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Why We Believe What We Believe – Holy Spirit Part 2

[Easley:] When you place your trust in Christ and Christ alone for your salvation, the very person of the Holy Spirit indwelt you. And we live the Christian life so pathetically, myself included many times and we have all the resources of the Godhead three in your life and in my life.

[Lepine:] This is *inContext* with Michael Easley, I'm Bob Lepine. We're talking today, Michael, about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. I heard someone say whether there are four commands in the Scriptures related to the Holy Spirit. We are to be filled with the Spirit, we are to walk in the Spirit, we are not to grieve the Spirit and we are not to quench the Spirit. Did I get those right? Is that accurate?

[Easley:] Close enough. [Laughs]

[Lepine:] [Laughing] Well, you're going to take us through a number of phrases that are used in the Scriptures related to the Spirit's ministry -

[Easley:] Right.

[Lepine:] - in our life as we listen to part two of this message in the series "Why We Believe What We Believe." Looking today at the ministry of the Holy Spirit, let's go ahead and jump right in to it. Here is our teacher, Michael Easley.

[Easley:] Let me give you a number of concepts here that are sort of interrelated but not sequential. Number one is the identity. When we talk about the Holy Spirit, we don't speak of the Spirit as "It."

A few years ago when one of these sort of hybrid, Pentecostal, charismatic movements was really sweeping across the country, there were some writers talking about the Holy Spirit as "It" and it got everybody up in a real lather.

"You can't refer to the Holy Spirit as 'It.'"

Well, that's right. Let me give you two passages so that you'll understand why. In John 14:16 Jesus says:

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever."

That's a very important set of terms there. He didn't say that He will send the Spirit or that he will send it. He compares the "another helper" to Himself. And so this identity from Jesus' lips is a person, not an it. Also, in the gifting arena in 1 Corinthians 12:11 Paul writes the Spirit:

"distributing to each one individually just as He wills."

And so God's Holy Spirit, when a person comes to Christ, is endowed with a supernatural grace gift, *charismata*, grace gift and that comes from the Holy Spirit. So the idea is that the Holy Spirit is a person; as *He* distributes those gifts among the body of Christ.

Well, the ministry of the Spirit can be grouped in a lot of ways. Let me give you four as we conclude. Number one, indwelling. To be indwelt by the Holy Spirit is important in contrast to the Old Testament where the Spirit's dwelling was temporary and selective. David said, "Don't take Your Holy Spirit from me."

Saul obviously loses God's Holy Spirit. When Gideon would have God's Spirit or Sampson, the Spirit of God would come upon them. They would be able to selectively and temporarily do some pretty amazing accomplishments when they were indwelt. In Romans eight verse nine we read:

However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed [or we might say since] the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

The confirmation of eternal security in large measure is because when you and I trust Christ, the Holy Spirit indwells us. My experience means nothing in comparison to the knowledge of "the Spirit indwells me." Now why is that so important? Because even the best of us, on a good day when we really feel good about our walk with Christ, we can be turned on our heels very quickly.

On a bad day when things are going terrible and nobody loves us and we think we're all alone in the world and nobody understands our problems and we've got some terrible news about our health or someone we love or some horrible thing or we're just in sort of a blue mood, I mean, "Well, my experience tells me otherwise. My experience tells me God doesn't love me. My experience tells me 'Where is the Holy Spirit indwelling me?'"

Experience is a hard way to live theologically. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, according to the authority of Romans 8:9, His Spirit dwells in you.

When I pastored at a church I was always picky about how we share the gospel of children. A lot of times people talk about "accepting Jesus into your heart; inviting Jesus into your heart; why don't you ask Him into your heart?" Well, I think I know what all of those mean, but you don't find any of them in the Bible.

Now if you tell a concrete child "ask Jesus into your heart" he or she sees Jesus shrinking down, going into their chest cavity, opening a little door in their heart and sitting on a stool [Laughter] and Jesus is now happy in their heart. They say, "I have Jesus in my heart."

Now I know why we use that pedantic language, but you know what? I also believe Jesus Christ called kids to Him and they came to Him and He never used the words, "I need to go into your heart." [Laughter] "Except you come as these children" right?

What do you do? You believe. You trust. You put your faith in. You believe Jesus at His word. Why do we have to make the Gospel something it's not? Do we think we have to be clearer than the Gospel is? Do you think Jesus wasn't clear enough when He said, "Believe in Me? Put your faith in Me? Trust in Me?"

I think it's a lot more secure to trust in what Jesus and the New Testament say about salvation than how we sometimes are so creative with sharing in the Gospel. So when

my son, my daughters, when people trust Christ, I say, "The Holy Spirit has become your permanent roommate. He indwells you."

I don't use the stool and heart and chair imagery. I say, "He's come into your life."

I don't understand all that, but the passage says:

"Indeed [or since] the Spirit of God dwells in you."

Now the rest of the verse is sad.

"But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him."

In other words, if the Holy Spirit does not indwell the heart, [laughs] excuse me, if the Holy Spirit doesn't indwell us - that's a hard language to get rid of - if the Holy Spirit doesn't indwell us, we are not saved. That's another way of putting it. So the way you know you are saved may or may not have anything to do with your experience. It does have to do with trust in Christ at His word that the Holy Spirit indwells us.

The next word is very important; that's "sealing." Ephesians 1:13:

In Him, you also, [listen to this] after listening to the message of truth...

You see, the means by which the Gospel is communicated is right in that verse. *After listening*. So when you and I share Christ or open the Bible or teach, we are telling the people the message of truth, aren't we?

In him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed.

So this is great evangelism theology here.

"Okay, the message was delivered. You believed it. You embraced it." Then Paul says "You were sealed."

Sfragidzo, great Greek word.

You were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise

And the imagery of that seal is very fun to study. It authenticates a document. It ensures the content of the document. It's authentic. The only way you and I will find entry into heaven is that we have been sealed by God's Spirit. To authenticate, we put our trust in Christ and Christ alone.

This is why salvation is so rich because we do so little in understanding it and we do nothing to gain it. We embrace, we accept, we trust, we believe, we put our faith in, but He does all the work. Ephesians 4:30 reads:

We were sealed for the day of redemption.

All of these, of course, dovetail with the doctrine of eternal security and the assurance of

the believer.

So we have indwelling. We have sealing. Third we have baptizing. Now this is one that gets really fun. A lot of confusion and most of the division in the different denominations within Christianity will divide over what the baptism of the Holy Spirit means. There's confusion on a number of issues. There's confusion first of all in how you define "church." In certain traditions, if church begins with Abraham versus Pentecost, you're going to have a very confusing conversation about the baptizing role of the Spirit.

There is also confusion about what happened at Pentecost. Remember, the outsiders thought everyone was drunk. They are speaking, we might say, in their mother *dialektos*. That's a very important word in Acts chapter two. It's a known dialect. If I remember correctly there are thirteen *dialektos* mentioned in Acts chapter two, and they're all hearing the message, Parthians, Medes, they're all hearing their mother tongue.

So when you go to the UN and you see everywhere wearing headphones, the headphones come off and whoever is speaking, everyone is hearing. Not an interpretation of it. They are hearing an English speaker in French, German or whatever different language it is. That's how I understand that miracle that occurred and there was this cacophony apparently, so it sounded strange to those outside. It was a fascinating miracle that authenticates the Holy Spirit's fulfillment of Joel chapter two.

There's also confusion about the role of water baptism along with when the Holy Spirit comes, when the baptizing sequences occur, how many times you have to be baptized; two, three, four. Some even talking about a fire baptism and other manifestations that have to accompany this. There's further confusion about the filling of the Holy Spirit, so all these come together.

Let me give you a couple observations. Number one, no Old Testament believer is baptized the way Jesus announced it or the way it occurred in Acts two. In other words, if you want to have a consistent biblical theology on this baptism, you have to look at the whole and say, "What's different in the old and new covenants? What did God, through Christ, accomplish when He said His Spirit? In the High Priestly Prayer or the Upper Room Discourse in John fourteen through sixteen teaching the Holy Spirit's coming, what was He going to accomplish?"

And this baptism accomplishes a number of things I'll mention in a moment.

Secondly, we find no command or exhortation in the New Testament to be baptized with the Spirit. It's not an obedient response to as we might talk about water baptism. So that would seem odd if it was a requirement that the New Testament wouldn't enjoin us, "Be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Well you have been baptized. You have been identified with Him when you trusted Him.

Third, all believers after Pentecost are, I believe, indwelt with the Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:13:

For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, [right there Paul says it.] By one Spirit, we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Baptism then includes, in my opinion, the most important issues is incorporation and identification. Identification we saw when Jesus was baptized.

"This is My Son in whom I am well pleased."

Set the discussion of the mode of baptism aside; sprinkled, dipped, water, front, backwards, three or four times, in the name of Jesus only; just set that aside for a moment. What's really important is when God the Father says, "This is My Son in whom I am well pleased."

The Spirit is the identifying feature of that. So when I was a pastor I taught when you're baptized, we did immersion in our church. I thought that was a good depiction and accurate to the verb, but I said, "The point is not the mode. The point is you are identifying your self as a follower of Jesus Christ when you are baptized to demonstrate your obedience to His commands; the baptism of the Spirit, one Spirit all baptized into one body."

Secondly is the incorporation into the body and this of course is where we have some good tradition. When you're baptized in the local church, many churches say that is part of membership. It's hard to find a chapter and verse that says that you ought to be baptized to be a member, right? It really is hard if you're honest with the text. I can never do that. I've read some good attempts but they fall short.

But think about it conceptually for a moment. If the Holy Spirit indwells the believer and it's called baptism, and we have this thing called water baptism where we are obeying Christ in His command "baptize them in the name of" there seems to be some tandem they are in my theological mind that says, "This is an identification and incorporation with the body of Christ."

In other words, "I am one of you too. I've been baptized by the Spirit. I've water baptized to identify myself and incorporate with this body of Christ."

So there is some sense to the concept. I'm not saying a church has to have that to be a member, and I made a whole bunch of you start paying attention now.

Lastly is filling. Fifteen different times in the New Testament we have the Spirit filling, it's noted. There are two broad categories of this filling. The first, God's sovereignly fills a person for a specific time or a specific mission. We saw that in John the Baptist's life. We saw it in Elizabeth in Luke 1:41, and in Zacharias in Luke 1:67. There is a time when God with His Spirit endows a person, old and new, for a very specific mission.

Secondly, the filling occurs as it influences and controls the believer's life. The Holy Spirit influences us and controls our life. In Luke 4:1 Jesus is controlled by the Spirit. Acts chapter six verse three, the so-called first deacons, they were men full of the spirit. Every time I read the word "filled" in the English Bible, I substitute the word "controlled" in my head because I believe the word "filled" in the New Testament came closer to meaning "controlled" the way we use the term than the first century.

The key verse I like in this regard is Ephesians 5:18:

do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Holy Spirit.

If you were to take enough alcohol in a glass and consume enough of it, you've taken an external substance that you've consumed, and before long that alcohol will control you. That's why quiet, demure men will become pugnacious and fighters if they're drunk because this substance externally that they consumed controlled them and they act in a way they wouldn't act if they were sober. It's a very good corollary to the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is an external person who when you believe on Him, He internally dwells you and the question then is, "Do I allow Him to control my life, or do I control my life?" And that is where the whole issue of the spiritual life begins, men and women, that when you trusted Jesus Christ, you were indwelt by His Spirit whether you knew it or not. But I think the most applicable part of this is are we submitting to, are we yielded to, I like Packer's phrase are we "in step with" the One who's come along side to help us, the *parakaleo*?

The filling of the Spirit describes the empowering of God. Now I know, again, every illustration at best stands on three legs; some only on two legs, but I really appreciated an illustration Bill Bright used years ago. I've never been able to improve on it. Let me close with his story here.

"Sally was almost penniless. Her husband Jeb had died years before. His life insurance paid off the mortgage, but that was about it. The house was deteriorating around her. The car had been junk long ago because she couldn't keep up with the repairs and insurance. She got by on a few dollars each week for groceries. Her electricity was taken away. She decided to live by a Coleman stove and candlelight. Sally rarely left home. How could she when everything cost money?

"Coffee was \$.85, even with her senior citizen's discount. A movie was three dollars. The walk to the park required shoes and her remaining pair were threadbare. Day after day Sally was at home crushed. She sat in her rocking chair.

"Life was supposed to be better than this,' she thought. 'It started out so great; so full of promise but that's all passed by now.'

"This is the way she lived for years, lonely and defeated until one day an old acquaintance called her. Miriam was heartbroken when she saw Sally's condition. She decided to stay a few days and help Sally by straightening up the house. In the course of helping her old friend, Miriam made a discovery. Tucked away in a file drawer of Jeb's roll top desk was a folder that said "For Sally." Inside Miriam found an old bank savings book. The last entry had been made twenty-two years earlier, just before Jeb had died. The bankbook had a balance of \$87,000, but that wasn't all.

"The folder also contained a yellow envelope sealed and inscribed with Jeb's handwriting;

"To Sally with love forever.'

"Do you know what this is?' Miriam asked.

"Sally searched her mind. She remembered when her husband was dying the tender

words that passed between them. Then the memory hit her. In the grief and the heartache of those days he said, 'When I'm gone, there's something important in my desk.' [Laughter]

"Now Miriam watched Sally open the envelope. Carefully inside there was a single folded page and a key. It read,

"My dearest love, my time with you draws short but I want you to know I've provided everything you will need once I'm gone. Check the bankbook in the file then take the key to the bank with you. In loving remembrance. Enjoy life to the full. With love forever, Jeb.'

"Sally and Miriam discovered the key was for the safety deposit box at the bank. They lifted the metal lid of the box. Their eyes widened at several bundles of cash, \$32,000 in all; also a pile of stock certificates and three corders of rare coins.

"That afternoon the broker informed them that the stock was worth \$550,000 on the current market. The coin dealer appraised the coins at \$47,000. The bank calculated twenty-two years of interest on the savings account. All told Sally was worth \$883,000 and she'd been living in misery and despair."

Now, a little bit over the top of an illustration, I will agree, [Laughter] but is it really? When you placed your trust in Christ and Christ alone for your salvation, the very person of the Holy Spirit indwelt you. And we live the Christian life so pathetically, myself included many times. And we have all the resources of the Godhead three in your life and in my life. Rest. Don't stress so much. Don't work so hard. Find the place where you work and rest. Use the resources of the very Spirit of God who indwelt every one of us who believes in Him. After all, He is a person and He's God.

[Lepine:] Michael, when we think about living our lives under the control of the Holy Spirit, what does it really mean to be controlled by God's Spirit?

[Easley:] I have impulses and fairly quick responses to things and if I go into a situation whether it's parenting or responding to Cindy or even in a meeting, I can pretty quickly, you know, snap into a mode. For me it's a pause, -

[Lepine:] Hmm.

[Easley:] - it is a prayer and it is asking God, "Will You control me in this situation right now because my natural impulses are probably not the best." And especially when we feel that sort of blood rising up and righteous indignation or correction or anger, we're not being controlled by the Spirit of God.

[Lepine:] There is a parallel passage in the Scripture where talks about in one place Paul says, "Be filled with the Holy Spirit and that will result in speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."

In another place it says that we're to, "let the word of Christ dwell in us richly and that will result in speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."

It's not the same thing. Letting the Word of Christ dwell in you richly is not the same as

being filled with the Spirit, but there is a parallel there. There is a connection between being full of the Word and being full of the Spirit and if folks are interested in finding out more about the ministry the Holy Spirit, we want to point them to our website incontextradio.org.

There you will find information about a resource we have put together; a study guide that accompanies the series we've been looking at of "Why We Believe What We Believe." And a companion to the study guide is the *Moody Handbook of Theology* which is a wonderful resource to help give you a biblically grounded understanding of some of these important issues.

Again, all the details are on our website, incontextradio.org, and Michael, we're encouraging our listeners to make note of that website address. Bookmark it in your web browser and check back with us on a regular basis because there are some changes taking place at *inContext*. In another couple of weeks it's likely that they're not going to hear this program at this time on their local Christian radio station.

[Easley:] Right. Right. Moody's making some changes and they have graciously allowed us to take the name and the program elsewhere. So we'll be on some different broadcasting on different stations. We'll also be on the Internet and we'll have a little more Internet activity; some other options there for downloading things; some books, some light papers that we hope to produce and maybe even a little blog and a little argument with Bob Lepine and Michael Easley once in a while.

[Lepine:] [Laughs]

[Easley:] So it could be fun.

[Lepine:] Let me encourage folks to stay connected with us through the website incontextradio.org. Let me invite you back tomorrow when we're going to have our Friday conversation with our friend Charlie Boyd and talk about communicating the Gospel to children. That's tomorrow on *inContext* with Michael Easley.