

He Shall Testify

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[0:00] Please turn to Galatians 5.16. Galatians 5.16. This morning we're going to continue our study through J.I. Packer's book, *Knowing God*,! Turning our attention to the Holy Spirit.

And although they're very important topics, I'm not going to be seeking this morning to launch into an apologetic on the scriptural proof of the Trinity, nor formally prove the deity of the Holy Spirit. There's just too much material to cover if I were to attempt to give those areas justice. Rather, what I really want to do this morning is kind of extend what I taught in my previous lesson, which is focused on our relationship with God, and really look at how we can actively know and learn to acknowledge God.

And we do that by living by the Spirit. Galatians 5.16. So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Look down at verse 25. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Well, how do you keep in step with the Spirit?

[1:31] We had a German Shepherd dog a number of years ago called Bella. That was the one that almost ripped Scott Ladek's leg off. I'm not seeing him here.

But, ah, there he is. But one thing Bella did very well, at least with me, was heal. And as I walked along, she would keep her eye right on my leg.

And as I would walk, she'd walk. And if I slowed down, she slowed down. If I turned around, she'd turn around. And she stayed right by my knee. If I stopped, she would stop and sit down. She did very well at healing.

And she did so because her attention was fixated on my leg. She was watching me. She was staying in step with me. And that illustration is what comes to my mind whenever I read these verses in Galatians.

We're to keep in step with the Holy Spirit. And we do that by living by him and for him. We do it by staying fixated on his desires, on his pace, on his direction.

[2:41] When he moves, we move. When he stops, we wait. When he doesn't about face, we need to turn around. But how often I feel I must be led about like a dog on a choker chain, where I'm always trying to get off the path.

I'm pulling this way and that way, unwilling to wait, trying to pull ahead. Well, we are to live by the Spirit by staying in step with the Spirit.

Today's lesson, then, is going to center on our relationship with God as enabled by the Holy Spirit. And we're going to do this by focusing on a multiplicity of works that are performed by the Spirit on our behalf, past, present, and future.

My goal is that we might become better equipped to fulfill our desire and our duty to keep in step with the Spirit as we become in tune with the works he's performing on our behalf and also become better worshipers of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Listen to 1 Peter 2.9. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness and to his wonderful light.

[4:06] In the doxology, we sing, Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. But I wonder how many of us consciously ever praise the Holy Ghost for the many blessed works he performs on our behalf.

Let us do so today as we're reintroduced to some of those works. Before we begin, I need to reiterate a couple of dangers that I want to make clear from the outset because I'm not going to have time to focus on these throughout the lesson.

First, we must recognize that the Reformed faith has rightly recoiled from the feelings and signs-based religion that has become prominent in some quarters of Christianity.

A study of the Holy Spirit seems, for some reason, by its very nature, tend to lead us to an overemphasis on our feelings, to listening for the Spirit's promptings, to try to read signs and allow those signs and those circumstances and events in our life to govern our decisions rather than allowing the Holy Word of God as revealed and absolute to govern our decisions.

So the first caution is we must, first of all, interpret everything in life, our experiences with God, through God's Word. For example, consider a father who tells his child that he wants his room cleaned up by the end of the day and he arrives home to discover that nothing was done.

[5:41] Well, the father decides, I'm not going to spank him, but he expresses his disappointment and then after supper, he takes his son out for ice cream and reassures him of his love.

Now that son would be sadly mistaken if he interpreted the experience that he just had with his father as meaning that his father condoned his disobedience or it was really just no big deal that he didn't clean up his room.

How often do we have that tendency to do that with our heavenly father as he gives us his commands and then we go off our way, he brings experiences into our life, he brings blessings into our life.

And so we think, oh, it's really no big deal. No, we must allow God's Word to govern our understanding of our experiences rather than the other way around.

At the same time, because our God is a person and he has put us in covenant relationship with him, we are going to have daily experiences with our God.

[6:58] To not recognize, appreciate, and interact with God within those experiences, maybe just because we don't want to live by feelings, would be like a husband going off on his honeymoon and seeking to not have any emotional interaction during that because he doesn't want to be caught up in the motion of the moment.

I mean, we'd say that would be ridiculous. And yet, isn't that again how we so often live our Christian lives? We don't want to be emotional. And yet we're living experientially with our God. We are the bride of Christ. Life is the stuff of our relationship with him. To not experience God through the work of the Spirit in our lives is senseless. And just as it would be to that wife, it's offensive to God.

And it's destructive to ourselves. Experiences are precious. They allow us to get to know another person better. We learn more of their personhood by living with them. Experiences enable us to enjoy each other.

However, words are required to put those experiences into context. And God has given us his written word that should be the overarching guide by which we interpret all of our experiences.

[8:19] So I would say danger number one's axiom is that God's word must be the framework that governs the understanding of our experiences. The second caution is that we're going to be saying an awful lot about the Holy Spirit today.

And as such, we're going to be basically fixated on him for the most part. But in so doing, we must not worship the Holy Spirit in exclusion of God the Father and God the Son.

Jesus came to do the will of the Father. The Father has glorified the Son. The Spirit lives to magnify or draw attention to the Son. So as we consider the works of the Spirit and we seek to praise him, as our doxology speaks of, we must also be sure we give the Father and the Son the honor and the worship due their name.

All right, so that's the introduction. The lesson this morning is really very simple. We're not going to make it through all the points. I have 13 points on your sheet.

I decided to do... Some of you are laughing. I always do this to myself. No, actually this was intentional. These 13 works of the Spirit are by no means all-encompassing.

[9:42] And yet I couldn't cut off below this. And so I will give you the blanks before we end, depending on how far through we get, but we'll probably get through about two-thirds of them.

And you can take them. I left verses there as well and look at this more if you are so inclined on your own. Well, we can't give justice to the profound and essential works of the Holy Spirit, in my mind, without beginning, and this will be our longest point, with a very intense but quick look at the doctrines of grace.

And our first point is he saves and regenerates us. He saves and regenerates us. Please turn to Romans 8.

And I'd ask you to put a marker in your Bible there somewhere, in Romans 8, as I'm going to have you turn up to other passages, but we're going to keep returning there throughout the lesson. The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ propitiates, appeases, takes upon himself God's wrath against all whom God has chosen to be recipients of his grace.

[11:00] Christ endured hell for his people as the perfect, acceptable substitute, fully satisfying God's justice on our behalf.

But I have a question. Does Christ's glorious work of justification on the behalf of his chosen people enable us to know God? Anyone? Not by itself.

Good answer. It's kind of a trick question, but it's not. Why not by itself? What's missing? Just because our record in heaven is clear, it's not.

Do we have any desire to know heaven? There is to be a personal change. Some is a judicial change.

Exactly. The problem exists, doesn't it? We're God-haters. We all want to go our own way. Romans 8, 7, and 8 iterates that point.

[12:01] The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

Unless these chosen people for whom Christ died are made practically righteous, they will never be able to dwell with God. 1 John 1, 5 and 6, in him there is no darkness at all.

If we claim to have fellowship with him, yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.

So if my heart is all darkness, and I'm still a God-hater, then there's a problem.

Even though Christ died for me, his justification of my sin does not make me pure and able to dwell with God.

So something else has to happen. But thanks be to God that his will is not frustrated. As it says in Isaiah 14, 27, for the Lord Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him?

[13:06] His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back? There are many places we could turn to read of God's declared purpose regarding his elect, but since we've been studying there in the morning, let us turn to Hosea 2.

Hosea 2. And verse 14. Therefore, I am now going to allure her. I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her.

Verse 16. In that day, declares the Lord, you will call me my husband. You will no longer call me my master. I will remove the names of the bells from her lips.

No longer will their names be invoked. Verse 19. I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the Lord.

Verse 23. I will plant her for myself in the land. I will show my love to the one I called, not my loved one. I will say to those called, not my people, you are my people, and they will say, you are my God.

[14:16] But how can God allure one who is dead to spiritual things? I'll turn to John 6.35. John 6.35.

And as you do, listen to Ezekiel. How does he do it? I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Can God really do that? Can he mess with our will? Well, in spite of our propensity to try to make man's will sovereign, the scriptures consistently present God as moving the heart of man to fulfill his purposes.

And we can praise him that he does because every one of our hearts would never seek after him had he not done that. Proverbs 21.1. The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord.

He directs it like a water course wherever he pleases. In 2 Corinthians 4.6. For God said, Let light shine out of darkness.

[15:24] Made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God and the face of Christ. Do you suppose that the one who created light, who spoke and trillions and trillions of stars instantly were formed out of nothing, is able to speak and cause the glory of himself to be shown into the hearts of those whom he's purposed it to be?

I think so. Jesus spoke on the same subject in John 6.35. Then Jesus declared, I am the bread of life.

He who comes to me will never go hungry and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. Well, here's the problem.

If the very Son of God preached, walked on this earth, declared the gospel to those who were around him and the end result was their crucifying him, what hope is there for man?

Well, he goes on. All that the Father gives me will come to me and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but the will of him who sent me.

[16:43] And this is the will of him who sent me that I shall lose none of all that he has given me but raise them up on that last day. My Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life and I will raise him up at that last day.

Well, if we stop there, isn't that a bit perplexing? Jesus preached nobody came. Well, not nobody, but only a few. The rest crucified him.

And yet he says everyone the Father gave him is going to come to him. And yet we saw what the result was. How can he say that? How can he be so confident that I shall lose none of all that his Father has given me?

Well, he tells us in verse 44, no one can come to me. Well, we knew that, right? In our depravity, none of us would come to him. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws, compels.

Unless the Father who sent me draws him and I will raise him up at that last day. How does he draw him? What's the means he uses?

[17:52] Well, now we're coming around to our subject. Jump down to verse 63. The Spirit gives life. The flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.

He went on to say, this is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father enables him. The Father enables those whom he has chosen to come to him. And the Spirit is the one who gives life.

So we are dependent on the Spirit for life. Having fully justified his people, Jesus Christ began the crucial work of granting repentance to those who would receive his pardon.

Listen to Acts 5.31. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

Christ's work spoken of in Acts 5.31 is indispensable because none of us possess a heart that would repent. When God approaches his elect, every one of us to a person is not seeking him.

[19:03] Isaiah boldly says, I was found by those who did not seek me. I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me. Nevertheless, because of Jesus' work of giving repentance to those he has chosen, people do come to him.

And how does he give repentance? Well, through the Holy Spirit. Listen to 1 Thessalonians. 1, 4, and 5. For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit, and with deep conviction.

2 Thessalonians 2.13. But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and through belief in the truth.

So in conclusion, man left to himself is spiritually dead, blind, a hater of the true and living God, bent on his own glory, and a rebel against his creator.

That is us, and we could spend hours showing that through Scripture. Even though every human being deserves eternal damnation in hell, God chose to save some from eternal damnation.

[20:23] to accomplish this, God performed two sovereign acts. First, he sent his son to propitiate God's wrath on behalf of all whom he would then call.

And then, as each of God's elect arrives on the scene in space and time, the Holy Spirit changes the rebels' hearts, and he does it so that they would approach Christ.

He gives them a new heart, allures them, draws them to Jesus, shines the light of the knowledge of the glory of God into their hearts, and moves them to love God's law, God's ways, and the person of God himself.

I cannot leave this topic without appealing to those here who have not yet personally experienced this work of the Spirit in their hearts. God's word to you is to come to Jesus.

Is your heart cold and hard toward God? Then plead with God to change your heart. We've just seen, yeah, that's what you'd expect for your heart to be cold toward him.

[21:27] That is what we are. The first step is to pray to Christ that his Holy Spirit would come and change your heart. Do you find yourself desiring to submit to your Creator and King, to really know and obey and please him?

Well, this desire could not exist apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. your first, very first, response of submission is to obey God's call to look to Jesus and live, to acknowledge the wickedness of your rebellion against him, to own your despicable love for self, for your own desire, for your own self-rule, for your own self-glory, to admit your bankrupt condition and your inability to ever satisfy his perfect righteous demands in your every word, deed, and thought.

And then to throw yourself on Jesus who did the unthinkable, God becoming man to bear the wrath of God in your place so you could live and serve him eternally rather than having to spend the same eternity yourself in hell making the payment.

And you have this promise from this same Jesus, all that the Father gives me will come to me and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. So come to him and live.

But to the rest of us I say, do we owe anything to the Holy Spirit? When's the last time you thanked him for this glorious work he's performed in your heart and ascribed to him the praise that's due his name?

[23:08] Well, that's our first point. number two, he gives us knowledge and understanding. He gives us knowledge and understanding.

Matthew 13, 11 he replied, the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven have been given to you but not to them. without the Holy Spirit, without his work in our hearts we cannot understand God or the secrets of the kingdom of God.

Remember Jesus told his disciples in John 16, 12 I have much more to say to you more than you can now bear but when he the spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all truth.

We mustn't take for granted our ability to understand truth. It is the truth as revealed by the Holy Spirit through God's word that will set us free. Without understanding we perish.

An appreciation for our dependence on the spirit should change the way in which we live. It should cause us every single time we come to God's word every single time we hear the word preached or spoken to humbly come before him and beg the spirit's enlightening knowledge giving truth revealing understanding of that word.

[24:37] We are incapable of that ourselves. Unless his spirit does that within us we will get nothing. Do we truly believe that?

If we do then we're going to be in prayer much. Thirdly he moves us to obey God. He moves us to obey God.

foot back to Romans 8. Romans 8.9 You however are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the spirit if the spirit of God lives in you.

Some other translations render the thought of this verse as you are not in the flesh but in the spirit. we speak of someone as being in love as in they've been overcome by that.

Matthew Henry observes all the saints have flesh and spirit in them but to be in the flesh and to be in the spirit are contrary it denotes are being overcome and subdued by one of these principles.

[25:46] Romans 8 simply reiterates what was predicted by Ezekiel hundreds of years before and I will put my spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Like a boss at work or a father within the house the spirit is in control of every child of God. I understand what we mean by it but it's not as if I decide from day to day whether he's going to be in control of my life.

He is in control of my life. It's whether I will acknowledge it whether I will live in the spirit instead of constantly seeking to pull him off the path.

But unlike human examples the spirit lives in us. He's already given us new desires and affections and he actually moves upon our spirits to cause us to follow him and to be careful to keep his commands.

Have I avoided certain sins today? Do I praise the spirit for keeping me from going down those paths? Is my heart panning after God and desiring to obey and please him?

[26:55] When is the last time I praised Jesus for putting his spirit in me to cause me to have that longing for him? Well, number four, he is the pricker of conscience.

He is the pricker of conscience. One's conscience is their sentinel to guard to guard one's heart against evil. Now, it's certainly possible for our consciences to become seared and even perverted.

As we read in Titus 1.15, to the pure all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted.

So, again, it's vital that we allow our consciences to be governed by the word of God. God.

Nevertheless, the conscience is an indispensable gift of God for the discerning of right from wrong. When he, the Holy Spirit, comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment. Well, guilt is the stuff of conscience.

[28:04] So, when you feel those pangs of guilt, when your conscience begins troubling you, do you praise the Holy Spirit for convicting you, for using that conscience to show you where you're going off?

Do you allow the guilt to drive you to Christ, to have your conscience washed and cleansed?

Number five, he grants the power to conquer sin. He grants the power to conquer sin.

Look at verse 13 of Romans 8. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

I cannot myself cease fulfilling the lust of the flesh. Has anybody discovered that to be true? In and of myself, I am going to continue to give place to the flesh rather than the Spirit.

It's only by the Spirit that I can say no to self and sin. Every time I say no to sin, the Spirit has supplied the power in order to say that no.

[29:20] And every time I give in to sin, I have failed to appropriate the power of the Spirit who's seeking to hold me out of that sin. Again, do we live in constant acknowledgement and thanksgiving to God for our dependence on the Spirit to please Him.

I say constant because my heart is wicked and corrupt and I am constantly in battle with sin. And so the more I recognize the depravity within and how much I am battling against that sin, the more I should be in constant thanksgiving to the Spirit, to God, and to Jesus for giving me the power to overcome that sin.

Number six, He leads us. He leads us.

Yes, there's a second side of your paper. Look at verse 14 of Romans 8. Romans 8, 14, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

If you're a child of God, you're on His gracious leash, and He's only going to allow us to go so far.

As I've illustrated before, we nevertheless kick and pull against Him, pull against His authority, want to go our own way.

[30:51] But the call to every believer is to allow the Spirit to lead us in the way we should go. Look back at verses 4 and 5 in Romans 8. In order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires. But those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

Matthew Henry comments, though the righteousness of the law is not fulfilled by us yet, blessed be God, it is fulfilled in us. There is that to be found upon and in all true believers which answers the intention of the law, us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

This is the description of all those that are interested in this privilege. They act from spiritual and not from carnal principles. How do I allow myself to be led by the Spirit?

How do I keep in step with Him? By setting my mind in what He desires rather than in what my flesh desires. And what does the Spirit desire?

[32:09] He desires to do the works of the Father and to bring glory to the Son. Am I watching and listening for the Spirit's leading? I believe the story of Philip illustrates this well as found in Acts 8.

29 where the Spirit told Philip go to that chariot and stay near it. Remember he was on the road and there was a eunuch riding in a chariot and Philip went up to the chariot and had the opportunity to begin witnessing to him.

Now we do not know if Philip literally heard an audible voice from the Spirit but it's very possible that he was simply prompted in his heart to draw near to we have all had thoughts come through our minds a thousand times a day sometimes seemingly out of nowhere where do those thoughts come from I'm not suggesting that we begin psychoanalyzing every thought to try to discern where it comes from but without going beyond scriptures we do know that at least some of our thoughts cross our minds are from Satan and some are from God both have access to our minds!

use that access for their purposes the one for good and the other for evil to not recognize this reality is foolhardily and it's going to leave us vulnerable to Satan and it's going to cause us to become

cold towards the spirit and his promptings so returning to Philip we see a man who is actively seeking to be a witness for Christ and so when a fellow traveler shows up on the road and he's walking over here I would imagine based on what else we read of this man he's thinking why spend hours walking down the road when there's possibly an opportunity here to share my beloved Christ so it would be certainly natural even if the spirit didn't speak in an audible voice if there was a prompting in his heart of hey why don't you go over there and see what maybe I can strike up a conversation that he was on it his desire his focus was already one with

God's if you're like me so much of the time the spirit may be prompting me a dozen times a day but because my heart and mind are far from kingdom thoughts I've effectively shut them out of my life I never even hear him he would become more like Philip number seven he testifies to our sonship he testifies to our sonship look at verse 16 in Romans 8 the spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children jump back to verse 15 for you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave to fear but you receive the spirit of sonship and by him we cry Abba Father do you gain comfort in the knowledge that you are a son of God is the spirit making that understanding practical in your heart enabling you to address your heavenly father as daddy as papa

[35 : 37] Abba father and when you get so low that you can't even pray to him then number eight he intercedes on our behalf he intercedes on our behalf Romans 8 26 and 27 in the same way the spirit helps us in our weakness we do not know what we ought to pray but the spirit himself intercedes for us with!

I'm sorry with groans that words cannot express and he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the spirit because the spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will remember the last time your soul was in so much anguish you didn't even know what to say to God you opened your mouth and nothing could come out but groans well isn't it comforting to know that the blessed Holy Spirit who lives and dwells in us is groaning on our behalf he is praying for us with words that even if we had an eloquent!

tongue we could never express! this is a beautiful work of the Spirit for us once the last time we praised him for doing this for us number nine he inspires us to fear God he inspires us to fear God listen to Jeremiah 32 38 through 40 they will be my people and I will be their God I will give them singleness of heart and action so that they will always fear me for their own good and the good of their children after them I will make an everlasting covenant with them I will never stop doing good to them and I will inspire them to fear me so that they will never turn away from me we understand that the root issue of the on regenerate is that they don't fear God we understand that our root issue is that we often do not fear

God where does the fear of God come from from God the Father through Jesus Christ and enacted on our hearts by the Holy Spirit the blessing of this work cannot be measured as I contemplated sin as I opened my mouth to speak as I set myself down a certain path but then the fear of God comes over my soul what is to be my response well first of course we should turn then from that sin if the fear of God has truly come over my soul just as a child who's caught with her hand in a cookie jar when mom walks in they're going to quickly pull it out they're going to stop doing their evil or is a robber who's caught by a light in darkness the fear should turn us from the sin but secondly do we then praise God do we thank him for putting that fear within us again where did it come from was it from us do we self generate this never it's from the

Holy Spirit it's all from God without him I would die number ten I guess we're out of time so let me give you the last the words on the last ones number ten he causes us to love God he causes us to love God has our souls ever raptured to God in love do you ever have that time where you just are brought so close to him and your heart is so going out to him where does that come from I don't self generate it it's from the spirit is there any more blessed of a time should we then not praise him all the more for it number eleven he imparts hope he imparts hope the same Holy Spirit who's living with us on our earthly journey!

[39 : 55] gives us hope for our future with him do I have peace in the midst of trouble and trial facing death where does that peace come from it's from the spirit number twelve he is the controller of life's circumstances he is the controller of life's circumstances let me just make two comments on here I have two verses I believe on your sheet yes I've attempted to balance this Matthew 12 39 says he answered a wicked and adulterous generation asked for a miraculous sign but none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah Jesus speaking to the Pharisees who are always looking for signs it's a warning against living a sign based life where I'm just always what is what's

the sign of what you want me to do here Lord that's rebuked in scripture and yet at the same time we read of Paul that his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia having been kept by the

Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia when they came to the border of Mysia they tried to enter Bithynia but the spirit of Jesus would not allow them to I don't think anything mystical was going on here but they were in tune with the circumstances of life the spirit was stopping it up and so then just instead of plowing forward on their own they re-evaluated and said well it makes sense to go this way then they were sensitive they were in tune understanding the spirit is the controller of life circumstances and again I go back we must allow the word of God to govern all of this and then 13 he supplies us with words as needed he supplies us with words as needed we don't have the words to speak he gives them for his glory all from the spirit we serve a blessed God don't we he gives us everything we need may we go forth today praising him for it we're dismissed