

Whereas: A Reflection on the Spirit of Truth

Justin Ryan Boyer – Cornerstone Christian Fellowship – May 22nd, 2011

A friend once made an insightful Trinitarian observation about how the world generally tries to resist



God. She saw that in the Old Testament God's people turned away and ignored the Father; she saw how in Jesus' day the Son was mocked and betrayed; she saw how now today, as would be par for the course, the Church down plays the work and person of the Holy Spirit. As we speak about the work of the Spirit, let us not forget that He is a distinct person of the Trinity and not simply some impersonal force. He is mysterious and His work and candor within the Trinity is the humblest, always looking to glorify the Father or Son. We see in certain places in Scripture where the Trinity interacts with each other, such as Jesus' baptism. Here God the Spirit descends upon the God the Son, whom God the Father identifies as His beloved, in whom He is well pleased. Make no mistake, the Holy Spirit is God. Peter makes

this connection in the Book of Acts as he confronts Ananias and Sapphira about their sin, saying that by lying to the Holy Spirit, they have lied to God.

We begin this reflection on the Spirit by looking at a story of the Son, specifically of Christ's temptation in the wilderness – as we go through the narrative, we'll also be paralleling it to the Fall in Genesis 3, seeing whereas mankind relinquished their God given authority, Christ conquered, doing so through trust in the Father and by following the Spirit.

Here, hungry and weak after 40 days of fasting, the devil comes and tries to entice Jesus to *prove Himself* in three different ways, all of which Jesus overcame. First, Satan goes after the desires of the flesh saying that Jesus should turn stones into bread. Whereas our parents in the garden of Eden saw that the fruit on the tree was good for food, Jesus knew that it was not bread alone that we live by, but the very Word of God. Then the devil shows Jesus all the glorious kingdoms and lures Him with the pride of possessions, if only Jesus would worship the Snake. Whereas Adam and Eve desired to be made wise through disobedience, Jesus knew real wisdom was the fear of the



Lord and that there was only One to be worshipped and served. Finally, the devil tempts with the desires of the eyes, encouraging Jesus to throw Himself down off a high place, for God will surely save Him and hence all will see then who Jesus really is. But whereas our spiritual lineage saw that the forbidden fruit was a delight to the eyes, Jesus knew that true fulfillment came only through trusting the Father's heart and not putting the Lord God to the test. The failure and fall of the human race in the Garden is now starting to be redeemed and renewed by the second Adam, Jesus, through His triumph in the wilderness.

So how does this show the work of the Spirit? As we look at the opening verses in the temptation story and mesh the Matthew and Luke accounts, we see that the Spirit is the background character that is with Jesus in His trials.

Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit ----- *filled*
Jesus was led up by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness ----- *led to (into) a place*
Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit in the wilderness ----- *led in that place*

There is similar Greek phraseology in the Spirit leading Jesus into the wilderness and the devil leading Jesus to see the kingdoms of the world. But the intention behind it couldn't be more contrary. Whereas, in this case, the devil wanted to lead in order to destroy, the Spirit leads in order to glorify. Also, one of Satan's strategies in the wilderness was to question Jesus' sonship. "If You are the Son of God, then..." But where Satan wants to exploit Jesus' sonship and orphanize saints, the Holy Spirit works to affirm and confirm sonship.

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. [Roman 8]

The Accuser's work and The Spirit's work are in complete opposition to each other. Satan is the father of lies, whereas the third person of the Trinity is the Spirit of Truth. *Truth*, not lies... *truth*, not "rightness". What I mean by rightness is "truth" divorced from meaning or context or devoid of heart and love. You see, in one of the devil's temptations he starts using Jesus' language, trying to twist words for his own usage. Jesus would respond to the devil's attacks with, "it is written..." and thwart him off, so Satan then uses "for it is written..." as a manipulative trap. A similar method of deception was used by the snake in the garden with Adam and Eve when he asked "Did God really say..."; the Pharisee's often fell into the cult of rightness where their answers were correct but meant nothing. But Jesus, the way and the truth and the life, filled with the Spirit of Truth ruins the devil's mishandling.

Pastor Tim last week had us ruminate on receiving the Spirit and that to be filled we must be emptied. Today as Pastor Matt teaches on what it means to be led by the Spirit, consider the following. Being guided by the Spirit of Truth is not just an intellectual exercise. God cares about the whole of His creation: body, soul, and spirit. There is an experiential component to following the Spirit, such as is exemplified with the Temptation of Christ.

It's interesting that the Spirit led Jesus into the *wilderness*, into a place of attack and hardship. Too often we think that if the Spirit is leading us, He's leading us into "easy money." But that's just not always the case, in fact the places the Spirit may lead us into will be valley's of deep darkness, of self-denial, of discomfort physically, emotionally and socially. Luckily, the Spirit is the Comforter and even though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we are able to fear no evil, for He is with us. Just as the heart of the Good Shepherd from Psalm 23 is ultimately good towards His flock, so also is the Spirit as He leads us in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

The Spirit fills. The Spirit leads us into places. The Spirit leads us in those places.

Will we follow? Will we move? Will we listen as the Spirit of Truth reveals to us the Father? Will we worship as He glorifies the Son? Will we lay down selfish lies, putting our faith and trust in the Spirit as He guides us in our inner lives, in our families, in our communities, even to the ends of the earth?

We once were children of disobedience, whereas now, because of the Father's mercy and Christ's grace, we are being built together by the Holy Spirit into a dwelling place for God.

After 40 Days

Lori Chaffer

You set before me all my dreams
And vowed to give me everything
You said I did not have to choose
But Father he would disagree with you

You took Him to a mountaintop
And showed Him all the world
"To you I will give all you see
If you will bow and worship me as king"

The works that you spoke then
Were vows to be broken
And I will not hold on to these

Your promises your promises
Have only left me all alone
And selfish dreams your selfish dreams
I will no longer listen to them

. R E F E R E N C E S .

Matthew 4	John 15
Luke 4	John 16
Psalm 24	Genesis 3
Ephesians 2	1 John 2
Isaiah 11	Romans 8
Matthew 3	John 8
Acts 6	John 14