

Community Church Huddersfield
Roots of Restoration Notes

Session 6 - Life in the Spirit

1. We are concerned not just with how the Church is built but what it is filled with

- a. We have focused on the pattern or structure related to the building of the church but we must be concerned not just with how the church is built but what it is filled with.
- b. We need to be not just concerned with the *purpose* and the plan of God, but with the *life* of God among his people.
- c. The church is meant to be filled with God's presence by God's Spirit.

In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

(Ephesians 2:21-22)

- d. The church is essentially a s/Spiritual community.

2. Some Personal Testimony

- a. I came from an evangelical background, before I was baptised in the Spirit
- b. I could see and feel the reality of the Spirit's work but having to struggle with my own intellectual resistance and fear of extremes of 'charismania.'
- c. Many people miss out on life in the Spirit because of the over-focus on the mind, and the fear of or reaction to silly extremes.
- d. Two main things have helped me overcome these:
 - i. The experience of Spirit-filled worship
 - ii. Truly spiritual leaders who have modelled life in the Spirit
- e. Now I am absolutely committed to life in the Spirit but:
 - i. I want the real thing not a charismatic substitute
 - ii. I want to test everything but not reject anything of the Spirit just because it doesn't fit into my preconceptions.

3. A Little Church History

- a. God has been restoring different truths over the centuries
 - i. Protestant Reformation – Justification by faith, the priesthood of all believers and the authority of Scripture
 - ii. Radical Reformation/Baptist – believers' baptism
 - iii. Evangelical Revival – new birth, the mission to the nations
 - iv. Brethren – the nature of the church

- b. Through the holiness, Pentecostal and charismatic movements, God has been restoring
 - i. Baptism in the Spirit
 - ii. Gifts of the Spirit
 - iii. Healing and miracles
 - iv. Life in the Spirit
 - v. The life of Faith
- c. I am not saying that such things were not there before in church history, but God has been bringing it to the forefront.
- d. Incidentally, I believe the key things that God has been restoring through the restoration movement and in this generation are:
 - i. The nature of the Kingdom
 - ii. The ministry of apostles and prophets
 - iii. Grace – being liberated from religious legalism
 - iv. Continuing our understanding on the nature and the mission of the church

4. A Key Vision for Community Church:

- a. Ezekiel 47: 1-12
- b. There is a River!
 - i. life of the Spirit coming from S/spiritual worship
 - ii. It will impact and influence the communities around us
 - iii. It will produce new congregations as places to fish from
- c. All this comes from a river flowing from the throne
- d. Since then God has also spoke to us about 7 key areas and about congregations being more than just meetings

5. Basic teachings about the work of the Spirit that I teach elsewhere and won't focus on here but that we need to be sure we understand:

- a. To be born of the Spirit - regeneration
- b. To be baptised in the Spirit
- c. To be continually filled with the Spirit
- d. To be equipped by the Spirit for service and mission
- e. To be led by the Spirit
- f. The gift of the Spirit
- g. The fruit of the Spirit
- h. The Spirit as guide and helper (paraclete)
- i. The work of the Spirit in conviction, illumination, sanctification etc.

6. The Holy Spirit and the Kingdom of God

- a. The Kingdom of God is not about religious rules but about life in the Holy Spirit.

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,

(Romans 14:17)

- b. The Holy Spirit is the one who makes the Kingdom real to us – he gives us a foretaste of the Age to Come.
 - i. Firstfruits (*aparche* – Rom.8:23)
 - ii. Deposit (*arrabon* - 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph.1:14)¹
- c. Therefore the Holy Spirit is not just about our individual experiences but about the fulfilment of the purposes of God in the earth,²

7. The Holy Spirit and Community

- a. Life in the Spirit is not just about individual experiences. The Holy Spirit creates community.
- b. We are baptised by the Spirit into the body

They were all baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ

(1 Cor.10:2-4)

For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

(1 Cor.12:13)

- c. We have to therefore beware individualism and realise that God wants a community of the Spirit.³

8. Worship in Spirit and Truth

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

(John 4:23-24)

¹ ..the Spirit was both the certain evidence that the future had dawned, and the absolute guarantee of its final consummation. (Gordon Fee, *Paul, the Spirit and the People of God*, p.54)

² We've enjoyed his power, His presence and His illumination, but we've not seen the cosmic, universal, historical, eschatological significance of the movement of the Holy Spirit in the earth. (Ern Baxter, *The King, the Kingdom and the Holy Spirit*, p.37)

³ The dynamic of the early church was not in the Spirit-filled individualism but in Spirit-filled corporeity.....the unique feature of Pentecost was not 120 believers filled with the Spirit, but those Spirit-filled believers being fused into a functioning body, whose mighty corporate ministry was to turn the world upside down....The world had seen Spirit-filled persons before but never a Spirit-filled body. (Wallis, *The Radical Christian*, pp.71-72)

- a. The set patterns of OT religious worship (liturgical) have given way in the new covenant to the greater reality of worship in the Spirit
 - i. Truth is primarily referring to the reality as opposed to the shadow – see the book of Hebrews.
- b. It springs from a spiritual, inner revelation and knowledge of God (see John 4:22)
- c. It springs up as an uninhibited overflow of the heart in response to this revelation of God – spontaneous, free, various, creative, given expression to in a whole range of physical ways.
- d. It can never be limited by the prepared, the staged, the routine, the professional etc.⁴
- e. It will make us of the mind but it won't be limited by the mind.

9. Where Spirit is there is Freedom

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom

(2 Cor.3:17)

- a. This means freedom in our whole lives from anything that would bind or oppress us.
- b. It is freedom to enjoy life to the full and to become all that God called us to become.
 - i. Life in the Spirit is the only way to live a successful, productive and full life – see Romans 8

Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

(Rom.8: 2)

But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

(Rom.7:6)

- ii. The Spirit confirms and gives inner testimony to the fact that you are a son and heir of God and so free

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of

⁴ God is not interested in accommodating his working to our background, our culture, our temperament, or our ideas of decorum and respectability. (Arthur Wallis, p.67)

God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

(Rom.8:15-17)

- c. But it is also freedom to worship God with complete abandon and without any inhibition.
- d. With that freedom also comes sensitivity – we follow God’s Spirit and we flow together in the Spirit.
- e. But our worship is not meant to be limited in any way. The only way it is limited is by our natural bodies.
 - i. The Spirit within you is not meant to be contained. That’s why he longs for your resurrection body.⁵

10. The Spirit blows where he wants

The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.

(John 3:8)

- a. Although you may have a sense of the direction of where God is going you can never limit and restrict the Holy Spirit and he’s always full of surprises.
- b. This will also therefore characterise those born of the Spirit
 - i. Not to be used as an excuse for being unreliable or uncommitted.
 - ii. It means that life can be a little scary at times – but exciting.
- c. It means that you have to stay open and sensitive to the Spirit
- d. This is true on our personal lives and in our corporate gatherings

11. Some further reflections:

a. Spirit and Spiritual Authority

- i. Some charismatics have got lost in independence and zany free-for-alls because they don’t realise importance of spiritual authority
- ii. There is great freedom in our meetings but there is also direction and godly rule
- iii. Freedom works best when there is the security of anointed authority

⁵ So inside you right now is the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead, the same Spirit that created the world, the same Spirit who spoke through the prophets, and the same Spirit who, when the Lord comes, will suddenly change you. That Spirit of immortality and resurrection is in you. Every once in a while when you’re worshipping, the Holy Spirit gets so excited in you that you feel you could fly, but your body says, “Not yet.” (Baxter, p.44)

b. *Recognising The Anointing*

- i. The selection of leaders and different ministries is not by personality, democracy, time-serving, sentiment etc. but by the anointing of the Spirit (See Numbers 27:12-23)
- ii. The key mark of the ministers of the new covenant is that they minister in the Spirit (2 Cor.3:7-18)

c. *Charisma and Character*

- i. I used to think that you had to be really holy for the Spirit to fill you or use you.
- ii. Then I read about Samson and the Corinthian church!
- iii. We need to learn to discern:
 - good that God can still use you while still working on your character
 - bad if you think charisma reveals character
- iv. Don't quench the Spirit but test all things and hold on to the good. (1 Thess.5:19-22)

d. *The Spirit and the Mind*

- i. One of the main ways in which people can miss the Spirit is by getting too locked up in their minds and trying to work everything out with the mind
- ii. This is not to encourage anti-intellectualism but we must recognise the limits and the place/role of the mind
- iii. The natural mind cannot understand the things of the Spirit (1 Cor.2:14)
- iv. The Spirit will not be contained by anything, including our tiny minds

e. *Resistance to the Spirit*

- i. Intellectualism is one way in which the Spirit is resisted
- ii. But there are other ways:
 - Sentiment
 - People wanting the familiar, the safe and the routine
 - Religious platitudes. etc.
 - Preconceptions
 - Cynicism
 - Temperament
- iii. There is always an inner and outer tendency to resist the Spirit. We have to resist the resistance.
- iv. Spirit-led worship and ministry is the thing that I have most had to fight for over the years. We must never let go of them.

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