

Who is the Holy Spirit?

1. The Holy Spirit is active.

- *Genesis 1:2, 41:38; Exodus 35:31-33; Luke 1:35*

2. The Holy Spirit is for everyone.

- *John 14:15-17; Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 3:16*

3. The Holy Spirit never leaves us.

- *John 14:17, 16:7; Galatians 5:22-23*

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West Valley Church
05/14/23
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John 14:15-18, 26. 16:7-15

Most of us are very familiar with God as our Father, and of course we wouldn't be here without Jesus the Son. But the equally important person of the Holy Trinity is the Spirit of God himself. His role in creation, in our lives, in our salvation, and in the world is vital to everything.

And yet we seem to know so little about the Spirit.

We reduce him to something like "the Force" in Star Wars movies, or we think he is some kind of mystical, behind-the-scenes ghost. But if we are to become all that God has created us and saved us to be – if we are going to live this abundant life of Christ-like holiness and purpose – we must know, experience, and give way to the Holy Spirit in our lives. Today we begin a three-part series on the Holy Spirit.

In the Bible there are lots of symbols for the Holy Spirit – breath, wind, oil, water, fire, and a dove. These symbols give us an idea of who He is, but sometimes it's hard to remember that the Holy Spirit is a person. The third person of the Trinity, and the one who comes to us when we believe in Christ. The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force or power, like electricity. The question isn't "what is the Holy Spirit?" But "WHO". In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word used for spirit is RUACH. Ruach (pronounced roo-akh) also sometimes means breath, or wind. In fact, when spoken correctly, the word engages breath and lungs by making a "kh" sound at the end. You cannot say it right without pushing air out. Every time you say it, your lungs are active, and it's a good reminder that...

1. The Holy Spirit is active.

Throughout the Bible, the Holy Spirit is called lots of names – Spirit, Good Spirit, Eternal Spirit, the Lord, the Paraclete (more on that one later), plus a whole list of other "spirit of" names – spirit of the sovereign Lord, living God, Spirit of Christ, Spirit of God, Spirit of Life, holiness, truth, prophecy, glory, and others. These words help us to know who the Holy Spirit is and what he does. This week, we'll focus on who the Holy Spirit is and next week we'll get more into what the Holy Spirit does. Let's start by going back into the Old Testament so we can better understand who he is and how he was active back then. Starting at the beginning, when Ruach is first mentioned:

Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. (Genesis 1:2)

The Spirit was there in the beginning, bringing breath and life to creation. In the

Old Testament, people didn't just have access to the presence of God. Not everyone could have the Holy Spirit. He was still in the Old Testament, but He wouldn't be available to everyone until after Jesus. Pharaoh recognized the Holy Spirit in Joseph. God had given Joseph the ability to interpret dreams:

So Pharaoh asked his officials, "Can we find anyone else like this man so obviously filled with the spirit of God?" (Genesis 41:38)

You may not be able to interpret dreams, you may not even be able to remember your dream, but this is one of many cases how the Holy Spirit was active in giving wisdom in the Old Testament. THE HOLY SPIRIT was also active with a man named Bezalel in Exodus 35...

The Lord has filled Bezalel with the Spirit of God, giving him great wisdom, ability, and expertise in all kinds of crafts. He is a master craftsman, expert in working with gold, silver, and bronze. He is skilled in engraving and mounting gemstones and in carving wood. He is a master at every craft. (Exodus 35:31-33)

Not only did the Holy Spirit give Bezalel wisdom, but He also gave Him great ability. The Holy Spirit is active in our lives giving us abilities, and gifts too. So like Bezalel and Joseph, some people in the Old Testament were able to receive the Holy Spirit, a couple other examples of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament that you can study on your own, were David, Saul, Samson, and Isaiah. In the New Testament we see the Holy Spirit active in the life of Mary before Jesus was born.

The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35)

The Holy Spirit is active throughout the Bible, but before Acts 2, people didn't just have all access to the presence of God. Usually you had to go to the Temple. But in Acts 2, the disciples received the Holy Spirit, and after that, anyone could receive the Holy Spirit. That was one of the first messages of the church was that...

2. The Holy Spirit is for everyone.

God's presence has always been a gift from God, but it was not until Jesus ascended into heaven did the Holy Spirit come down for everyone. Jesus said in John 16 that He had to go back to heaven, before the Holy Spirit would come. This was a confusing topic for the disciples, so Jesus spent some time teaching his disciples what to expect when He would be gone, to assure them that they would not be all on their own. Jesus says in John 14:

"If you love me, obey my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit..." (John 14:15-17)

Jesus taught Peter and the other disciples about the Holy Spirit and how the Holy Spirit would be coming for them, but he probably still didn't figure it out until he experienced the Holy Spirit. It's like when we learn to drive a car. You cannot just read about or be told how to drive. You have to drive it to really understand it.

After Peter received the Holy Spirit, he went around telling everyone to repent and put their faith in Jesus so they could also receive the Holy Spirit, and they did.

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)

Every one of you, and you will receive the Holy Spirit. Peter now understood that the presence of God was not just at the temple, and not just in Him, but for everyone. Paul would expand on this concept of having the Holy Spirit in us by saying to the Corinthians:

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? (1 Corinthians 3:16)

As glad as I am that you are here today in church, you can experience the Holy Spirit today even when you are not at church. If you are watching online, you can experience the Holy Spirit right where you are. We can experience the Holy Spirit in the car ride home, when you go for a walk, when you are eating dinner tonight, or at work this week. When we repent, and ask God to forgive us, he does. We are made new and given a pure heart, at that time the Holy Spirit comes into our life, He begins to help us grow and become more like Jesus, all of us.

On Mother's Day, it's always a good reminder to reflect on the lessons we learned from our mothers. One thing I learned from my mom growing up, was the importance of knowing the lyrics to a song. As a kid I liked songs that had a good beat, or fun sound, but I didn't always know what the words were. I had lots of songs I said I liked because I liked the instruments. Sometimes when I heard the words, I realized it may not be a song I should be singing, or even listening to. My kids like listening to music too, and I ask them, "what are they singing?" If they don't know, I tell them, we should know the words to the songs we want to sing. Sometimes I would sing what I thought were the words, and I would just embarrass myself because I didn't actually know the words. It was my job to feed the dog growing up, and one time during Christmas I heard a song on the radio and started singing along. Mom had to correct me when I was singing the wrong words, and even the wrong language.

As I was studying David this week and his experience of Ruach. I read through Psalm 51. When I did, I remembered an old song I learned as a kid. "Create in me a clean heart". It's a beautiful song, and it's mostly Psalm 51 put to music. David had sinned with Bathsheba, and so the Psalm was written as a prayer, asking God for forgiveness, David wanted to be cleansed of his sin, and given a clean heart. One phrase in the song, from verse 11 made sense for David to sing, as he feared losing the Holy Spirit "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me." As much as I like the song, it doesn't make sense for us to sing that line, not when Jesus already said in John 14:16 that our Heavenly Father would send the Holy Spirit, and...

1. The Holy Spirit never leaves us.

As a believer and follower of Jesus, His Holy Spirit was sent to come alongside us and help us. And Jesus said the Holy Spirit would never leave us.

Saul and Samson were some who had been given the Holy Spirit but then the Holy Spirit left them. Scriptures says:

Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul. (1 Samuel 16:14)

About Samson Scripture says:

"He did not know that the LORD had left him. (Judges 16:2)

David may have been writing Psalm 51 as a reflection on what he had seen or heard from these past leaders. David was probably worried the Holy Spirit would be taken like when it happened with Samson and Saul. We do not have that problem though.

Jesus probably was aware that the disciples may have been also worried about this as well. Which is why Jesus told the disciples, the father will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you...the Holy Spirit never leaves us.

If Jesus said it, then I believe it.

But there may be times when you may feel alone, but that doesn't mean you are. How we feel, does not determine who God is. Since Acts 2, God's presence is always with us, being the advocate we need. When Jesus promised to never leave us, the Holy Spirit was the fulfillment of that promise.

In John 14:16, John uses the Greek term paracletos. The most common English translation, for this is advocate, but it's also translated as comforter, consoler, helper, and counselor. The literal translation is "someone who is called to come alongside someone else". Not just alongside us when we feel like it, or when we feel like we need comfort or help, He comes alongside us and will be with us forever. The paraclete teaches us and reminds us of everything Jesus said. In verse 17, here is a little more about what Jesus said to the disciples about the paraclete, the Advocate.

He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. (John 16:17)

Scripture often uses the expression "the world" in reference to the people who reject God. This is one of the amazing things about John 3:16, "for God so loved the World, for God so loved the people who reject God, that He gave His Son. God's love is for everyone. The Holy Spirit isn't forced on anyone though. You can reject the Holy Spirit just like you can reject God's love. Not sure why you would, but you can, and some do. The disciples knew the Holy Spirit because they knew Jesus. If you remember when Jesus was baptized, the disciples witnessed the trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Disciples heard from heaven, "this is my Son, who pleases me", and saw the Holy Spirit come down like a dove on Jesus. So in

John 14:17, when Jesus says about the Holy Spirit “you know him because he lives with you now, “the Holy Spirit was with them, because the Spirit was with Jesus. And then Jesus said that later the Holy Spirit would be in them. They’ll understand that more in Acts 2, when they experience Him.

Jesus called the Holy Spirit the one who leads into all truth. But just a few sentences before this in verse 14:6 Jesus answered:

“I am the way and the truth and the life.” (John 14:6)

The Holy Spirit leads us in following Jesus, He brings glory to Jesus. We can know the Holy Spirit because we know Jesus.

The disciples didn’t want Jesus to leave them.

The disciples had lived with Jesus and learned from him for a few years but still, they always had questions for Jesus. They had left their homes and families to follow Jesus. Who would lead them and help them if Jesus left? They had been through the emotional rollercoaster of seeing him die, then come back to life, and now he was going to leave again.

Jesus knew they were a little nervous about him leaving again, so he told them in John 16:7...

But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate won’t come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. (John 16:7)

As great as it was for them to be around Jesus, Jesus knew it would be best for his followers to have the Holy Spirit.

I used to think how easy it would be to follow Jesus back then. If I could just be with Jesus, it would’ve been so easy to be a Christian. The good old days. Less distractions with technology so I could read my Bible and pray more. No sports on the weekends so I could focus on Church. If it was so easy back then, why did the disciples run and hide when Jesus died. Why did the crowds shout to crucify Him, instead of believing He was God and follow Him?

Following Jesus wasn’t easy then, and it isn’t easy now. But God gives us His Holy Spirit so we can know the truth. So we can know God and listen to Him as He comes alongside us. So we can share the good news and the message of Jesus as we learn how to live by the energy and influence of God’s spirit.

Jesus is in heaven, but the Holy Spirit points us to Jesus. The spirit reminds us of God’s plan and our role in it.

When we choose to follow God, His Holy Spirit lives inside us. With the Holy Spirit at work in our lives, we begin to produce fruit. Fruit of the Spirit. The Greek word that we translate as “fruit” doesn’t just mean fruit in the sense of edible food, it can also be translated as offspring, deed, action, result, or profit.

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)

If we have the Holy Spirit in us, the result will be these actions. If you have chosen to follow Jesus, which fruits of the Spirit are missing in your life? The Holy Spirit wants to help you produce fruit as you continue to follow Jesus. As we close, I want to pray for us, and pray for the Holy Spirit already at work in our lives. If you want to pray up here, you can.

1. If you want to ask the Holy Spirit to help you produce fruit, produce results of the Spirit in your life, a particular one, or just more in general, let's do that.
2. If you have been feeling lately like you don't have an Advocate, or a comforter or helper alongside you, don't leave today without coming to God and telling Him what you need. So you can leave today with the assurance, that His Holy Spirit is with you, just like Jesus promised He always would be.
3. And if you want to receive the Holy Spirit, but you haven't taken the first step of asking for God's forgiveness and committing your life to following Jesus, you can make that choice today too.

Prayer

The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 8:11 an encouragement to the believers in Rome, and to us today:

“If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.” (Romans 8:11)

Now, don't miss that—Paul is saying that the Spirit who resurrected our Savior Jesus from the dead, lives in YOU, today!

I'd like to challenge you to seek him this week so we can all produce fruit of the spirit, proof of who He is in our lives. If you have chosen to follow Jesus, then you have the living presence of God in your life, His Holy Spirit. Let's start acting like it.

Thanks for worshiping with us today and God bless you as you go.

Happy Mother's Day!