

Topic: The Spirit in Mission, Dr Wee Boon Hup

Text: Acts 1:1-11

A. Introduction: Role of the Holy Spirit in Mission

- We are first introduced to the Holy Spirit as a Co-Creator in Genesis Gen 1:2 – ‘... and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters’
- The Hebrew meaning for ‘hovering’ is to brood, as birds do over their eggs to incubate or hatch them
- In the same way, the Holy Spirit broods over the church – He is the Director and Producer in the theatre of missions.
- The Holy Spirit moves the mission of God on earth
 - o by empowering, sending and actively participating in the unfolding of mission undertaken by the persons He sends.

B. The Holy Spirit Influences the “spirit” of Mission (through each of us)

- The word ‘spirit’ refers to the prevailing tone, climate, attitude or tone of a person, group or time period.
- The Holy Spirit was promised by Jesus to help the church fulfil its missional purpose- Acts 1:8 ‘But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth’.
- The Church was largely concentrated in Jerusalem at the time. However, following the stoning of Stephen, ‘a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1)...those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went (Acts 8:4)’

C. How Witnesses Affect the “Spirit” of Mission

- One way the Holy Spirit shapes the spirit of mission is through the persons involved in mission who are called witnesses.
- Witnesses tell what they have seen. They were present at the event when it happened, or they could have been directly affected by the event. Witnesses therefore must have experienced what they testify.
- Witnesses are willing to suffer and die for what they have experienced and deeply believe. “marturia” (Greek) is the root word for “martyrs”, Rev 17:6.
- Witnesses’ influence is ever expanding: from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, end of the earth.
- You are a witness when you have experienced the work of God in your life. Begin where you are, and as the Holy Spirit leads, you may stretch your witness to more.

- All believers are generalist-missionaries:
 - a. Everyone has to be caught up in the spirit of missions wherever we are placed.
 - b. Success should not be measured by the number of missionaries, but by how many church members are involved in missions.

- The Holy Spirit also shapes the spirit of mission through specialist-missionaries:
 - a. The Holy Spirit called the church at Antioch to set apart Barnabas and Saul (Acts 13:2) In particular, Saul was called to be an apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15).
 - b. At first glance, Saul appeared to be an unusual candidate for mission to the Gentiles. Prior to his Damascus conversion, he saw himself as a devout Jew and persecuted those whom he felt deviated from the laws of Moses (followers of Christ). It is worth noting that he was devout despite not having come from Jerusalem, but Tarsus, a non-Jewish environment.
 - c. As such, he was the right person to make the gospel relevant to the Gentiles (post conversion) as he was already endowed with the experience and skill of translating knowledge (the gospel) for a Gentile context.
 - d. His ability to maintain the truthfulness of the gospel amidst translation in a Gentile context is evident in his non-insistence on circumcision for the Gentiles after conversion (see Galatians 2:3 for the apostles' acceptance of his preaching to the Gentiles and their non-insistence on the circumcision of Titus, a Greek believer)

Concluding Thoughts

- The Holy Spirit empowers us all to be witnesses, not just commissioned specialists. He has bestowed all of us with different gifts (see Romans 12:4-8) and will provide what we need to do His work.
- The Holy Spirit does convict some to be specialist missionaries. The confirmation of this conviction will come through prayer.
- There are no independent (specialist) missionaries. The church is to support them and they must remain accountable to the church.

QUESTIONS

1. *The power to be witnesses for Jesus comes from the Holy Spirit. What is your relationship with the Holy Spirit like? What can you do to let the Holy Spirit empower you to be His witnesses?*

2. *“Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the world” describe an ever expanding sphere to be witnesses. Where and who would you identify as your “Jerusalem”, “Judea”, “Samaria”, and “the ends of the world”? Map it out and share with your cell group about these spheres that God may be sending you as His witness.*