



*feeding...gathering...carrying...leading. (Isiah 40:11)*

Dear Church Family,

While the women were away on their retreat, we heard from three men from our congregation as they shared from their personal study of the Holy Spirit from Scripture. John Kramar shared from his study of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. He observed how even Jesus received power when the Holy Spirit came upon him at his baptism and did not operate in supernatural power prior to that event. And while Jesus did promise that his followers would do even greater works than him (Jn 14:12), Jesus' teaching on the Holy Spirit in John 14-16 focused on "the more subtle internal workings of the Spirit bringing knowledge and wisdom and insight." The Spirit was for everyone who asked his heavenly Father for this gift (Lk 11:9-13), although there was an element of waiting for the first disciples. John shared his own personal convictions about desiring the Holy Spirit and continuing to pursue knowing the Holy Spirit in his life.

Robin shared from his study of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, observing that with the OT we see graphic pictures of the Holy Spirit in the lives of certain characters. The OT makes clear that the Holy Spirit brings courage, power, wisdom and that without the Holy Spirit, even Biblical heroes can be pretty ordinary and are also capable of deeply sinful behavior. Robin concludes, "The OT also makes plain that without the HS I am pretty ordinary, and ill-equipped to live the way God desires and accomplish the things he wants...a crucial reminder when I am tempted to go it on my own strength, understanding, and experience." Robin also focused on sin and the Holy Spirit. "Through graphic visual effects, the OT also reveals that my sin which grieves the Spirit really pains the heart of God... and when left un-repentant, ruptures the relationship with God's Spirit, effectively pushing him away." And the costliness of restoring relationship that is emphasized with the OT sacrificial system is sometimes lost on us and we inadvertently devalue grace. Deep repentance is a part of life in the Spirit.

Ben shared from his study of Paul, assessing the impact of both Stephen's speech and martyrdom and the Damascus Road experience. He ended up in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3 with Paul explaining to them, "*you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts (v.3).*" The Spirit of the Living God in our hearts to be witnesses to the glory of God. And this ministry is more glorious than the ministry of Moses bringing the 10 commandments whose face shown with the glory of God. "*And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit (v.18).*" We need more of the Holy Spirit to be the kind of people who bring that kind of glory to God.

There is more to each of these teaching/testimonies and I encourage you to listen to them if you were away on Sunday. We are grateful to John, Robin and Ben for being used by the Lord to encourage and exhort us.

Pastorally Yours,  
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