

Lesson 2. Who is the Holy Spirit

How can any one of us truly answer this question? How can I define with human words the very Spirit of God? If I look at the make-up of my spirit, I would say that it is where my feelings, convictions, thoughts and decisions come from. It is the life in me that holds my personality and the characteristics that make me unique. My spirit is the very essence and soul of who I am.

It is with this same approach that I would attempt to paint an incomplete picture of the Holy Spirit. We must understand; none of us can completely describe or depict who God is. He is above us. (See Romans 11:33-35) He is God; we are not. He is three, but all three are one (1 John 5:7)...

The Holy Spirit is the very personality and life flow of God Almighty. He is one of the three persons of our triune God. In Him we can know God intimately and have union with Him. The Holy Spirit comforts, speaks with precision & truth, renews our spirits, convicts us of sin, brings us back to God, reveals the future, glorifies Jesus, heals us, ministers to others through us, changes us, reproduces His likeness in us, eternally binds our salvation, and literally does the impossible. Because of the Holy Spirit, I know that God exists, that He wants relationship and that He is love. He is the life & breathe of the Word of God.

Jesus came to this earth; the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. When Jesus left this earth physically, He promised that the Holy Spirit would come and not only dwell with us, but inside us if we would give Him permission. Jesus came alive physically (born as a baby), so that we could come alive spiritually (born by the Spirit); His Spirit given to us in power because He came in weakness and conquered death by living a sinless, human life, submitting to death on a cross.

I cannot send my spirit to live in someone I love, but God can. My children may inherit some of my personality, but they are a new spirit in themselves. It is only God that can send His completeness to us, to marry our souls so to speak, transforming us into His image. It is only God that can do this, and yet still leave us more ourselves than ever. Oh, the beautiful, mind boggling ways of our God!

1. The Words Behind the Name

Let's 1st have a look behind the words used in the name of the Holy Spirit (Ghost). I've looked this up in the Strong's Concordance at www.studylight.org.

Holy : Hagios

KJV (229) - Holy One, 4; holy, 161; misc, 3; saints, 61; **NAS** (232) - Holy, 92; Holy of Holies, 1; holy, 62; holy one, 5; holy ones, 1; holy place, 7; most holy, 1; saint, 1; saints, 59; saints', 1; sanctuary, 2;

1. most holy thing, a saint

Spirit: Pneuma

KJV (385) - (Jesus' own) ghost, 2; (Jesus' own) spirit, 6; (My) Spirit, 3; (evil) spirit, 47; Holy Ghost, 89; Spirit, 111; Spirit (of Christ), 2; Spirit (of God), 13; Spirit (of the Lord), 5; Spirit (of truth), 3; human (spirit), 49; misc, 21; spirit, 8; spirit (general), 26; **NAS** (380) - Spirit, 239; breath, 3; spirit, 103; spirits, 32; spiritual, 1; wind, 1; winds, 1;

1. the third person of the triune God, the Holy Spirit, coequal, coeternal with the Father and the Son

Romans 11:33-35

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor?" "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?"

Leader's Notes

- a. sometimes referred to in a way which emphasises his personality and character (the \Holy\ Spirit)
 - b. sometimes referred to in a way which emphasises his work and power (the Spirit of \Truth\)
 - c. never referred to as a depersonalised force
2. the spirit, i.e. the vital principal by which the body is animated
 - a. the rational spirit, the power by which the human being feels, thinks, decides
 - b. the soul
 3. a spirit, i.e. a simple essence, devoid of all or at least all grosser matter, and possessed of the power of knowing, desiring, deciding, and acting
 - a. a life giving spirit
 - b. a human soul that has left the body
 - c. a spirit higher than man but lower than God, i.e. an angel
 1. used of demons, or evil spirits, who were conceived as inhabiting the bodies of men
 2. the spiritual nature of Christ, higher than the highest angels and equal to God, the divine nature of Christ
 4. the disposition or influence which fills and governs the soul of any one
 - a. The efficient source of any power, affection, emotion, desire, etc.
 5. a movement of air (a gentle blast)
 - a. of the wind, hence the wind itself
 - b. breath of nostrils or mouth

2. What does Jesus say about the Holy Spirit?

We're going to focus in on what Jesus said specifically as recorded in the book of John. Look up the following and write down what He says regarding the Holy Spirit:

John 3:5-8

- Births new life in us (Spirit gives birth to spirit)
- Is like the wind in that you can't see it, but you can feel it

John 7:37-39

- If we believe Him, He will inhabit us. The Word here says that 'out of his belly will flow rivers of living water'. The word used for belly is Koilia which means womb or innermost being. The Spirit of God inhabits us in such a deep way, as deep as our soul.
- A river (a stream, a torrent, floods) of life that continually flows out of us. This is different than what was given in the Old Testament as the Holy Spirit was given for certain purposes and for certain times. He did not inhabit someone continually. We now live with advantage; we live in the new covenant with the gift of the Holy Spirit given to us to be in us eternally.

John 14:15-16

- the Father will give us another Helper (other than the physical Jesus with us on earth) – 'Helper' Parakletos: summoned, called to one's side, esp. called to one's aid, advocate, comforter)
- He will never leave us.
- John 14:26
- sent from the Father
- He will teach us all things
- Help us remember everything that Jesus has spoken. This is stunning for we need to remember that Jesus is the Word; and in the beginning was the Word. This says to me that through the Holy Spirit we have the capability of remembering all that Jesus (the Word) has spoken throughout time as recorded in scripture (and possibly not recorded... hmmm)

Leader's Notes

John 15:26

- from Jesus
- He will testify of Jesus

John 16:7

- sent from Jesus
- it is to our advantage to have the Holy Spirit instead of the physical Jesus

John 16:8-11 *see attached commentary from Matthew Henry

- The Spirit shall convince the world, of sin; not merely tell them of it.
- Also, of Christ's righteousness, imparted to us for justification and salvation. He will show them where it is to be had, and how they may be accepted as righteous in God's sight.
- Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. All will be well, when his power is broken, who made all the mischief. As Satan is subdued by Christ, this gives us confidence, for no other power can stand before him.
- "He'll expose (reprove, convict, refute, convince, rebuke) the error of the godless world's view of sin, righteousness, and judgment: He'll show them that their refusal to believe in me is their basic sin; that righteousness comes from above, where I am with the Father, out of their sight and control; that judgment takes place as the ruler of this godless world is brought to trial and convicted." MSG Bible

John 16:12-15

- He is the 'Spirit of Truth' and will guide us into all truth. When we know the truth, there is peace
- speaks directly from Father God
- will announce and declare things that will come in the future
- He honours Jesus
- He draws off of the very life of Jesus
- Everything that the Father has belongs to Jesus and to the Holy Spirit. They work together.

John 16:20-23

- If we will ask the Father, he will give to us according to His will
- Gives joy that no one can take away. That's deep & embedded joy!

John 17:26

- He will inhabit us by His Spirit.

John 20:19-23

- The Holy Spirit brings peace.
- He wants us to receive His Holy Spirit. Ask and receive.
- We need the Holy Spirit to be strong and courageous and to go out to do the works of the Father.
- We will be able to forgive the sins of others. He will empower us to forgive & release others from the debt of their sin toward us. His Spirit will always draw us to the purposes of Jesus – to see people redeemed and saved! (Remember John 3:17 - For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.)

3. Conclusions

The Holy Spirit:

- Sent to us as a gift from the Father and the Son
- Is like the wind in that you can't see it, but you can feel it
- Testifies of and brings glory to Jesus
- Draws off of the very life of Jesus
- Everything that the Father has belongs to Jesus and to the Holy Spirit. They work together.

Leader's Notes

The Holy Spirit toward us:

You can take each of the following points and personalize them. Make a declaration of who the Holy Spirit is as He resides in you.

- Births new life in us (I declare that I am born again by the Holy Spirit in me)
- Will inhabit us if we believe and receive Him (I receive the Holy Spirit and know that He lives in me)
- Will be like a river of life that flows out of us – move powerfully through us (I have a river of life flowing powerfully through me to benefit others)
- Is our Helper, Advocate, Comforter, and Counsellor (Parakletos summoned, called to one's side, esp. called to one's aid, advocate, comforter). The Holy Spirit is my helper.
- Has been given to us for our advantage. That we can do greater things than Jesus did on earth. (I live with a definite advantage and can do even greater things than Jesus did on earth for the glory of God)
- He will teach us all things (He will teach me everything that I need to know)
- He is the 'Spirit of Truth' and will guide us into all truth (The Spirit of Truth resides in me and will lead me to the truth)
- Help us remember everything that Jesus has spoken (He will help me remember everything that Jesus has spoken. Jesus is the Word, and the Word was in the beginning. That means that through the Holy Spirit I can recall anything that 'the Word' has spoken as recorded in scripture!)
- He speaks directly from God the Father and the Son. (As the Holy Spirit quickens me, I can hear the heart of God the Father & the Son)
- He will announce and declare things that will come in the future (The Holy Spirit in me knows what tomorrow holds, and may even declare it through me. Even so, I can trust Him with the future)
- He'll expose the error of the godless world's view of sin, righteousness, and judgment (I can trust the Holy Spirit to expose sin if necessary to give me wisdom for a situation)
- If we will ask the Father, he will give to us according to His will through the Holy Spirit. (I know that if I ask anything that is the will of God, it will be done for me)

Jesus did nothing of His own initiative. He was fully God, but fully human when here on earth. It was the Holy Spirit working powerfully through Him that gave Him the words to say, the resulting miracles and the spiritual insight. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus had direct access to God's power, His thoughts, His words, His actions and His love. Now, Jesus is at the right hand of the Father ... together tangibly with Him. He has given us direct access in His Name through the Holy Spirit to everything in God.

Ponder the following statement of Jesus:

"Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it." John 14:11-14 (NIV)

This is the *dunamis* power (dynamite) or supernatural gift of the Holy Spirit. To do and say more than we are naturally capable of, all for the witness and glory of Jesus Christ!

Have you received this gift? Remember what Jesus said to the Samaritan woman: ..."If you had only known and had recognized God's gift and Who this is that is saying to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him [instead] and He would have given you living water." (John 4:10)

Why not pray right now and ask Jesus to fill you with His Living Water.

Suggestions to close with:

Take time as a group to pray:

- Ask and pray with those that may want to receive God's Spirit for the first time.
- Pray as a group to empty yourselves and be filled again with His Spirit
- Declare some of the points in the above conclusions
- Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you and bring people to your minds that you can pray for
- Worship and praise God together. Thank Him for His beautiful gift of the Holy Spirit in your lives.

If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him! Luke 11:11-13

Matthew Henry Concise Commentary

Verses 7-15

Christ's departure was necessary to the Comforter's coming. Sending the Spirit was to be the fruit of Christ's death, which was his going away. His bodily presence could be only in one place at one time, but his Spirit is everywhere, in all places, at all times, wherever two or three are gathered together in his name. See here the office of the Spirit, first to reprove, or to convince. Convincing work is the Spirit's work; he can do it effectually, and none but he. It is the method the Holy Spirit takes, first to convince, and then to comfort. The Spirit shall convince the world, of sin; not merely tell them of it. The Spirit convinces of the fact of sin; of the fault of sin; of the folly of sin; of the filth of sin, that by it we are become hateful to God; of the fountain of sin, the corrupt nature; and lastly, of the fruit of sin, that the end thereof is death. The Holy Spirit proves that all the world is guilty before God. He convinces the world of righteousness; that Jesus of Nazareth was Christ the righteous. Also, of Christ's righteousness, imparted to us for justification and salvation. He will show them where it is to be had, and how they may be accepted as righteous in God's sight. Christ's ascension proves the ransom was accepted, and the righteousness finished, through which believers were to be justified. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. All will be well, when his power is broken, who made all the mischief. As Satan is subdued by Christ, this gives us confidence, for no other power can stand before him. And of the Day of Judgment. The coming of the Spirit would be of unspeakable advantage to the disciples. The Holy Spirit is our Guide, not only to show us the way, but to go with us by continued aids and influences. To be led into a truth is more than barely to know it; it is not only to have the notion of it in our heads, but the relish, and savour, and power of it in our hearts. He shall teach all truth, and keep back nothing profitable, for he will show things to come. All the gifts and graces of the Spirit, all the preaching, and all the writing of the apostles, under the influence of the Spirit, all the tongues, and miracles, were to glorify Christ. It behoves everyone to ask, whether the Holy Spirit has begun a good work in his heart? Without clear discovery of our guilt and danger, we never shall understand the value of Christ's salvation; but when brought to know ourselves aright, we begin to see the value of the Redeemer. We should have fuller views of the Redeemer, and more lively affections to him, if we more prayed for, and depended on the Holy Spirit.