be the end, but a means to experience Him in ALL of the fullness that He allows.

So today as we look at **some** NT theological truths (facts) regarding the function of the Holy Spirit, I also want us to ponder how His work tangibly helps us as Christians, and **should** practically, radically change our lives.

**\*Let's pause here and ask for HIS help\***

First, **The Spirit breathes life into us**. Just as the Hebrew and Greek words for Spirit can mean **wind**, they can also mean **breath**. As we answer the call of Christ and come to Him believing that he alone can satisfy our spiritual thirst; that he alone can save us from wrongdoing against God and people; The Holy Spirit breathes spiritual life into us. HE makes us spiritually alive. This is the picture we have already looked at in **John 3:5-8**, Jesus said **"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God...that which is born of Spirit is spirit"**. The Holy Spirit opens our eyes to the glory of Christ. Before him we have no regard for the things of God, no desire for Jesus, no care for obedience, no love for His word. But the Spirit comes in great effectiveness and power. You and I cannot create love for God in ourselves; only the Spirit can. He breathes life into us, and everything changes.

The Spirit is our seal. Ephesians 1:13-14, In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it. This word seal carries with it the idea of setting one's mark on something to declare its yours; Like King's use to seal royal papers with a signet ring. To everyone, in this physical realm and the spiritual, God's declaration over you in Christ is **THIS ONE is mine**; And his seal is not a certificate or a mark; but rather His very spirit abiding in you.

The Spirit sustains us. I firmly believe in the perseverance of the Saints, because I believe in the faithfulness of God and in His promise to sustain those He has saved. The good work He began in you by His Spirit, He will bring to completion by that same Spirit (Paul taught this in Philippians 1). And here is what Peter said in his 1st letter: According to his great mercy he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance (Remember the Spirit is our guarantee of this inheritance) that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power (I believe there the effective work of the Holy Spirit) are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Peter 1:3-5).

*The Spirit is personally, deeply, intricately involved in every aspect of your salvation. He breathes life into you; He is your seal; and He sustains you. When you realize your need for salvation; when you doubt or fear your place before God even if you have confessed Christ many times, when you feel yourself far from Him, when you wonder if you can go on in godly living and you feel the strong pull of your old way of life - Cry out to God and **ASK for the Holy Spirit.***

The Spirit convicts us of sin (John 16:8). The spirit brings to us a godly sorrow, a sorrow for sin that does not condemn us, but that leads us to repentance. But He does not just convict us of sin, He positionally moves us from that sin toward holiness. You are in the process of being made Holy - apart from sin, dedication to the glory of God. The biblical word for this is sanctification. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6:11). The Spirit sanctifies us. It is HE who enables you to put to death sin (the deeds of the body) (Rom 8:13). And even furthermore, He molds you into the very Image of Christ which is the purpose of your salvation. That your life would be in increasing measure, less of you and more of Jesus. And we...are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Cor 3:18). Do not be deceived, the Christian life is radically different from the non Christian life.

*As you struggle with what is sin or what is not sin. As you find yourself mired in the deeds of the body; the familiar pull of old temptations. As you long for freedom from immorality of all kinds, and to truly make your life count for the glory of God by reflecting the image of Christ more and more - Cry out to Jesus and **ASK for the Holy Spirit.***

Next, the Spirit reveals to us the wisdom of God. 1 Cor 2. "For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person,

which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. Paul uses an analogy here - You have inner thoughts, and emotions; No one on earth can know what you are thinking, unless you choose to reveal it. Your thoughts are secret until you decide to share them, and then they are only known by those who you give them to. And Paul applies this to God. God has thoughts and wisdom that are secret and hidden. No one can know them and no one could understand them - except the Spirit of God. **And God has sent that same Spirit to us that we would know His wisdom.** Consider God's love for you here. And that **we can have the very mind of Christ.**

And **the Spirit** who knows the wisdom of God, and has the thoughts and mind of Christ - **teaches us.** Jesus said this to his disciples,. **'When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. 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'** (John 16:13). The Spirit teaches and **The Spirit guides us.** Over 65 times in the book of Acts, the Spirit is mentioned telling Christians to go here; preventing Christians from going there. The early church walked in His guidance. They did not initially move until he told them to. And then as they went, they sought him and listened for Him.

Think about how often we wonder, what is God's will? As if is this far off, out of reach ideal that we might be able to stumble into if God allows it. Yet - He has sent us the one who knows His thoughts, who has his wisdom, to teach us and to guide us.

*Do you desperately want to know what God thinks? Do you desire to follow HIS wisdom in a situation, IN LIFE, and not just live by your own plans? Do you want to grow in knowledge and learn deep things about God and His kingdom? Do you want to know His will for your life? - Cry out to God and **ASK for the Holy Spirit.***

**The Spirit strengthens and comforts us.**

**The Spirit prays for us in our weakness.** This is astounding. **The spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groaning too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:26-27).** And **The spirit tells us what to say to our persecutors. (Mark 13:11).** **Understand the personal nature of the Spirit in your life.** When you are drowning in stress, or a sin, or trouble, or trial and you do not even know what to pray for, the Spirit will intercede for you. Not in a generic fashion; but personally, according to God's will for you. When you find yourself attacked, criticized, or maligned And we do not know how to respond properly, the Spirit will tell us what to say.

*When you do not know what God's will is, and you just do not know what to pray and ask for regarding an outcome. When you are weak and in desperate need of strength - mentally, physically, spiritually. When you are depressed or anxious; and you need comfort. When you do*

*not know how to respond to someone who has hurt you - Cry out to Jesus and **ask for the Holy Spirit.***

The Spirit calls us for specific works of ministry and He equips us for those good works.

Romans 12, 1 Cor 12, 1 Peter 4. We will discuss this more in 2 weeks. But in Acts we see the Spirit setting apart people for ministry, and affirming that to others in the church. And then we see that the Spirit grants gifts - AS HE WILLS - to assist people in their calling. 1 Cor 12 says 'One Spirit brings a variety of gifts'. 1 Peter 4 says He brings one to all of us. If you are a believer, You have a spiritual gift (probably more than one). Those gifts are not to make you known, they are given so that you can serve others; they are given for the common good of the church. And as we move forward in our calling and using our gifts, The Spirit empowers us.

Consider again what we have already seen: This Spirit that was with Jesus throughout his ministry, now abides in believers. And listen to these words from Jesus in John 14. Truly, truly I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. (12-14). There is a lot we could talk about regarding this verse, and certainly the key indicator here is 'in my name'. This is not simply a phrase, as it is praying in a way consistent with the character and will of Christ. But what if we looked at the plain wording of this text and we chose to not simply explain it away. What if we accepted what is said here with great boldness? "Did Jesus really mean this? Do we really believe him? This is a rock-solid promise that the resources of heaven are ready and waiting for the people of God who desire to make much of him in this world. For the people who long to see his power at work and live to see his purposes accomplished, he will give us absolutely everything we need according to His presence alive in us. Yes we work, we plan, we organize and we create WHILE we fast, pray, and constantly confess our need for the provision of God. And we trust Jesus is ready to give us everything we ask for so we might make much of God in the world. Is your life today marked by a desperation for His Spirit?" - David Platt

We have seen today, just a **small sampling** of the function of the Spirit in our lives. The question before us, will we allow this to compel us to look to and trust in the Spirit and move further and deeper in RELIANCE on him? Or will we fail by continuing to trust in our experience, education, power, and wisdom? **First, have you been born again?** And next, Church - there is but one response for us. *Cry out to the Father and the Son and **ASK for the Holy Spirit.***