

1. There are Those Who Call Themselves Christians, but They are Not
  - a. Called themselves ‘disciples’
    - i. They appeared to be disciples, yet they did not consider themselves united to Jesus, but merely to John’s message
    - ii. As Paul met them, he assumed that they were disciples, most likely because they were calling themselves such
  - b. There ARE reasons to doubt the genuine salvation of a professing disciple
    - i. Note that Paul learns something from them which makes him question the veracity of their so-called “faith”
      1. Though they must have labelled themselves “disciples”, and probably had similar language of repentance, or kingdom of God, or forgiveness, etc.
      2. There were some indicators that their faith was not in Jesus and thus they were not disciples of Jesus and they also needed to believe in Jesus and be saved
    - ii. The Scripture is clear that there are certain indicators that one has certainly been saved, and these indicators have to do with the work of the Holy Spirit in the affections of the heart and the pursuit of one’s behaviors: HOLINESS
      1. Without such indicators, one must question whether he or she is truly saved and accepted by God
      2. Obedience is one such indicator:
        - a. Jesus taught the relationship between His Spirit, love for Him, and our union with Him and the Father are all connected
          - i. John 14:15-21
      3. John also gave three such indicators in his first letter:
        - a. True **obedience** – 2:4
        - b. True **dependence upon Jesus as our only Savior**, the Son of God, the Christ, particular dependence upon a particular Jesus – 2:1-2,22
          - i. Not a vague sense of “God” or a vague “Jesus”, as if anything which bears His name is of Him
          - ii. Though it is not politically correct to call something a deception and a lie and a danger, there are cults in this world which bear the name of Jesus, or the Holy Spirit, or the Father, but which are not of Him
            1. Church of Latter-Day Saints (Mormonism), Jehovah’s Witness, Christian Science, the New Apostolic Reformation (Bethel Church and Music from Redding; Kansas City Prophets; International House of Prayer, etc.)
            2. These all claim to be Christian, to know Christ Jesus, but seriously deviate in their understanding of central tenets of Jesus’ teaching about Himself, about the nature of our problem, about the nature and purpose of the Church, etc.
          - iii. “Which Jesus?” really matters!
      - c. Marked by **love for one another** – 1:7; 3:10-11
2. Those Who Belong to Jesus Reveal Fruit of the Holy Spirit of God
  - a. Something was lacking regarding the Holy Spirit that led Paul to conclude that their faith was lacking
  - b. Therefore, he asks them if they had received the Holy Spirit *when they believed*
    - i. There is an assumption that the Spirit is given to believers at the point of time when they entrust themselves to Jesus
    - ii. Paul does not assume that these men are Christians, because he presumes that the Spirit is given when a person believes in Christ Jesus
      1. “You must be born of water and the Spirit to see or enter the kingdom of God” (John 3)
        - a. Remember Nicodemus had a lot of religion, but no Holy Spirit and thus no saving faith
          - i. He ‘believed’ in Jesus as a good teacher, a sage, a healer, and a prophet
          - ii. Yet, that was not believing in the ‘real Jesus’...yet

2. “you, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, this person does not belong to Him.” (Rom 8:9)
- iii. Without the Spirit of God dwelling in us, we are still dead.
  1. In spiritual terms, what Jesus is saying that in the same way in which you born, not due to your power or your work or your suffering or your labor, but someone else’s, and which ushered you into a new existence which you were completely unprepared for and remained in utter dependence – so you are born of the Spirit
- c. Though they had “believed”, Paul knew that genuine faith always comes with some fruit
  - i. James said that a “faith” without works is dead, not living
  - ii. So, there is a type of “faith” which is not true faith at all, not saving faith, not living faith, because it is devoid of the Holy Spirit who produces life
  - iii. We saw this back in chapter 8 with Simon the Magician, who is said to have “believed”
- d. I have to think that Paul knew the answer to this, but he leads them down the path to put their faith in Jesus by using a Socratic method of asking basic questions about beliefs and values and the consequences of those beliefs and values
  - i. What observance would lead Paul to conclude that they had not received the Holy Spirit?
    1. If there is no reception of the Holy Spirit, an understanding of this ‘Spirit of Holiness’, then there is no belonging to Christ Jesus, no true faith, and no true salvation
    2. He must have seen a lack of fruit: a tree is known by its fruit.
      - a. Lack of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, generosity, self-mastery, etc.
      - b. The fact that the Spirit is called “holy” may indicate that there was a general lack of concern for holiness – just a presumption on a one-time baptism for forgiveness of sins, but not a pursuit of holiness through dependence upon Jesus?
    3. However, the greatest acknowledge of the Holy Spirit is the exaltation and confession that Jesus is the Son of God by whom we are made acceptable to God
      - a. John 14:20 – the sending and receiving of the Spirit comes with an understanding of our union with Jesus and therefore with God
      - b. 1 John 4:13-14 – to receive the Spirit is to “testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world”
      - c. 1 John 4:15 – “whomever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God resides in Him”
        - i. Therefore, these so-called disciples did not hold Jesus in such esteem
        - ii. They may have revered Jesus, even tried to emulate him, but they did not identify with Him completely (baptism)
    4. We see this lack of identification with Jesus because they seem unfamiliar with Him and His work of baptizing with the Holy Spirit
      - a. This also gives us an understanding of what ‘tongues and prophesying’ contextually mean: boasting in Jesus!!
- e. Their answer is very revealing: “No, we haven’t even heard of a Holy Spirit!”
  - i. John the Baptist actually did teach concerning the Holy Spirit
    1. Matt 3:11 – “one coming after me will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire...”
    2. John 1:33-34 – “I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and have now testified that this is the Son of God.”
  - ii. This shows us that these ‘disciples’ did not even know John’s teaching very well and thus should be used as examples of what John’s ministry actually was
    1. Rather, they are examples of those who take the name of something, but who believe and practice unorthodox things, inconsistent with the name of which they take
    2. This is why Paul begins with correcting their understanding of John’s teaching
      - a. “John baptized with a baptism for repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is: Jesus.” (v4)
  - iii. Jesus explains how He fulfills what John had merely paved the way for, in John 7:37-39

1. "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup> Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" <sup>39</sup> Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."
  - iv. Thus, it appears that these men missed the centrality of Jesus and His glorification, seeing Jesus as another prophet or teacher or sage, but not as one who had been glorified through His substitutionary death in our place and resurrection for our life and exaltation to the right hand of God to advocate for us
  - f. The lack of the Spirit's regenerating work means that their baptism was not an identification with Jesus
    - i. Since there was not any evidence that they were born again, then Paul inquires what union their baptism signified
    - ii. Their baptism indicated the object of their faith, and therefore its insufficiency
      1. That is, they identified with John, not with Jesus
      2. They identified with religious repentance and their own works, not the works of Christ Jesus as their means of being made right with God
3. Saving Faith Unites Us to Jesus and is Evidenced by New *Affections* for Him as Your Savior and Lord
    - a. If we are not united to Jesus by His Spirit, then we are not united to Jesus – we are on the other side, the enemy side, of God
      - i. The Scripture speaks of no such thing as a partial Christian or half-way Christian.
      - ii. "You are either a Christian, or you are not a Christian. You are either dead or alive, born or not born."
    - b. The fruit of the Spirit is evidenced by new attitudes and affections for Jesus
      - i. This is why the Holy Spirit is the center of questioning here: our union with Christ Jesus, received by faith, is secured and evidenced by the work of the Holy Spirit *to love Jesus more than anything else*, and this changes the way that we live
        1. The fruit of the Spirit is evidenced by this set of new attitudes and affections
          - a. "If you love me, you will keep my commands"
        - ii. Love makes you do *everything* differently
          1. Just watch how young people change from friends to "something more"!
          2. All of a sudden she is cleaning up the family room, putting on mom's perfume, checking her makeup and the wrinkles in her shirt
          3. Love changes your actions, not because it must, but because it wants to please the one whom it loves
            - a. When the Spirit of God is given, he changes the object of our love to Christ Jesus and so we alter our behavior in order to please the one whom we love
        - iii. There is all the difference in the world between external coercion to obedience, the Christianese chatter, and the *expulsive power of a new affection* set within our hearts
          1. When the Spirit makes a person new, the world comes alive in a new way
          2. The sermons which felt so long and boring feel shorter and more interesting
          3. The songs which seemed so corny and distant become soul-shaking and knee-buckling
          4. The enemy which seemed so terrifying and fearsome becomes lost and needy and helpless so that I labor to see him healed in spirit
          5. The work which seemed so boring and repetitive and mind-numbing becomes the very strings which the fingers of my soul joyfully pluck to serenade my Redeemer
      - iv. In fact, the baptism commanded by Jesus, in contrast to John, is to be done "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:18-20)
        1. God unites us to His Son like a Bride to a Groom
        2. God unites us legally to the work of Jesus (we died and were raised with Him by faith), and the Spirit of God unites us experientially to Him (cries with our spirits, 'abba!')
        3. To truly belong to God means to identify with Jesus so greatly that His purposes become your purposes just as His death becomes your death and His life your life
          - a. Do you identify with Jesus like this?
            - i. Romans 8:17 – "we are heirs provided that we suffer with him, that we might be glorified with him"
          - b. Are His purposes for life your purposes for life? Are you living like that?
            - i. Are you forgiving as He has forgiven you?

- ii. Are you patient with others as He is patient with you?
      - iii. Are you gentle with others as He is gentle with you?
      - iv. Are you growing in these areas, like fruit on the Spirit's tree?
    - 4. Therefore, they are, upon believing in Jesus, then baptized in the Spirit, but rather baptized "in the name of Jesus"
      - a. They identify with Him, and their baptism does not result in their baptism in the Spirit, but rather the second act of Paul conveys this
  - v. The act of "laying on of hands" is the act of identifying with another, or being united together, and it is at this act that the Holy Spirit falls upon them demonstrably
    - 1. Numbers 8:10-14 – the identification of the Levites as representatives of the whole nation of Israel (united as one and representative of all); the identification of the bull with the Levites as atoning sacrifices (the laying hands on the bull was representative that they were bearing the sins of all the Levites)
    - 2. Therefore, when Paul laid his hands upon these Ephesian men, they were being identified with Jesus and His entire Church who are also united to Him, all the redeemed who have believed, and then were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise
    - 3. Ephesians 2:11-16
  - c. Pentecost now catches up to those 'at the ends of the earth'
    - i. Like the disciples in Samaria, the gift of the Holy Spirit was evidenced like at Pentecost, when the representative of the church was present to express and demonstrate that the new believers are equal participants as all others who have believed in Jesus (Jew and Gentile; Jerusalem-Samaria-Caesarea-Ephesus; Jerusalem-Judea-Samaria-ends of the earth)
      - 1. Pentecost in Jerusalem and Judea – Jewish believers in Judean land evidenced by speaking in tongues and prophesying
      - 2. Pentecost in Samaria – partial Jews in Judean land evidenced by the same signs
      - 3. Pentecost in Caesarea – Gentile believers in Judean land evidenced by same signs
      - 4. Pentecost in Ephesus – Gentile believers in Gentile lands evidenced by same signs
    - ii. And all the signs boasted of God's glorious work in and through Jesus the anointed Savior of the world
    - iii. Such manifestations of the Spirit are particular, rare, and ALWAYS corporate (never individual) and ALWAYS total (never partial)
      - 1. That is, the Spirit fell in such a way upon the WHOLE group, not part of the group
      - 2. Because this is a particular sign for a particular people, not a normative evidence of the Spirit

Don't you think it strange that Luke says "about" 12 men were there? That is a strange number to 'round' to? Luke is using his language to symbolize the full inclusion of these Ephesian believers as the Church. 12 tribes who are the people of God, 12 apostles who were the foundation of the Church of God. Therefore, even Greeks in Gentile lands receive the same promise from the Father (Acts 1:9).

God justifies the ungodly. Jesus came to save sinners. There is nobody too far away from Him to be saved, nobody too far gone, too ungodly. In fact, the only requirement of character to be justified is to be ungodly. Could that describe you? That label is yours, just as much as if you labelled the ocean 'wet.' Just like these Ephesians, you, too, can be saved and be united to Jesus as your Savior today. Entrust yourself to Him to save you from God's righteous wrath against your ungodliness.

How can Jesus do this? We are baptized in His Spirit because He was baptized into ours: Luke 12:49-50