

Mixed Spirits

One of the most confusing aspects of our walk in spiritual reality is the fact that we can operate under the influence of mixed spirits. We can move powerfully in the strength of the Holy Spirit and a short time later be functioning in the flesh or even under the influence of a demonic spirit. One of the clearest examples of this are some episodes between Jesus and Peter.

Examples

Jesus asked the disciples who the people said that He was. After various answers, He asked them who they thought He was. Peter spoke very clearly and emphatically.

Matthew 16:13-17 NASB

- (13) Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, **"Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"**
- (14) And they said, "Some *say* John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."
- (15) He **said* to them, **"But who do you say that I am?"**
- (16) Simon Peter answered, **"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."**
- (17) And Jesus said to him, **"Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven."**

Jesus made it very plain that Peter's answer was by revelation from the Father. So, in this instance, there is no question about the source of the revelation nor Peter's correctness of speaking it. However, just a few short verses later it is quite a different story.

Matthew 16:21-23 NASB

- (21) From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.
- (22) Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid *it*, Lord! This shall never happen to You."
- (23) But He turned and said to Peter, **"Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."**

Jesus began to tell the disciples of upcoming events in the plan and purpose of God that dealt with His suffering in Jerusalem and His death and resurrection. Peter didn't want to hear this and took Jesus aside and began to rebuke the Lord. Jesus' response is very clear. While He was

talking to Peter, He addressed Satan, rebuked him, called him a stumbling block and said that his mind was set on man's interests and not God's interests.

So, it is very clear from the Lord's response that Peter, at that time, was operating under the influence of an evil spirit and not the Holy Spirit. It is also obvious that Peter was culpable, that his flesh played a part. This is revealed by the fact that the Lord said that his mind was set on man's interests and not God's. Satan doesn't have his mind set on man's interests, only on his own; therefore, because Peter was operating from a *carnal mind*, he was open to being used by a demonic spirit.

A little later we find another situation where Peter operates from his own thinking processes. At least this time there appears to be no evil influence.

Matthew 17:1-6 NASB

- (1) Six days later Jesus *took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and *led them up on a high mountain by themselves.
- (2) And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.
- (3) And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.
- (4) Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."
- (5) While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"
- (6) When the disciples heard *this*, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified.

While Peter was speaking, the Father, Himself, overshadows them and very clearly rebukes Peter.

This instance is particularly important to us as we consider our interaction with spiritual reality. When the Lord was transfigured and Moses and Elijah appeared with Him, the three disciples were face to face with spiritual reality and did not know how to respond to it. Not knowing what to do, Peter says let's build something, a tabernacle for each of you. We always get into trouble when we are faced with spiritual reality and don't know how to react in a proper spiritual manner.

Application

In our examples taken from Peter's walk with the Lord we can see three clear interactions with spiritual reality.

1. Revelation from the Father given through the Spirit. The Holy Spirit always reveals

Jesus, since Jesus is Truth, that is, Reality. Revelations of spiritual reality by the Holy Spirit always center or focus on Jesus.

2. Thinking processes from a carnal mind that opens one to demonic influence. This frequently occurs when our desires are different from those of the Lord. Just like Peter, we don't like what the Lord is saying to us and in our own way, we rebuke the Lord and substitute our desires.
3. Thinking processes that are ignorant of spiritual truth and understanding. Not knowing what to do when faced with spiritual reality, we substitute activity based on what we think would be good.

We must learn to discern between these three responses to spiritual truth in ourselves and in others. We must, also, learn to mature in order to increase our walk in the Spirit and decrease the occasions where we interact in the natural.

Problems

The mixed spirits scenario presents problems in the Church today. For corporate maturity to occur we must address these problems.

1. **Infallible Prophets.** Once a prophetically oriented person is used mightily by the Holy Spirit there is a desire to see this repeated regularly, which is O.K., but, there is a tendency to think that every urge that he feels is the Holy Spirit, which is NOT O.K. It is easy for this one to believe that everything that he hears is a clear word from God and people had better pay attention. This will lead to him thinking that he can never be wrong and produce in him an uncorrectable spirit.
2. **Demonic Deception.** When a person is used by the Holy Spirit and also by a demonic spirit, the result is deception if you cannot discern between the two. A good example of this is William Branham, a leader in the Latter Rain movement. He was used awesomely by the Holy Spirit in the prophetic areas, especially the word of knowledge. However, according to those who were close to him, he was also open to an evil spirit that enabled him to do feats of telekinesis and other psychic phenomenon.
3. **Carnal Thinking.** This has probably done more damage to the Body of Christ than anything else. This occurs when you are trying to move in spiritual reality with the natural mind. The Scriptures tell us, "For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace," (Rom 8:6) One of the reasons that there is so little life flow in our churches is carnal thinking has produced death and not life and peace. Unless our minds are renewed, our thinking processes are contrary to God. (Rom. 8:7-8)

Requirements

There are some requirements for us to operate in spiritual reality.

1. Receive the Holy Spirit
2. Be transformed by the renewing of our mind

Jesus told us what the Holy Spirit would do when He came. [*For further study on the Holy Spirit see the teaching "The Promise of the Father" available on the website*]

Joh 16:13-14

(13) "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

(14) "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you.

On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured forth on the believers and the Lord has continued to fill believers with the Holy Spirit. It is important that we receive Him.

1Co 2:12

(12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,

It is the Holy Spirit that brings us into spiritual reality. It is through Him that we apprehend the things freely given to us by God.

1Co 2:9-10

(9) but just as it is written, "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND *which* HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."

(10) For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

All that God has prepared for us is revealed through the Spirit. We cannot comprehend these things with the natural mind.

1Co 2:14

(14) But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

This is why we must be transformed by the renewing of our minds so that we can spiritually appraise and accept the things of the Spirit of God

Rom 12:2

(2) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

This is not an optional condition but an absolute requirement if we want to walk in spiritual reality.

1Co 2:12-13

(12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,

(13) which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*.

To speak of spiritual things requires spiritual words to produce spiritual understanding. We cannot do this until our thinking processes have been transformed and we begin to think with spiritual processes. Until this happens, we run the risk of operating in another spirit, our own or an evil one, instead of the Holy Spirit.

Mixed spirits are a reality. We must discern the difference and accept that which is from God and reject that which is not.