I. Introduction.
   A. Orientation.
      1. Last week, we considered faith: the kind an unbeliever can have, and the kind that only a believer will possess.
         a. We saw that saving faith has three parts:
            (i) Knowledge: the content of the Gospel.
            (ii) Assent: the belief that those things are true.
            (iii) Trust: the actual placing our hopes in Christ alone to save us.
            (iv) They must be in this order:
               (a) You can’t believe something you know nothing about.
               (b) And you can’t trust in something you don’t believe is true.
               (c) You must have all three or you don’t have saving faith.
         b. Second, we saw that an unbeliever may have none, one or two of these, but he will not have all three:
            (i) If he’s never heard the Gospel, he doesn’t have any of these: he needs to be evangelized.
            (ii) If he’s been raised in the Christian faith or evangelized, he may have the first part, but not the second. If he has no more than knowledge, then he needs to be reasoned with (apologetics) and prayed for (that the Spirit might give him this conviction).
            (iii) If he’s convinced that the Gospel is true (through the awakening influence of the Spirit), but hasn’t trusted in Christ, then he definitely needs prayer.
               (a) It’s certainly possible for an unbeliever to know and believe the facts of the Gospel.
               (b) There are so many who believe themselves to be Christians who have only these two.
               (c) But you must have more if you are to trust Him.
      2. What is that more? It’s the regenerating power of the Spirit of God that brings with it the third element of trust.
         a. The unbeliever’s problem is not a lack of knowledge, but a heart problem: he hates the things of the Lord, more strongly than we think – as we’ll see this evening.
         b. Unless the Spirit changes his heart, he’ll never embrace Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord because he doesn’t want to.
         c. When the Spirit does this work, the heart immediately goes out to Christ in love and takes Him to be his all and everything.
         d. He produces that faith, that trust, that affection that looks to Jesus alone for His righteousness and hope of heaven.
   B. Preview.
      1. This provides us with a good background for the fourth difference Shepard points out between the believer and the unbeliever: The believer is full of the Spirit of God, while the unbeliever is full of Satan.
a. The Spirit dwells in the souls of believers, becoming within them an animating principle of life.
b. But the soul of the unbeliever has nothing of the Spirit and is only flesh, which is the same nature as that of the devil.

2. These are the two things we’ll look at this evening.

II. Sermon.
A. Let’s consider first, the condition of the unbeliever: that he is full of Satan.
1. Shepard doesn’t mean by this that he is possessed by Satan, but that he shares the same nature.
a. Consider what our text says about the unbeliever:
   (i) “For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh” (v. 5).
      (a) The flesh is the sinful nature; the things of the flesh are the things it desires, all of which are contrary to God’s will.
      (b) To set your mind on the flesh is to be bent in that direction, to desire the things God hates.
   (ii) “The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God” (v. 7).
      (a) Loving the things God hates, the one whose mind is set on the flesh also hates God Himself.
      (b) He is hostile towards Him, and would destroy Him if possible.
   (iii) “It does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so” (v. 7).
      (a) The unbeliever is in rebellion against God; he refuses to submit to Him.
      (b) His heart is so steeled in sin he isn’t even able to do so.
         (1) One important note here is that it’s not that he is physically unable to do what God requires. He just doesn’t want to do it.
         (2) God wouldn’t hold us accountable to do something that was physically impossible for us, such as jump to the moon, run 100 miles per hour, or lift 10,000 tons.
         (3) But He does hold us accountable for things we can do, but won’t, such as obey Him.
   (iv) Needless to say, “those who are in the flesh cannot please God” (v. 8).
      (a) They are completely unable to do anything pleasing to Him at all.
      (b) Consider Paul’s description of the unconverted man in Romans 3:10-18, “There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one. Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving, the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood, destruction and misery are in their paths, and the path of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.”
      (c) This is the doctrine of total depravity: man is affected by sin in all his faculties and so is completely unable to do anything to commend himself to God.
b. If we didn’t know that these things referred to an unconverted man, we might suspect that they were describing the devil.
   (i) That’s because unbelievers share the same nature as the devil.
   (ii) The devil is pure hatred of God, *but so is the flesh.*

2. Now we might ask ourselves how this can be true and yet how we can have what seem to be pleasant neighbors around us.
   a. It’s because God’s common grace, the restraint of His Spirit, holds their depravity back.
      (i) God has a plan to save His people.
      (ii) If He didn’t restrain the wickedness of men, they would destroy His people and themselves as well.
      (iii) This doesn’t change their nature, but it does hold them back from expressing all the evil that is in their hearts.
      (iv) Men are not better than what the Bible says – they are every bit as bad as this, which is why it should surprise us to see a Stalin, a Hitler, or a Saddam Hussein.

   b. This restraint will be removed in the lake of fire, where they will express all their hatred and loathing of God and for their neighbor for all eternity. Then it will clearly be seen what they are really like.

B. Second, and on the other hand, Shepard reminds us that the Christian is full of the Spirit.
   1. What does he mean by this?
      a. He does not mean that the Christian is full of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit.
         (i) There are those in charismatic circles who might argue with us on this one.
         (ii) But the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit ceased once God finished giving us His revelation in the Word.

      b. Nor is he speaking of the greater measure of the Spirit some receive who are called to a greater work or greater suffering.
         (i) Who would argue that God didn’t give Paul the apostle, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Martin Luther or John Calvin more of His Spirit to do the work He called them to? Or that He also didn’t grant them more of His Spirit for the suffering they would also have to endure?
         (ii) This is the equipping the Lord gives that is particular to a man’s calling.

      c. What he is speaking of here is the indwelling of the Spirit in every believer.
         (i) Of the One who is the opposite of the evil spirit (*Parable*, 323).
            (a) The One who is called the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2).
            (b) Who sets us free from the law of sin and death, or the flesh (v. 2).
            (c) Who fulfills the Law in us by giving us a love for holiness (v. 4).

         (ii) Of the who “binds the soul to the Lord, and keeps it so forever,” who, “never suffers that love-knot to be untied again” (325).

   d. How could these things be true of a believer and yet there be no difference between him and an unbeliever?
      (i) There must be a remarkable difference between us.
      (ii) If there isn’t, something is wrong with our spiritual condition.
2. Now Shepard is not speaking here of perfection.
   a. Perfection was an error that John Wesley fell into, among others.
      (i) It’s the idea that we can reach a state of sanctification in this life, on this side of
glory, where we no longer sin.
      (ii) Wesley believed it came through a second blessing the Lord gives through His
Spirit.
   b. If this is true, it’s interesting that none of God’s saints in Scripture knew about it.
      (i) Paul considered himself to be the chief of sinners.
      (ii) Peter denied the Lord and later fell into hypocrisy.
      (iii) Thomas was guilty of the sin of unbelief when it came to the resurrection of Jesus.
      (iv) David committed adultery and murder.
      (v) Shepard writes that those who have the Spirit are not perfect, “for,” he says, “what
do the saints more complain of than their backslidings?”
      (vi) Isaiah writes, “Why, O LORD, do You cause us to stray from Your ways and
harden our heart from fearing You? Return for the sake of Your servants, the tribes
of Your heritage” (63:17; 326).
   c. As Christians, we can and do fall away at times; but never with our whole heart, for this
is contrary to our new nature: John writes, “No one who is born of God practices sin,
because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” (1 John
3:9; 326-327).
   d. When we fall away, it can never be final, for the Spirit will always bring us back to the
Lord (329); He will never depart from them, but is always at work in us, even in our
falls.
      (i) The psalmist said, “But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling, my steps had
almost slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant as I saw the prosperity of the
wicked. . . . When my heart was embittered and I was pierced within, then I was
senseless and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. Nevertheless I am continually
with You; You have taken hold of my right hand. With Your counsel You will guide
me, and afterward receive me to glory” (Psalm 73:2-3; 21-24; 330).
      (ii) We will not fall away because the Lord holds our hand.
   e. As Christians we are not perfect, but we have a love for the perfect and want to be
perfect. If this doesn’t make a difference in the way we live as opposed to the
unbeliever, then what will?
   f. Let’s examine our hearts this evening to see whether they fit more the character of an
unbeliever – of a restrained evil – or that of a true believer – an imperfect desire for
perfect holiness. Amen.