Charles Feinberg:

This is the second message in the series on truth and error about the Holy Spirit. The second message is on that question, it’s the first part of it, "What is the Holy Spirit's ministry to the church?" This series is by Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg, Dean Emeritus and Professor of Old Testament at Talbot Theological Seminary in La Mirada, California.

Our first message on the Holy Spirit dealt with the double question, "is the Holy Spirit a divine person?" The answer was, he is both divine and he is a person. The second question was, "What does he do for the world, what is his ministry to the world?" Now in this tape and in the next study the question is, this is part 1, "What is the Holy Spirit's ministry to the church or to the individual believer?" Now since the world in general takes little or no notice of the Bible, the word of God, we can't really expect to have them know about the work of the Holy Spirit on its behalf. We dealt with that in the message before, the work of the Holy Spirit, on behalf of the world. But since the world knows little or nothing about the true message of the Bible, it cannot be expected to know the Ministry of the Holy Spirit in the scriptures which is extended on behalf of the individuals in the world. But a sadder fact friends, is that so many saved, so many believers truly born again are willing to remain in utter ignorance concerning the Ministry of the Holy Spirit for them on their behalf or they're willing to ignore his claims on their life or disregard his provision. Then they wonder why they don't have the joy mentioned in the Word of God; why they don't have the fruitfulness that's mentioned there; why they do not have the true,
beautiful, constant fellowship with God with our Lord Jesus and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit. All these indicated in the Word of God as the blood bought provisions for the child of God. I repeat this theme is of vast importance to the child of God.

For a man, and we need to remember these basic truths basic principles, for a man to be a Christian He must be in right relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. When a man tells me he is a believer in the biblical sense of the term, he's been born again, we know that he's in right relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ if he is giving us the actuality of the case and not speaking hypocritically. For a man to be a believer, a Christian, he must be in right relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. For one to be a spiritual Christian, Which means there are some Christians that are not spiritual. But for one to be a spiritual Christian He must be properly, rightly related to the blessed Third Person of the Trinity, namely the Holy Spirit.

Now that it is sadly possible to be a Christian without being spiritual is a truth that's manifest on every side in every congregation that you've ever been in in the church here on Earth and the case that's very, very prominent in Scripture is First Corinthians. In the first chapter the apostle Paul says of these Corinthian believers that they were enriched in all wisdom, in all knowledge, in all utterance. They were a fabulous church. They were a remarkably talented. They were greatly enriched and endowed and endued by God. But it's that same church to which the Apostle Paul writes and tells them in the third chapter there in 1 Corinthians, "But you are carnal, you are fleshly, I could not speak unto you as spiritual but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ." You are believers alright, but you are not in right relationship to the Holy Spirit and therefore you cannot know the deep things of God. You are riven asunder by divisions and party strife and immorality, there the fifth chapter First Corinthians, and you are asking questions about basic things of the scripture and acting in an unchristian like way at the Lord's Supper and
even questioning some things concerning a basic truth of the resurrection of the human body when Christ's wonderful resurrection proves that beyond a shadow of a doubt. So you see they were Christians but they were carnal Christians. Now, a carnal Christian is one who knows Christ by faith but he's living in a realm below his privileges. One who has a spiritual a Christian is one who realizes that to have the spiritual life, a vigorous one, he must be rightly related to the spirit of God. Now the ministries of the Holy Spirit to the believer are clearly set forth in the word of God just as those to the unbeliever or to the world are set forth.

And what is the first ministry of the Holy Spirit to the believer? Re-generation. Now that's the method whereby the natural man, man as he has naturally been born into this world, it's the method whereby the natural man becomes a believer. Regeneration, generated again, born again, born a second time. Regeneration is being born again not of your earthly parents but of the Holy Spirit. Physical birth, let's remember it, gives physical life but spiritual death. How do we know? Ephesians 2:1, "And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins". Every person in the world that's come down from Adam by physical birth gets immediately as he comes into this world, he has spirit, and he has physical life but spiritual death. How do we know? Romans 5:12, "Therefore just as through one man", Adam, “sin entered into the world”, Genesis 3, "and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned". And even though Adam lived over 900 years, Methuselah lived 969 years, in the fifth chapter of Genesis we're told they died. Death came in through sin and so that death passed upon all men or it spread to all men. A dear little child that's not committed one active sin may die less than an hour old it may die. Why? Has it committed sin? No but it has been born from that sinful ancestor, Adam and Eve. Yes those answers, so death spread to all men. Because all sin God considered us in Adam because Adam had been cut off. If Adam had been destroyed
from the earth we would never have come into the world. So these scriptures tell us friends that physical birth is physical life. But spiritual death, spiritual life can only result from the infinitely spiritual person from the birth by the Holy Spirit.

And we're told that in unmistakable terms in John 3:3-5, “Jesus answered and said to him”, speaking to the wicked demons who came to him by night, “truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” It’s not enough to be born once, that's physical birth. You must be born again. If you don't you can't see the kingdom of God, God's marvelous heaven throughout eternity. "Nicodemus said to him, ‘how can a man be born when he is old?’” he was just thinking of physical birth, that’s all he could think of. "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's body and be born, can he?” Again, only thinking of the physical realm. "Jesus answered, ‘truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”. To have spiritual life you must be born of the Spirit of God. I sometimes illustrated somewhat quaintly we go out perhaps to a rubbish pile or the city dump or the county dump and we see a great number of things there. We see some things that look like metal and we pick up one and it looks like some brass. But oh, it's dirty, it's filthy, it's encrusted. It has all kinds all sediment on it. But we take it away, we clean it up and we polish it up and we make it shine as if it had just come polished out of a fiery furnace. But my dear friends, it is steel, brass, or bronze. It'll never be anything else. It can never be silver. It can't be gold. It can't be a diamond. It always has the same nature and the same with us. Born as sinners, we may polish it up, we may be Elementary School flesh, or high school Flesh, or university Flesh, or even seminary flesh, or even ministerial flesh. We're still flesh if we've not been born again.
The only way to have spiritual life is through the Spirit of God and John 1:13 tells us that. Some people think that the first mention of the new birth is in John 3, that's not so. The first mention of the new birth is in John 1, 1:13, "Who were born not of blood", he has been saying before that, that the Lord Jesus the word made the world. The world was made by him. He was in the world, the world didn't know him. He came unto his own things, his own land, his own throne, his own right to rule, and then masculine plural, "and they who were his own", his own people Israel, the world didn't know him. Worse, his own who had all the promises and the privileges from Abraham on, They didn't know him. He came into his own things, his own rightful possessions and honors and prerogatives, and they didn't receive him. But as many as received Him, to them he gave the authority, the right, the warrant to become children of God who were born. Children are born, "They were born not of blood". See this is not a birth of the flesh, not of your parental heritage nor of the will of the flesh, something that you did at a certain time and said well I'm going to change. I'm going to keep a stiff upper lip. I'm going to do this by dint of the determination of my will. No, this birth doesn't come by the will of the flesh, not something that you determine to do, not some resolution or resolve, nor to the will of man. Not what somebody else may do for you or someone else may pronounce on you in some kind of a right or a ceremony and confirmation or in baptism by man. No, But of God. No wonder they can be called children of God because they are born of God. Right. You are a child of your parents because you were born of your parents. You may have the name Smith or Brown or Jones because you were born of parents by that name. We can be called God's children because we are born of God.

You say, well Of course, that's obvious, but not as obvious as we'd like. Yes, spiritual life results only from the birth by the Holy Spirit. "Born not of blood", one negative. "Born not of the
will of flesh”, another negative. "born not of the will of man", a third negative but one way and only one way that a person can be born again and thus become a child of God and that's to be born of God. There's mystery of course connected with the transaction but it's real just the same. There are many mysteries concerning lightning, many mysteries concerning electricity, many mysteries concerning nuclear fission, atomic energy. There’s mystery connected with so many things and so many transactions in life but it's real just the same. The moral man and a believer are not, please, they are not the same type of humanity in different degrees. No, the difference is entirely one of kind. Not of degrees but one of kind and Paul writing to Titus puts it beautifully, Titus 3:5, "God he saved us not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness; but according to his mercy". In our unsafe state we didn't have any deeds of righteousness, "But according to his mercy by the washing of regeneration", there it is, the word regeneration. How did we come to be saved? How did we come to be regenerated? How did we come to be born again? "By the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit". A wonderful work of the Spirit of God. No one, hear it, no one in the history of the world no matter by whatever extraneous means has ever been saved without the power of the Holy Spirit. Whether we realize it or not it is an utter, absolute impossibility to be regenerated, to be born again of any other personality or any other power than that of the Blessed, omnipotent Holy Spirit.

D.L. Moody, the great evangelist met a man once in inquiry room with a question which you could imagine he would ask because he was out for souls, that Dear man of God, he asked this young fellow, "Are you a Christian?" The man said, "I'm a practical Christian". "Oh", said Moody, "a practical Christian, when were you converted?" He felt that the man might mean that he was a practicing Christian. He was a Christian in the practical realm he says, "When were you converted? Well I said, "I never was converted. I don't believe in stuff like that". "But", said
Moody, "The Bible says you must be born again". "Well", he says, "I don't know anything about that, I don't believe in the Bible". "You mean you don't believe the Bible and yet you call yourself a practical Christian?" said Moody. Moody said, "Do you believe Webster's dictionary?" "Yes", said the man, "of course I believe in Webster's dictionary". "Well", he said, "for your information, Webster says that a man who doesn't believe the Bible is an infidel. You better call yourself by your right name." That too many people, friends, that when they talk about spiritual matters, and spiritual experience, and spiritual truths, and doctrine use words incorrectly. You'll remember in our first tape, in our first message we said this is an area where we must use scriptural language and be severely accurate not stepping aside one iota. Here's a man that didn't believe in the New Birth, didn't believe the Bible and yet called himself a practical Christian. He probably meant that he hadn't robbed somebody, recently he had murdered, or committed adultery. There's more to the matter than that. You must be regenerated. A man, a woman, a young person must be born again of the Spirit of God.

So what does the Holy Spirit do in relationship? What is his ministry to the believer, to the individual members in the church? First of all, regeneration. Then there's another wonderful thing that the Holy Spirit ministers and that is baptism, B A P T I S M, baptism. Now there is a baptism with water which is outward and there is a baptism of the Holy Spirit and that is strictly inward. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is as much a fact as the regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Though there will be no feeling attached to either one of them. Somebody says, "Well you ought to really feel something. Well if you do, if it's of God, all right. We don't rule that out. But don't say that somebody has to have the same feeling you had. You remember that man that had been dealt with, he had been witnessed to, Christ had been shared with him by a friend. And he was in a boat under a bridge and the man was gloriously saved. And from that time on as he went
witnessing he always thought he had to get the man he was dealing with, He had to get him in a
boat under a bridge.

Now, no my dear friends, the important thing is no feeling can be made the norm. Though there is feeling or no feeling. I know I'm alive today physically, because I'm breathing. Because a doctor can take my blood pressure. He can use his stethoscope and hear my heart beating. He can feel the pulse in my wrist. He can feel a pulse in my throat. Yes, he can do all that. I am alive because I'm breathing. but I don't remember how it felt to be born into this world but I'm here and I'm alive And that must mean that I was born. So my friends, there need be no feeling attached to either the regeneration or the baptism. Oh I'm sure that many of us have had tremendous joy as we realize the load of sin that's gone from our shoulders, from our hearts. But that feeling does not have to be the same thing. Not every bridegroom, not every bride feels exactly the same way at a wedding or after they've been pronounced husband and wife. Not man and wife, if he's not been a man before that, the pronouncement won't help at all. But that feeling can be as different as there are different people married. I repeat, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is as much a fact as the regeneration by the Holy Spirit, though there be no feeling attached to either one.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit takes place at the moment of regeneration. I can't stress this too emphatically. My dear friends there is so much error abroad. People are in great distress. I don't believe I've been saved because I don't know whether I've been baptized by the Holy Spirit. Hear it, not what somebody else says but what does the word of God say? What says the scripture, that baptism of the Holy Spirit takes place at the moment of regeneration and makes us an integral and inseparable part of the body of Christ. It cements us forever to him and in him. Just as you, when you were born, you had a heart in you. You couldn't live without a heart. Now
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they do transplants but you have to have the function of that heart. You see, all they do is some operations with a heart on the outside, pimping and all, but there has to be that function. We are cemented inseparably in Christ. Listen to this precious word, 1 Corinthians 12:13, oh if you don't take down any other passage, take this one down on the baptism. 1 Corinthians 12:13, "for by one Spirit", only one capital S, the Holy Spirit, we believers, "We're all", That's true of saved Jews and saved gentiles, "We all were baptized into one body whether Jews or Greeks", that's Jews or gentiles, "whether slaves or free", no matter what your nationality was, no matter what your social position was in the social or economic scale and we were all made to drink as though it were a marvelous portion of a draft of life. "We were all made to drink of one spirit". Beautiful word, 1 Corinthians 12:13. That whole chapter is absolutely irreplaceable.

In 1 Corinthians 6:17 we read, "But the one who joins himself to the Lord is One spirit with him". How are we joined? We are joined in the body of Christ by the divine sovereign operation of the Holy Spirit. In Galatians 3:27, we read this beautiful word, "for all of you", that's believers, "who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ, You are in him". That's why you can be called Christian, one of Christ, Christ ones, one of his own. He's not ashamed to call them brethren, Hebrews 2. In Ephesians that we read to you, Galatians 3:27, Ephesians 4:12-13, we read, "for the equipping." Why is the ministry given the wonderful gifted men in the church? Ephesians 4, "for the equipping of the Saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ". Just like every ligament, every muscle, every nerve in your body builds up that body, they're all needful. You may say, "Well that's not very important but if it's severed it may definitely restrict or absolutely stop a certain function of your body. “To the building up of the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to a mature man to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of
Christ”. Oh how parents love to put their children up against the door jam and then take the measurement where they are at such an age and then how much taller at another age and how much taller at another age. That's what God has put the ministry in so that all believers may grow each part of a body, marvelously contributing its part. The body beautifully knit together and all giving its life giving strength and vigor to the whole body.

Colossians 2:19, "and not holding fast to the head". Those who go off into certain isms, and sects, and things unbiblical, and heresies are not holding fast to the head. They forget who is the one who is doing all the directing, the supervising in the body of Christ. The head Capital H, the Lord Jesus Christ from whom the entire body being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments grows with a growth which is from God. What would happen if a head were severed from a body? Why you'd be as in a telephone exchange, you'd have a whole central system. The whole p x, you see, would be gone. No the PBX would be absolutely cut off and you would have no center, no place where the arm would be told, "Don't put your hand in that fire" or the leg wouldn't go beyond its depth. What's doing that in the body? The head. The central nervous system and Christ has that wonderful function. Well what makes it that way? Paul writing to the Corinthians knew that many things were going on that were without the range of Christian testimony, he says, "does not this happen that any one of you commits a sin?" Does any one of you fall, stumble as a believer? And do not I burn", meaning do not I blush with shame? We feel it all over. why is it if something happens to believers over in parts of the world persecuted in the communist countries, in countries where Paganism is on the march, Asia, Africa, any part of the world, Why is it we feel for them? Because, for the same reason that my arm feels for any pain that's in the rest of my body. For the same reason that my legs feel pain. If I'm suffering in another portion of the body, we are one. We’re said now to be in Christ. It’s
because of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. That's the portion of every believer, regardless of his opinion or will in the matter.

Someone wrote congratulating the reverend Archibald Brown, minister of note. They congratulated him on his devoted, successful work for Christ. They had asked, "What's the secret of it? And this he said beautifully, "The answer is very simple. Fifty years ago Archibald Brown was joined up to the Main and the tap has been running ever since". Amen. That's what the baptism of the Holy Spirit does.

[End part 1a]