

# Getting the Spirit

## By James Innell Packer

Title for this morning's message is "Getting the Spirit", the Holy Spirit of God is focus. I remember the days when it was a common joke amongst theologians to refer to the Holy Spirit as the Cinderella of theology and the displaced person of the Trinity. But in fact, it has never been true among evangelicals that the Holy Spirit has been neglected. Not since John Calvin wrote of the Spirit in the way that earned him the title, The Theologian of the Holy Spirit, in the way that Augustine is the theologian of Sin and Luther the theologian of justification.

Not since the English Puritans, most notably over topping them all, John Owen, wrote with such magisterial power about the work of the Holy Spirit and the Christian life. At no point have evangelicals neglected this truth. Yet evangelicals, I believe, do have a problem with the Holy Spirit, and the problem is precisely one of getting him into focus. The problem on which I am going to try and focus now, let me explain. If while I look at you, I should take my glasses off, I should reduce you to a smudge there. I've done it now. I am pretty short sighted. You see, that is my problem. When I had my glasses off, I was still aware that you were there. I could tell I think, which if you were boys and which of you were girls. And if we were moving around the chapel and I had my glasses off, I would be able to avoid bumping into you. But you would have become, indeed you did become so indistinct at the edges. Your features became so blurred that I couldn't have given an adequate description of any of you. And if a stranger had entered the chapel while I had my glasses off, I could have pointed to him, but his face would just have been

a blob. I would never have seen the expression on it. You and he also the would be right out of focus until my glasses went back on my nose.

Now, John Calvin did not use many illustrations, but the few that he used were good. And one of these was a comparison between the way in which purblind folk like me need glasses to put print and people into focus and the way in which we all need scripture to bring into focus our sense of the divine. When Calvin stated this comparison in general terms only. But he clearly had in mind specific biblical truths as the means whereby focus is achieved.

He believed that everyone has some inklings of the reality of God, but they're vague, smudged inklings, so he believed, and you don't get God properly into focus until you're thinking correctly about His character, His sovereignty, His salvation, His love, His Son, His spirit, and all the realities of His works and ways. And only the scriptures will enable you to do that. Well, I am similarly saying that we today have a problem of that kind.

With regard to the Holy Spirit, we have all of us, I trust, real and vivid experience of the life and the power of the Holy Spirit. But nonetheless, we may not as yet have him in focus. We may not as yet have learned to think about Him biblically in all respects. This is, I believe, a very widespread problem in the church at the present time. That may sound paradoxical to you. For after all, these are days in which the work of the Holy Spirit is emphasized and life in the Spirit is very much talked about.

We all know that. But nonetheless, I am suggesting to you there does seem to be a problem of focus here, and it's to their problem that I want to address myself this morning. The ideal, of course, is that understanding of the Bible teaching about the Spirit as about every other matter on which God in his generosity shows us mercy and gives us grace, would precede our looking to God for the blessing spoken of and our receiving of the gifts that are promised, but God is a very generous God, and it is His way over and over to give more in the way of blessing, than as yet, we understand.

I hope that truth about God is not new to you. Take the case of the disciples, and as we read of them and their spiritual condition in the Gospels, Jesus told them that they were clean through the word that he'd spoken to them well before they understood the doctrine of the atonement. But nonetheless, they loved Him. They given their hearts to Him. They were committed to Him. And that was true faith, and through true faith, real forgiveness of sins that come to them. And they were new creatures in Christ, even though the doctrine as yet was quite opaque to them.

And God is still generous. Jesus is still generous. And one can know much of the life of the Spirit, while one's thoughts about the doctrine of the Spirit are still quite uncertain and confused. What applies here is the promise in Jeremiah 29, 13 and 14, when the Lord says when you see where the Lord says when you seek me with all your heart, I will be found by you, says the Lord. If we have sought with all her heart, we shall have found and found, perhaps beyond our understanding. Now, don't misunderstand me. I am not saying that God blesses the ignorant, the intellectually erring by reason of their own ignorance and error. And I am not saying that God does not care whether we know and grasp his revealed purposes or not. Nor do I suggest that

ignorance Sunday of ever unimportant for spiritual health, so long as one has a good and honest heart and a genuine passion for God.

That when God blesses, he blesses by blessing to us something of his truth. And that misbelief as such is by note, in its own nature, spiritually barren and destructive. Our certainties and certainties which are not challenging for a moment. But anyone who deals with souls will again and again be amazed at the gracious generosity with which God blesses the needy ones. What looks like a very tiny needle of truth hidden amid whole haystacks of mental error. As I've said, countless sinners truly experience the saving grace of Christ and the transforming power of the Spirit.

While their notions about both are erratic and largely incorrect. God, to be sure, is blessing to them. The bit of truth that they have. But the bit of truth is surrounded by ideas which are fuzzy, perhaps misaligned, perhaps distorted, and which need correcting by scripture. We should be grateful that God is thus generous. Where would any of us be? If God's blessing had being withheld until all our notions were right? Every Christian, without exception, experiences far more in the way of mercy and help than the quality of our notions warrant. I do. You do. We all do. But nonetheless, we would all appreciate the Spirit's work much more, and maybe avoid some pitfalls concerning it if our thoughts about the Spirit himself were clearer than they are, and that's the point at which these lectures are intended to give some help.

What I am suggesting to you is that whereas great attention is being given today to the Holy Spirit, who He is and what He does and the individual and the church are ideas about Him are in

many cases out of truth. Let us try together to get our thinking a little bit straighter than it has been. And the way that I'm going to come at this this morning is to look at some of the ways in which thinking about the Holy Spirit is organized by teachers and believers in our time. I am going to look at three ways of organizing it. Three focal centers for thinking about the Spirit and suggest to you that they're are not really as central as those who those who make them central assume them to be. And then I'm going to suggest to you the idea, which, as I believe from scripture is central and around which are thinking concerning the Spirit ought to be organized.

So the first notion, first focal center for organizing thought about the Spirit: Power, the idea of power. There are, as you know, people who see the doctrine of the Spirit as essentially about power in the sense of God given ability to do what, you know, you ought to do and indeed want to do. But feel that you lack the strength for. Examples include saying no to cravings, or sex, drinks, drugs, tobacco, money, kicks, luxury promotion, power, reputation or whatever; being patient with folks who try your patience, loving the unlovable, controlling your temper, standing firm under pressure, speaking out boldly for Christ, trusting God in the face of trouble. In thought and speech, preaching and prayer, the Spirit's enabling power for action of this kind is the theme on which some folk constantly dwell. Now what should we say about this emphasis? Is it wrong? No, indeed, just the opposite in itself. It's magnificently right for power, usually.

Don Imus in the New Testament, sometimes [greek word] as I guess you know, power is a great New Testament word and empowering from Christ through the Spirit is indeed a momentous New Testament fact. One of the glories of the gospel, one of the marks of Christ's true followers everywhere. There's a whole host of texts which I could quote to prove that if proof were needed.

From Jesus word to the apostles before Pentecost, stay in the city till your clothed with power from on high and the promise you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; through to Paul's statements about his about his experience when is he asked the Lord to heal is thorn in the flesh. And Christ said to him: "My grace is sufficient for you. My power is made perfect in weakness". And he then reacted by saying, "I will all the more gladly, then boast of my weaknesses that the power of Christ may rest upon me", or the way in which he emphasized this to Timothy, that God has given Christians a spirit of power and love and self-control. And the way in which in a prison situation, where death summary execution was at least a possibility for him, he cries triumphantly, "I can do all things that is all that God calls me to do in him who strengthens me. That is him who gives me power". Philippians 4:13.

There is no mistaking the thrust of texts like this. What we're being told is that supernatural living through supernatural empowering is at the very heart of New Testament Christianity so that those who, while professing faith, do not experience and show forth this empowering are really suspect that New Testament standards their Christianity is not up to the mark. Their Christianity may be phony altogether. And this empowering, according to the New Testament is always the work of the Holy Spirit, even when Christ only is named as its source for Christ. Is the Spirit-giver John 1:33, 20:22, Acts 2:33, etc.. So power from Christ through the Spirit is a theme that should always be given prominence whenever and wherever Christianity is taught.

Now, for more than three centuries, evangelical believers have been making much of God's promise and provision of power for living. And we should be glad that they have, but not only is this, as we see a key theme in scripture; it speaks to an obvious and universal human need. All

that are realistic about themselves are from time to time overwhelmed with a sense of inadequacy. All Christians again and again are forced to cry out; "Lord, help me, strengthen me, enable me, give me power to speak and act in the way that pleases you, make me equal to the demands and the pressures which I face!" We are called to fight evil in all its forms around us, and we do need to learn that in this battle, the Spirit's power alone gives victory, whereas self-reliance leads only to the discovery of one's impotence and the experience of defeat.

Evangelicals' stress on supernatural sanctity through the Spirit and supernatural enabling through the Spirit as something real and necessary has been and always will be timely teaching.

The power of the Spirit was first taught in this way with emphasis by the 17th century Puritans.

But after their time, it became a matter of debate among evangelicals for in the 18th century.

John Wesley began to teach that the Spirit will root sin out of our hearts entirely in this life. That was the scriptural holiness which Wesley believed that God had raised up Methodism to spread.

Non Wesleyan's recoiled. They saw the claim as unbiblical and elusive, and they constantly warned folk against it. So there was tension. But then by the second half of the nineteenth

century, the pendulum of reaction seemed to have swung too far. And many felt, rightly or

wrongly, that anti perfectionist zeal, anti Wesley and zeal had left Christians simply unaware that

God has power to deliver from sinful practices and to energize a calmly triumphant righteousness and to give piercing fish efficacy to preachers' utterances. And quite suddenly, the theme of

power in human lives caught on as the topic for sermons, books and informal discussion groups -

what in those days were called conversation meetings. This happened both sides of the Atlantic

and the things that were said by such as Phoebe Palmer, Aslan Mehan Robert and Hannah

Piersall Smith, Evan Hopkins, Andrew Murray, Rubin Archer Torrey, Charles Trumbull, Robert

McCulkin, F.B., Maya Handley Mole and others who spent their strength proclaiming what they called the secrets of power for believers. That was hailed as virtually a new revelation. Indeed, the teachers themselves took it to be such. And from the middle of the last century, a new evangelical movement which historians now call The Holiness Revival was offered running. In some circles, it still lives.

Now this isn't the only way in which the power theme has been developed among evangelicals. The power of Christ not only to forgive sin, but also by his spirit to deliver from enslaving evil is becoming again what it wasn't the first Christian centuries. A major ingredient in the church's evangelistic message. I put it that way, because until the beginning of this century it wasn't so. Evangelistic preaching focused on the forgiveness of sins and the hope of heaven, but not on the power of a new life. In this century, then, there's been a recovery of something important at a real enrichment of preaching in evangelistic situations. This is so this has been so both in the urban west where the evil face is usually the power of destructive habit and also among tribal communities where the evil is still often the power of malevolent demons recognized as such. Older evangelism, with its stress on law and guilt and judgment and the glory of Christ's atoning death, certainly had strengths which today's evangelism lacks. But on the whole, it made little of the power theme, and so was to that extent, I think the poorer.

Well, since God's promise and provision of power is the reality, it must surely be judged a happy thing that the topic should be highlighted in the ways that I've described, and the fact that emphasis on it in one form or another now marks virtually the whole of mainstream evangelical Christianity, along with the worldwide charismatic movement, is surely a hopeful sign for the

future. And yet, yet pleasure in today's power talk cannot be unmissed. Our experience shows that when the power theme is made central to our thinking about the Spirit and isn't anchored in a deeper view of the Spirit's ministry with a different center, unhappy disfigurements very soon creep in.

What sort of disfigurements? Well, take these for starters: Pietistic concentration of interest on the felt ups and downs of the soul as it seeks power over this. And that tends to produce some egoistic, introverted cast of mind which easily becomes indifferent to community concerns and social needs. The Spirit's work tends to be spoken of man-centeredly, as if God's power is something made available for us to switch on and use. That's the word that is employed: USE it, by a technique of thought and will for which consecration and faith is the approved name. Folk talk as if God's power works automatically in us so far as we let it do so, so that in effect we regulated by the degree of consecration and faith at any one time. And as if inner passivity waiting for God's power to carry us along is a required state of heart. What is that slogan, "Let go and let God" saying, if not that?

And then in evangelizing, it's almost conventional in certain circles to offer power for a living to the Spiritually needy as a resource which apparently they'll be privileged to harness and control once they've committed themselves to Christ. And I must say to you, honestly, brothers, that to me, all of that sounds more like an adaptation of yoga than Biblical Christianity. To start with, it blurs the distinction between manipulating divine power at one's own will, which is magic exemplified by Simon Makers in Acts 8, and experiencing God's power as one obeys His will, which is religion exemplified by Paul in relation to his thorn in the flesh. And furthermore, it

isn't realistic, at least not in the way that it's always presented. Evangelists' talk regularly implies that once we become Christians, God's power in us will immediately cancel out defects of character and make our whole lives plain-sailing. And that seems to me so unbiblical has to be positively dishonest. I know that God sometimes works wonders of sudden deliverance from this or that witness at conversion, just as he sometimes does at other times. But every Christian's life remains a constant fight against the pressures and pulls of this world and the flesh and the devil and his battle for Christ-likeness, that is, the habits for wisdom and devotion and love and righteousness is as grueling as it is unending.

Am I talking about your Christian life? I know that I'm talking about mine. And to suggest otherwise when evangelizing as a kind of confidence trick. Well, I'm troubled. I think that the problem here is that power given me to use, this egocentric view of the Spirit is not really the central idea that we've made it. And I think that our statements are bound to be distorted as long as we take this as the central idea. So I think we need to look elsewhere.

Now, look at a second notion, which is very common today, that which centers all thinking about the Spirit's work around the notion of performance. There are those, and we know them, perhaps we are them, who see the doctrine of the Spirit as essentially about performance in the sense of exercising spiritual gifts. For these folk, the Spirit's Ministry seems both to start and to finish with the use of gifts; preaching, teaching, prophecy, tongues healing or whatever gifts folk focus on. And they're right, of course, to see when they see that in the New Testament gifts are God-given capacities to do things specifically to serve and edify others by words and deeds and attitudes which express and communicate Christ to them. And they see that as the manifestation

of the Spirit. Gifts are discerned in action. Christians show what God enables them to do by doing it.

But they are wrong. I think when they are led by these insights to think of performance as the essence of life and the Spirit, and to suppose that the more gifts a person exhibits, the more spirit filled he or she is likely to be. There's the rub. That's the point at which it seems to me the thinking goes wrong. The supposition, let me say it again, that the more gifts the person exhibits, the more spirit filled he or she is likely to be.

We can be very glad, as I said, that the reality and universality of gifts among all believers leading to the leading to a pattern in our churches of every-member ministry and the body of Christ is so stressed, so underlined, so emphatically enforced. Today, it's a right emphasis. It's a scriptural emphasis. It's a sad thing that that for so many centuries, so many evangelicals missed it. But there are disfigurements and there are pitfalls which come along with which have come along with this emphasis. And let me spend a moment trying to say what exactly I think goes wrong here.

When attention centers on the manifesting of gifts, as if this were the Spirit's main ministry to individuals, whether we realize it or not, we topple over into the error of the Corinthians. The Corinthians were proud of their gifts. Proud of their knowledge, proud of their ability to perform. And when they met together, they were constantly performing before each other, showing off what they could do. And Paul rejoiced that they were knowledgeable and gifted in this way. And I don't believe he had his tongue in his cheek when he expressed that joy in First Corinthians,

one versus four through seven. But he had to tell them that in their basic attitude of concentration on on delight in gifts, they were showing themselves babyish and carnal and they were, in fact, behaving in ways which for Christians are inconsistent with the cause for shame. They were valuing gifts above righteousness and love and service. And that scale of value, said Paul, is wrong.

Gifts are not more important than character. Rather the other way round. And he rebuked them very sharply again and again at just that point. No church known to us received such wide ranging apostolic rebuke, as did that occurrence. The Corinthians thought themselves men of the Spirit pneumatikoi, we know that, by reason of their knowledge and gifts. But Paul labors to show them that the essential element in true spirituality, assuming spirit, given understanding of the gospel as the basis this is the essential element in true spirituality is ethical.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own. You're bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. First Corinthians 6:19 following, Glorify God, that is by righteousness. A still more excellent way surpassing all the performances which the Corinthians prized was the way of love. As Paul explains in First Corinthians 13, without love, he says, you can have the grandest gifts in the world and still be nothing. See the first three versus of that chapter that is still be spiritually dead. And he showed that he feared some in the Corinthian church were in fact, nothing in that sense. Come to your right mind and sin no more, he wrote to them, for some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame, First Corinthians 50 in verse 34.

What the Corinthians had to realize what some today may need to relearn is that as the Puritan John Irwin wrote, there can be gifts without graces. That is, one may be capable of performances that benefit others spiritually, and yet know little or nothing oneself of the Spirit-wrought inner transformation. The true knowledge of God brings the manifesting of the Spirit in charismatic performance is not the same thing as the fruit of the Spirit in Christ like character. See Galatians 5:22-23, familiar verses on the fruit of the Spirit in Christ like character. And there may be much of the former. The performance with little or none of the latter.

You can have many gifts and few graces like Samsón. You can even have genuine gifts and no genuine graces at all, like Balam and Saul and Judas. Bad news, but true. And all through the New Testament, when God's work in human lives is spoken of, the ethical is given priority over the charismatic. This is very clear in Paul's prayers for believers. He asks, for instance, Colossians 1:11 that the Colossians may be strengthened with all power according to God's glorious might for now. What ministerial exploits and triumphs through a super abundant display of gifts, strength and with all power for all endurance and patience with joy. Again, he asks that the Philippians love may abound with knowledge and all discernment, so that you what they preach and argue with cogency, or heal the sick with authority, or speak in tongues with fluency. No, the sentence doesn't end with any of those thoughts. It ends like this: So that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ Philippians 1 [verses] 9 to 11.

The ethical, I say again, has primacy. This point touches you see all those who are preoccupied with finding and using their gifts and with them all who betrayed perhaps by their own vigorous

temperament. Some of us have been given vigorous temperaments, measure the Spirits were work in themselves and in others by the number of Christian activities in which they invest themselves and the skill and success with which they manage to carry them out. But I'm suggesting that the mindset which treats the Spirit's gifts as more important than his fruit is spiritually wrongheaded and needs correcting.

And the best corrective I'm going, I'm suggesting, will be a view of the Spirit's work, which sets activities and performances in a framework that displays them as acts of serving and honoring God and gives them value as such, rather than leaving us to suppose the valuable just because they're dramatic or eye catching, or impress people or fill vital roles in the church or transcend our former expectations from the person concerned. I want theo-centricity as we think about gifts, just as I want things, theo-centricity as we think about power.

And as I hear what's being said these days, I don't always feel that I am hearing what I look for. Time's getting on, so I shall have to abbreviate a further section of exposition, which I had for you, which had to do with those for whom the whole their whole thinking about the Spirit's work takes its shape and is organized around the idea of purity purifying or propagation from the defilement of sin. There are some for whom this is the central thought.

And again, I don't wish to suggest for a moment that it's not in itself a scriptural thought. It's an extremely scriptural thought. Take one text for many, 2nd Corinthians 7 Verse 1 is a summons to us from the apostle to cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and to make holiness perfect in the fear of God. Folk for whom this is the central thought when they think of

life and the Spirit usually make much of the fact that the Christian lives in a conscious experience of the thing which to which Paul testifies out of his own experience in the second half of Romans 7 reach exceeding grasp. They aim at perfection not being matched by the achievement of perfection. They make much of the fact that Galatians 5:17 speaks of this when it says the flesh lusts against the Spirit, the Spirit against the flesh. These are contrary to one another so that you cannot do the things you would. And I believe that in stressing this divide, this element in Christian experience, they are right.

But for all that, I perceive that their emphasis, they are focusing everything as they think about the Spirit around this thought doesn't always produce the happiest results. Pitfalls surround those who make moral struggle, a struggle for purity central in their thinking about the Holy Spirit. Their tendency, I observe, is to grow legalistic and they make tight rules for themselves and for others about abstaining from things and different. They impose rigid and restrictive behavior patterns as bulwarks against worldliness, and they attach enormous importance to observing these manmade taboos. And then they become and thus they become very sick. More concerned to avoid what defiles and to adhere to principle without compromise than they are to practice the love of Christ. And they become scrupulous, unreasonably fearful of pollution where none threatens and obstinately unwilling to be reassured. And they become joyless beings, so preoccupied with thoughts of how grim and unrelenting the battle is that joy in the Lord simply escapes them.

They become morbid, always introspecting and dwelling on the rottenness of their hearts in a way that breeds only gloom and apathy. And they become pessimistic sometimes about the

possibility of moral progress, both for themselves and others. And they settle for low expectations of deliverance from sin, as if the best they can hope for is to be kept from getting worse. But surely such attitudes are spirit, your neuroses distorting, disfiguring and diminishing, and thus in reality, dishonoring the sanctifying work of God's spirit in our hearts and lives.

Granted, these states of mind are usually products of more than one factor accidents of temperament and early training. Meticulous mental habits turned inward by shyness or insecurity. A low self-image and perhaps actual self-hatred often go towards the making of these of these outlooks, and so do certain internal types of ecclesiastical culture and community. But inadequate views of the Spirit proved to underlie these attitudes, too. And that's my point. Now, these folk also, like the other two groups that we've looked at, need a different focus for their thinking about the Spirit to move them on from there, from the somber spiritual egoism that I have just described. Somber spiritual egoism, I think is the phrase that fits.

And now, let me say what I think that new focus ought to be. I return to my New Testament. I ask it what is the essence of the heart and the core of the Holy Spirit's New Covenant Ministry? I ask whether there's one basic activity to which all his work of empowering and enabling and purifying must be related in order to be properly understood. I ask whether there is a single divine strategy which unites all these facets of his life, giving action as means to one one end. And I think I hear in the New Testament an answer to my question and the central thought.

I suggest to you is the thought of presence, by which I mean that the heart of the Spirit's New Covenant Ministry is to make known the personal presence in and with the Christian and the

Church of Jesus Christ Jesus of history, who is the Christ of faith, the risen reigning savior who is there at the father's right hand. And here with us to renew our lives scripture shows. So I maintain that since Pentecost, as described in Acts to this essentially is what the Spirit has been doing all along as He empowers and enables and purges and leads generation after generation to face the reality of God. And He does it in order that Christ may be known and loved and trusted and honored and praised. That's His aim and His purpose. And it's to that end that He ministers to us as He does. This is what His new covenant ministry at its heart is really all about.

Now, when I talk of the presence of Christ in this way, I'm not talking about divine omnipresence. I'm talking about the Lord with us to bless, present, to bless, to use the old evangelical phrase. I'm talking about a knowledge of Christ's presence with us, which the Spirit gives and which results in the continuous happening of three things one person or fellowship with Jesus. I've been to and fro of discipleship, with devotion. That relationship which started in Palestine for Jesus first followers before his passion that becomes and continues to be a reality of experience.

And second, personal transformation of character into Jesus likeness takes place as we look to Jesus, our model for strength, as we worship and adore him as our enabler, and learn to lay out indeed to lay down our lives for Him and for others. And we are progressively changed into His likeness, through Christ, into to the father's families, so as to be heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ. This makes gratitude and delight on hope and confidence in a word, assurance blossom in believers hearts.

And it's as these three realities become real and continue to be real in the lives of believers that the Holy Spirit's ministry is known at its heart. You say, where do you get this from? One text for many. I get it from John's Gospel, Chapter 16 on verse 14. All that the father has is mine. Therefore, I said he shall take of mine and show it to you. Everything else in the Spirit's Ministry to New Testament believers.

I urge springs from that. I offer you this perspective, brothers and sisters then as a criterion in terms of which to judge and evaluate both from the standpoint of specific content and from the standpoint of basic perspective, allegedly spiritual man, spiritual movements in our time. Let me put it to you in pictorial parabolic language, I'm suggesting to you that the Spirit New Covenant Ministry, that self-effacing Christ exalting ministry that began at Pentecost, they probably be thought of in terms of three pictures.

First, it's a floodlight ministry. I am remembering walking towards Knocks Church Toronto, where I was to preach at a midweek service one winter evening and seeing the church floodlit. This is just the illustration that I need. The Spirit fulfills a floodlight ministry in relation to the Lord Jesus. He doesn't call attention to Himself, and floodlights are hidden away in knishes of the wall. You're not supposed to see them, but He throws light on the Lord Jesus so that you see Him in all His glory. I went in with joy and preached on the floodlight ministry of the Holy Spirit, and I offer you that picture. Brothers and sisters, it is through the Spirits Ministry that men and women see Jesus Christ. And that's how His new covenant ministry begins. And as it's a floodlight ministry.

So second illustration, it's a matchmaking ministry. You've all seen Fiddler on the Roof. You know the part which the matchmaker plays in Fiddler on the Roof. The Spirit is a matchmaker. It's as if He shines light on the Lord Jesus over our shoulder. And we hear the Lord Jesus saying, come to me, you who labor under heavy laden. And as if the Spirit whispers in our rear. Yes. Now you go to Him, and the Spirit makes the match and brings us to him in faith and repentance and commitment and love. And from that time onward we are together with Christ. The match is made, and our life through the Spirit is a life of fellowship with Jesus.

And the third picture is the picture of the Holy Spirits Ministry as an intercom ministry. You know what intercom systems are for? You can talk to folk who are not physically present with you and they hear you and they can talk to you and you hear them through the Spirit's ministry. We hear the voice of Jesus as He hears ours. And its because the Spirit fulfills a floodlight ministry under matchmaking ministry and an intercom ministry that He truly is the paraclete. You know that that great Greek word means a whole series of things which no one English word will express, comforter, strengthener, helper, supporter, advocate. Counselor. It is a big word. It has a big meaning. It's because the Spirit fulfils this threefold ministry in relation to the Lord Jesus and ourselves. The Ministry of the Floodlight and the Ministry of the Matchmaker and the Ministry of the intercom that he truly is the second Heraclitus whose ministry continues and even enlarges the ministry fulfilled by the first person paraclete, when he was on earth.

Take this. Brothers and sisters, as your focal thought or your focal trio of thoughts for judging supposedly spiritual movements. Take these thoughts as your basic perspective for preaching and teaching on the Spirit and for dealing with the Lord about the Spirits ministry to you. This, I

believe, is the way we should go as we seek to get the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in focus. This is the New Testament focus. God give us grace to make it ours, and then to prove the fullness of the new life into which the Spirit thus focused will lead us as he takes us to the feet of our savior and keeps us there. May we pray together?

Gracious God, we bless you both for the gift of Your Son to be our Savior, and for the gift of the Holy Spirit to make Him known to us and lead us to His feet. And make our lives, lives of joyous fellowship with Him in the power of that transformation, which He works in human experience and existence. Oh, help us, Lord. To get the Spirits ministry into full and proper focus in our own minds. That the power of Christ, the power of Christ to live, the power of Christ to serve, and the power of Christ to achieve holiness in the faith and fear of God may be truly ours, and that Jesus Himself may be the center of it all. So, Lord, lead us on with yourself. We pray for Jesus Christ sake. Amen.