



HG215: Our Hope Is Found In: **The Holy Spirit**

Galatians 5:16-26

Home Group Study Notes

28 February 2021 - Revd Christine Williams



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION
BEFORE THE MEETING!

*Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group
with you, along with any previous notes and other
resources which might be helpful for your discussions.*



Welcome (10 mins)

Ice Breaker

Where do you see yourself in 5 years' time?



Looking Upwards (10 mins)

Worship

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...



HG215: Our Hope Is Found In: **The Holy Spirit**

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Home Group Sermon

28 February 2021 - Revd Christine Williams

Come Holy Spirit. Come and breathe your life into our hearts. Help us through these troubled times and make us strong in you. You are here wherever we are; living through us and strengthening us day by day. Come and change us. Amen

The Holy Spirit: the promise of Jesus

Jesus promised that after he had gone he would send the Holy Spirit to be with his disciples. He gave this wonderful promise to us as much as to his disciples as we live through stressful times. It comes in John 14:15-19 ¹⁵“If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”

What Jesus was saying was that when he was no longer with them, he would be right there with them! When he ascended and left his disciples he would send the Holy Spirit, who would be just like having Jesus there in the flesh. But in many ways even better because the spirit would be living inside each of them; and now inside each of us. We have hope for our future and confidence in God’s provision for us because we know that Jesus is alive and his spirit lives in us. We have hope because of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does 2 important things: The Spirit leads us to faith in Christ and then lives in us day by day to take us on the journey to holiness.

The Holy Spirit: Initiates our trust in Christ

There is only one way to become a Christian. ‘You cannot enter the Kingdom of heaven unless you are born again’, Jesus said to Nicodemus. A. W. Tozer said. ‘Men do not become Christians by associating with church people nor by religious contact, nor by religious education; they become Christians only by invasion of their nature by the Spirit of God in new Birth.’ It is in Christ alone, through his death and resurrection, that we have a new spiritual birth as James was saying 2 weeks ago. We have no hope if we depend on our own efforts.

The Holy Spirit: is our only hope for Holiness

We need to wholly depend on the Holy Spirit not only for our initial salvation but also for our continued life after that first encounter with Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the breath that sustains us through life; our only hope. Paul said in Gal 6:10 that we must live by the Spirit and not start trying to live our lives without him. That is what we were doing before we first turned to Christ. We were living as though God did not exist. We lived ‘under the law’.

When God introduced the Israelites to the 10 Commandments in Lev 19.1 he said, 'Be Holy as I am Holy'. The 10 Commandments helped them to know God's character and thereby know how they should live because they were his people. But the law was like a stick to a donkey. They failed to live up to the rules. When we turned to Christ in faith we not only found that he was there loving us and saving us through his death and resurrection, but that he was holy and was calling us to change to become like him. 1 Peter 1:14-16 '14 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy.'" To be holy is to become like Christ. Holiness is not an imposed 'good behaviour' by rules and regulations from the outside like the donkey's stick, but it is a work in progress by the Holy Spirit as he changes us from the inside. The carrot is the desire to become more and more like Jesus. The spirit is in the business of restoring the image of God in us.

The magnetism of the old way of living and thinking

When we say, and mean, the words 'come Holy Spirit' we are calling down on ourselves an awfully big shake up. We will be turned inside out. We are creatures of habits and the old nature with its thought processes is not so easily left behind. Our lives are now on the front line of a battle. We need to be intentional about meeting the challenge. But it is the Holy Spirit who wins us the victory. Romans 8: 13-15 'if by the spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live because those who are led by the Holy Spirit are children of God. You did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear but you received the spirit of adoption.' We win the battle when we allow the Holy Spirit to work in us. We may think that it doesn't matter if we win the battle or not because we are still saved. But we are children of a heavenly father and he wants to grow his image in us.

There is so much around us in everyday life that tends to drag us down and back to where we were. Sin is so easy. It can happen before we have had time to think. Paul gives us a list of harmful sins which we must turn our backs on. But the items on the list are more like addictions. It could be we have an addiction to porn, sex, or gaming; it could be that we are ambitiously climbing the social or promotion ladder without regard to your Father's plans on our life; it could be striving to make and spend money and gambling; it could be drink or drugs, sex, or indulging in hatred, jealousy anger and arguments.

We need to take time to study the list that Paul gives in v19-21 and take a hard look at ourselves. It is Lent and it is a good opportunity to think about our behaviour and attitudes. We all have weak points and you will know what your weak point is. In fact, I know what your weak point is!!! It's whatever the Holy Spirit is bringing to your attention at the moment! Any addiction or bad habit is hard to break because it is deep rooted. The problem is that it puts up a barrier between us and our heavenly father. But God is stronger.

We need the Holy Spirit to help us in our weakness. He has not left us alone to struggle without hope. Our hope is in the Holy Spirit. We have to co-operate with the Holy Spirit to win the battle. I suggest that the first step is to identify the problem; take a good hard look at who we are and name the sin. Second, we need to confess the sin to the father. Then to repent and turn away from it and in the power of the Holy Spirit to turn to a new freedom.

The Fruit of the Holy Spirit

Our will, our thoughts, our decision-making, our attitudes all need to be brought into line with the mind of Christ. Are we motivated by following Jesus? Paul used the idea of fruit as Jesus did in John 15. Fruit is what happens to a healthy tree.

Apple trees grow apples as a consequence of being healthy. The Fruit of the Spirit is a consequence of a person walking in step with Jesus. (This is not to be confused with Spiritual gifts, prophecy, healing, teaching etc. which are given to Christians for building up the whole church). We would love to automatically be Christ-like without our having to do anything. The battle is won by staying close to him through the power of the Holy Spirit. But the battle between good and evil in our lives will continue until we meet Jesus face to face and we become like him because we will see him as he is. In this life it is an ongoing daily journey. I need to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit because I leak.

Love

Paul wrote his wonderful 1 Corinthians 13 passage about love, not as a really good reading for a marriage service, but to a church that was losing its way. Different factions were not showing much love to one another. Yet love is basic to the Christian life. 'Love God, and love your neighbour as yourself,' Jesus said. But sometimes that seems quite hard. We have to keep remembering that we are the recipients of the father's amazing love for us. 'How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God and that is what we are!' 1 John 3:1 It's awesome. But the standard is high. 'This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.'

Joy

I think there must have been so much joy surrounding Jesus as he travelled around Galilee. People were healed from diseases for which there was no known cure. Wonderful little stories were told. And what about the parties? There must have been a lot of happiness and fun where Jesus was. Jesus was criticised for the parties he attended. He turned oodles of water into wine so there was no teetotalism with Jesus. He was good to be with. He lifted everyone's spirits. There is joy in knowing him and being in his company. But the biggest joy of all was the joy of the disciples that first Easter day when they first he had risen from the dead.

Peace

Peace is not merely an absence of conflict. It is the contentment of a person who can rest in the knowledge that God the Holy Spirit is there walking along the difficult path with them. Paul wrote to the Philippians 4:6-7 'Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to god. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'

Kindness and Gentleness

Being kind is definitely a step towards holiness. Jesus was kind. He was kindness incarnate. People followed him around because, 'a bruised reed he did not break, a smouldering wick he did not snuff out.' He reached out to vulnerable people who were in pain and did not pass them by on the other side. Kindness infused his actions and his parables – e.g. the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal son. Even at his death he was kind to his mother by presenting her to John to care for. In the big wide world, it is dog eat dog.

It's the survival of the fittest. There is aggressiveness and bullying. But not so in God's good heaven, and not so for us as we seek to become like Jesus. (Please look at the other fruit within your Home groups.)

Keep in step with the spirit.

The Spirit is right here with us wherever we are and wants to help us as we walk through life. Times are tough right now. We need his companionship and help even more than normal. Worship him in your own home bow down before him. Study what the Bible says. Listen to the words that he has for you.

Pray in the power of the spirit. Remember that 'The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.' Rom 8:26.

Come Holy Spirit and change us into the people we were made to be.

Come Holy Spirit. Come and breathe your life into our hearts. Help us through these troubled times and make us strong in you. You are here wherever we are; living through us and strengthening us day by day. Come and change us through your power. Amen

Emmanuel Church Text for 2021

*“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul,
firm and secure.”*

Hebrews 6:19



Looking Upwards (40 mins)

Bible Study

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

1. Complete the following: 'I hate it when someone ...' Is it a hatred of the person or of the action or words they say? What would Jesus do or say to that person?

2. Look at the lists of works of the flesh and fruit of the spirit. Decide what would the opposite be for each item on the list.

3. Think of gospel stories which illustrate how Jesus' life displayed each of the Gifts of the Spirit.

4. How can we encourage the fruit of the spirit in one another?

5. a. Having a sinful nature is like slavery. Why?

b. Following Christ brings freedom. How? Read Galatians 5:1 Romans 7:14-8:2

6. Paul talks about 'Living by the Spirit' and 'keeping in step with the Spirit'. Gal 6:25. How can we do this? Be practical.



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



Looking Inwards (15 mins) *Caring For Each Other*

Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an opportunity to share, not something you have to do, however, 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



Looking Outwards (15 mins) *Concern For Others*

Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours or church, which you would like to share (please be sure not pass on anything that is confidential or which you think the person concerned would not wish to be shared) for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?

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