

Living by and with God's Spirit John 14:15-21 Romans 8:5-11

Portions adapted from "What The Holy Spirit Can Do For You," by Coz Von @ SermonCentral.Com

It's been said...

God is like Eastern Airlines ... He is the wings of man

God is like General Electric ... He lights your path.

God is like Bayer Aspirin ... He works wonders.

God is like Hallmark Cards ... He cares enough to send the very best.

God is like Coke ... He's the real thing.

God is like Tide ... He gets the stains out that others leave behind.

But the one I like best:

God is like Scotch Tape ... You can't see Him, but you know He's there.

These last two, especially refer to God the Holy Spirit.

As we continue this series of "Majoring on the Majors," looking into those uncompromisable Biblical truths that shape our faith and daily life, we've already learned something about God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son, so today lets think together about the Holy Spirit.

What is the Holy Spirit – or better – "**Who is the Holy Spirit?**"

Of course we say that the Holy Spirit is in some way or another God. One distinctive of Christian faith is the **doctrine of the Trinity**: Our belief that God is made up of three persons functioning as one: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit coexisting in the unity of the Godhead.

While we just cannot figure out how this three-in-one nature of God works and even though the word Trinity isn't found in the Bible, the concept is clearly taught. When Jesus sent his apostles, and by extension now us, out into the world, he said

Go! Baptize the nations
in the name of the **Father**
and of the **Son**
and of the **Holy Spirit**,
Matt. 28:19



In his letter to the Church, the Apostle Peter described us Christians as those

who have been chosen and destined
by **God the Father** and sanctified
by the **Spirit** to be obedient
to **Jesus Christ**
and to be sprinkled with his blood
1 Peter 1:2

Thus, the Apostle Paul closes his second letter to the Corinthians with this prayer

May the grace of the **Lord Jesus Christ**,
the **love of God**,
and the communion of the **Holy Spirit**
be with you all.
2 Corinthians 13:13

That word "communion" might have better been translated: *and the "SHARING IN" of the Holy Spirit be with you all.* Think about this for a moment:

We live through the love of God, and
We live by the grace of Christ, and
We **share the Holy Spirit among ourselves.** How do we share the Holy Spirit among ourselves? That is a thought we will come back to.

Now, I can understand **God** without having seen a picture of Him because, even though the Bible says that "God is Spirit," it also describes Him in quite human terms (John 4:24).

Daniel pictured God with clothing as white as snow and hair that's white like wool (Daniel 7:9).

Ezekiel said that God has the appearance of a man (Ezekiel 1:26). And other biblical writers speak of "*the eyes of the lord*," "*the hand of the Lord*," and "*the mouth of the Lord*" (Psalm 34:15; Ezekiel 8:1; Jeremiah 9:12,).

Jesus is even easier to understand. Realize that while there are thousands of pictures, of Jesus, all of those artists – not having actually seen him – were just guessing. And while I don't have a photograph of Him either, he was a human like me, he looks as I imagine how Jewish people of his day looked. Jesus is real to my imagination in the same way that Julius Caesar and Genghis Khan are real to me.

But, the **Holy Spirit** is, well, spirit, And while the Bible describes the Spirit as a **Counselor** and an **Intercessor** and says that **He dwells within us** (John 14:16, 17), these are all abstractions. None of them puts a nail in the wall that I can hang a picture on. I suppose that's why it's harder for us to think of the Holy Spirit as real than it is to think of either God the Father or God the Son as real.

However, the Bible does describe the Holy Spirit in very specific terms. **Jesus spoke of the Spirit as a Person** as an intelligent Being who was distinct from both Himself and God the Father. So, who is this Holy Spirit? Why is He important to us?

1. **The Holy Spirit is that Portion of the triune God who lives within us**

Shortly before Jesus left this earth, He broke the news of His coming departure to His disciples. Naturally, they were quite distressed and asked whether they could go with Him. He said no. But then He made this promise

*I will ask the Father, and he will give you
another Advocate, to be with you forever.
This is **the Spirit of truth** **You know him**,
because he abides with you, and **he will be in you**"
John 14:16,17*

Whenever the Bible speaks of either the Father or the Son dwelling in us, it's through the Spirit that this happens. This is apparent from Jesus' own words. Immediately after telling His disciples that the Spirit "*abides with you, and he will be in you,*" Jesus said, "*I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you*". (verse 18). By that, Jesus meant that He would be "*coming to*" His disciples — and to you and me — through the Holy Spirit.

Paul often wrote about us being "in Christ" and Him being "in us" (Romans 8:1, 8). Again, it's through the Spirit that this happens.

More importantly for our salvation, the Holy Spirit is that portion of God's person placed within us to work as a seal on our lives, reserving us as God's own until the day of our "redemption" when God calls us home (Ephesians 4:30).

2. So the Spirit who "abides with us," actually lives somewhere within our bodies, in our minds. He is that member of the Godhead who physically, personally, touches our life; holding us secure until God brings us home. **But The Spirit is also working to change our thoughts and feelings**

I propose that if we allow Him to, the Spirit will actually change our brain chemistry. This thought comes from what Paul said in Galatians about "*the works of the flesh*" versus "*the fruit of the Spirit.*"

Now the works of the flesh are obvious:
fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry,
sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger,
quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness,
carousing, and things like these. Galatians 5:19-20

Notice that these are mostly emotions and desires; ways we think, feel, and interact with others

By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love,
joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity,
faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
Galatians 5:22-23

These then are characteristics and ways that we interact with others that become more prevalent in our lives as the Spirit changes us. But here is the most important truth:

If we live by the Spirit,
let us also be guided by the Spirit.
Galatians 5:25

In other words, if/when God's Spirit dwells in you, He should be changing the way you think and feel! Jesus spoke of this change as being "**being born from above**" (John 3:3), and a moment later He said it meant being "**born of the Spirit**" (verse 8).

Paul said that the *Spirit of God* that is living with us, helps us to understand spiritual concepts that seem foolish to those *who are unspiritual* (1 Corinthians 2:12–14). That is why Paul urges us ...

Do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewing
of your minds, so that you may discern
what is the will of God
Romans 12:2

3. It is the Spirit who enables us to be so transformed, who works to renew our mind, so that we will bear the fruits of the Spirit. Because living within us, **the Spirit helps us understand ourselves.**

We humans seem stubbornly incapable of admitting our own faults. It began with Adam, who blamed his wife when God asked him why he'd eaten the fruit from the forbidden tree.

There can be two reasons for this denial.

- First, perhaps because we enjoy our sins, and we don't want God telling us we can't have them.
- Second, because certainly we are ashamed of our sins and would rather no one found out about them.

The odd thing is that these sins — we often call them addictions these days — may be destroying our homes, our professions, and even our very lives, yet we keep on doing them! That's why we need God's Spirit to help us understand ourselves and to help change us. .

Jesus said that the Spirit would convict us of sin and guide us into all truth (John 16:8, 13). And the truth the Spirit is especially anxious to show us is the truth about those sins that are destroying us.

Rosaria Butterfield, who I mentioned last week, was a tenured professor in feminist studies at the University of Syracuse and a militant lesbian, but as she read through the

Bible, God's Spirit began to show her that what she formerly thought was true was actually all lies and that her life had to change – and it did. She writes ...

My friends from the gay community were on the alert. On Thursday nights I had a regular tradition, I opened my home to anyone in the gay and lesbian community to come eat and talk about issues and needs. A regular at these events was a transgendered woman, "J," a dear friend of mine who lives in full-time drag.... I was in the kitchen and J came in to help. She told me pointblank that all this Bible reading was changing me. And she wanted to know before any more pasta could be served or wine glasses filled, what was going on in my life. ... I said, *what would you say if I told you that I'm beginning to believe that Jesus is real, is a real and risen and loving and judging Lord, and that I am in big trouble?* (*The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert, pgs 16-17*)

Rosaria's change, after she accepted Christ as her savior and was reborn from above by the Holy Spirit, was complete and quite abrupt. In just a matter of a year, she went from her former self to being a growing believer. To eventually now being a pastor's wife, raising four children, and writing books about what she is learning in her newfound faith.

Would you like to have this kind of change in your life? For some people such as Rosaria, the change can happen immediately, while for others, it takes time. But if you have placed your faith in Jesus Christ as your savior, the Holy Spirit, acting as God's seal on your life, has already taken up residence within you. You have already been "born from above," you have already been baptized by the Spirit; cleaned, sealed spiritually empowered, immersed in God's realm and placed within His family (Cf. Acts 1:5).

So, if you are a Christian, then the Spirit is already in residence, but now you must let Him fill your life. This is what I believe being "filled with the Spirit" means. I don't think there is any kind of necessary secondary baptism by the Spirit, **You have already received all of the Holy Spirit you are ever going to get, but now you must let Him have all of you.** Apparently our cooperation is required, being filled with the Spirit in some strange way is something we must allow to happen perhaps on a daily basis.

As Paul wrote to the Church in Ephesus.

*Do not get drunk with wine
But **be filled with the Spirit, ...**
Making melody to the Lord in your hearts.
Ephesians 5:15-20*

*Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise,
making the most of the time, because the days are evil.
So **do not** be foolish, **but understand** what the will of the Lord is.
Do not get drunk with wine ... **but be filled with the Spirit,***

as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:15-20)

I would suggest you add this line to your morning prayers: “*God, please help me to release Your Spirit to fill my mind, to change the way I think and feel, to align my life with your purposes this day.*” I can assure you, that if you persist in offering up this prayer, the change will happen (Ephesians 5:15-20).

4. Which brings us back to that which I said we would come back to – Paul’s benediction in which he prayed (2 Corinthians 13:13)

May the grace of the **Lord Jesus Christ**,
the **love of God**,
and the “sharing in” of the **Holy Spirit**
be with you all.

How do we share the Holy Spirit with each other?

For in the one Spirit
we were all baptized into one body ...
1 Corinthians 12.13

Several places in the Bible describe us both individually and corporately together as members of the “body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). Just as we are spiritually connected to God, we are also spiritually connected to our brothers and sisters in the faith. You can choose your friends but you can’t choose your family. WE have a mutual connection and claim on each other, to serve and be served as we grow up together in Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16).

5. Finally, there is a lot more that could be said about the Holy Spirit. For that reason I commend to you Charles Stanley’s study guide which is attached to the printed text of this sermon. But we need to conclude with this thought. **Life in the Spirit is not focused on do’s and don’ts but rather on a life lived in the love of God.**

*For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but **righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit**. The one who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and has human approval.*
Romans 14:17 -19

Did you catch it? Because of our love for God and what He’s done for us, we set ourselves apart, we seek to live holy lives. The infilling of the Holy Spirit is not to make ourselves feel good, or to condemn others, but to be pure channels of God’s love for the world. **Being filled with the Holy Spirit is not about using Him, but being used by Him.**

And, it's not so much your exact actions, but more your motives and your heart. It's about keeping a right relation with the Holy Spirit, living in peace with Him and others. Yes, you may do things that grieve the Spirit. But that's why we're told to be continually filled. To keep coming back to Him; repenting of any new sin, changing, growing, bearing the fruit of the Spirit's presence in your life.

So how do we get a fresh touch from Holy? How do we rekindle that fire in our souls? Here are three thoughts from the Book of Acts:

1. **BELIEVE** Acts 11:17
2. **ASK** Acts 4:31; Luke 11:13
3. **OBEY** Acts 5:32

1. BELIEVE – that there is more God has for you (Acts 11:17)
2. ASK– asking means you know you need Him (Acts 4:31; Luke 11:13)
3. OBEY– disobedience and sin quench His work in you (Acts 5:32)

D. L. Moody said, "I believe firmly that the moment our hearts are emptied of pride and selfishness and ambition and everything that is contrary to God's law, the Holy Spirit will fill every corner of our hearts. But if we are full of pride and conceit and ambition and the world, there is no room for the Spirit of God. **We must be emptied before we can be filled.**"

So what are you full of?

Of yourself, your own abilities, pride, your own sense of righteousness?

Or are you full of a greater power?

Have you had a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit lately?

Has God changed anything inside your heart lately?

If not, would you ask Him today to change your life and fill you up?

Let's pray about this.

11 SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

By Charles F. Stanley, AUGUST 15, 2018

<https://www.intouch.org/Read/Blog/11-special-attributes-of-the-holy-spirit>

Even as Christians, it's possible for us to be unaware of one of God's most awesome blessings. Although we may know we've been saved, we might not realize that the Holy Spirit came to live within us at that moment. And even if we've heard this truth, we may not understand who the Spirit is or why His indwelling presence is significant. The Scripture tells us everything we need to know about this amazing gift of the Holy Spirit sent to us from our heavenly Father to enable us to become and do what He desires. Consider these special attributes of the Holy Spirit:

- He convicts us of sin (John 16:8).
- He permanently indwells us (John 14:16-17).
- He seals us (Eph. 1:13).
- He teaches us (John 14:26).
- He guides us into all truth (John 16:13).
- He reminds us (John 14:26).
- He bears fruit through us (Gal. 5:22-23).
- He comforts us (John 16:7).
- He equips us with spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:4-7).
- He fills us (Eph. 5:18).
- He empowers us (Acts 1:8).

Although the Spirit comes to indwell us immediately upon salvation, His work within us takes a lifetime. His job is to enable us to do everything God desires and to transform us into the people He wants us to be. Since we now have a constant Helper reminding us who we are in Christ and equipping us for each day's challenges, we never have to struggle through life in our own strength. This doesn't mean we'll never have difficulties, conflicts, or misunderstandings; but through them all, He guards our way and gives us His wisdom. And when we sin, He immediately convicts us so we can confess and receive forgiveness (1 John 1:9).

The Holy Spirit is our source of power. When Jesus gave His disciples the task of preaching the gospel to the entire world, they had absolutely no power to carry it out (Luke 24:49). That's why Jesus told them to wait until the Spirit came. In the same way, if we hope to accomplish what God desires in our lives, we need to see Him as our source of power and strength.

The power of the Holy Spirit is God's divine ability and authority released in believers' lives for the purpose of godly living and fruitful service. When we walk in the Spirit, we're relying on His strength to accomplish God's will.

As a result, we experience the following benefits:

- We may get tired, but we won't burn out.
- We won't get discouraged by obstacles, knowing the Spirit within us will enable us to do whatever He's called us to accomplish.
- We'll trust God rather than trying to manipulate our circumstances.
- We may experience distress, but we won't become desperate.

When we do God's work in His strength, in His way, and with His wisdom, we'll be blessed no matter what goes on around us. Walking in the Spirit doesn't make life easy, but we never have to walk through it alone because our Helper is always with us.

What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? Although we're sealed and indwelt by Him when we're saved, this is not the same as being filled. To be filled with the Spirit means we have surrendered our lives to Him, acknowledging that He owns us and has the right to lead us. When we are fully yielded and walking in obedience to His will, then He has full control and fills us with Himself. (Galatians 5:19-25,

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