

The Holy Spirit

Lesson 4 – The Holy Spirit & Conversion

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Introduction

On the day of Pentecost when Peter preached what we call the first “Gospel Sermon” and there were a lot more people than 3000 Jews in attendance in Acts 2. Most of them were not cut to the heart and therefore did not ask “What shall we do? Why? If we read the book of Acts carefully you will notice that the Apostle’s words did always produce the same results in their audiences. Some were obedient, some wanted to hear more, some were unaffected, and some were hostile.

The questions then are – what influence does the Holy Spirit have in the conversion process, and is His influence strictly confined to the Bible?

Accepting vs Rejecting The Convicting Work Of The Holy Spirit

“You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.” (Acts 7:51)

“When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.” (Luke 12:11-12)

“But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. “For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.” (Matthew 10:19-20)

It was the convicting work of the Holy Spirit accompanied by the words He inspired Peter to say that prompted 3,000 people to accept Peter’s inspired message. Those who rejected his words was not rejecting the words of Peter but the work of the Holy Spirit.

How Does The Holy Spirit Convict & Convert?

So the big question for us is- does the Holy Spirit still teach us what to say? Does the Holy Spirit still speak through us?

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;” (John 14:15-16)

The evidence that the Holy Spirit still speaks to us and seeks to influence us is impeachable. I would say that He does it in a different way than He did in the first century – primarily through the Word of God – the scriptures, but he may also manipulate circumstances to influence thoughts and lead us to seek answers to the

questions or burdens that plague us. However, those answers will never be found apart from the inspired Word of God.

In Acts 2:16 Peter tells the crowd that what they were witnessing was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy that God was going to "pour out His Spirit on all flesh." The pouring out of the Spirit refers not so much to the power seen in speaking foreign languages as to the conversion power witnessed in the 3000 people who were cut to the heart.

What Are We Converting From?

Conversion means to change into a different form. When applied to the good news of Jesus it means a person is changed from believing in themselves to believing in God; changed from believing there is no eternal purpose or meaning in life, to believing that the solution is found in Jesus who is the way-truth-life!

God is providentially involved in every circumstance of our lives. The reason for this is so that He can lead our thoughts in His direction, preparing us for those moments when the outpoured Holy Spirit can convict of us our need for Jesus!

Peter says that those who obey the gospel are "chosen" by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit to obey Jesus. The basis upon which people are chosen to obey the gospel is their response to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit.

"But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; (John 16:7-8)

The deciding factor in conversion is the condition of the heart and mind of the listener. (John 8:37; Matthew 13:13-23; John 3)

Remember that Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would live in and be with His disciples forever! That means that He will live in and be with us today.