

## **Life With The Spirit Part 1**

As you know, our new sermon series and church wide emphasis upon the Holy Spirit begins this morning. Over the course of the next few Sundays we are going to talk about who the Holy Spirit is and what he has come to do. We are going to talk specifically about the baptism in the Holy Spirit and why we believe that experience is still important for us today. We will talk about what the bible says about speaking in tongues. We will take a Sunday to examine what the bible teaches about the nine gifts of the Spirit. We are going to take a look at the role of the Holy Spirit in spiritual transformation, in producing the fruit of the Spirit in our life. We will talk about the role of the Spirit in worship, in living a holy and sanctified life, in empowering us for service. We've got a lot to cover in the coming weeks, but this morning we are going to start with just some basic teaching concerning the Holy Spirit.

Almost twenty years ago I wrote a book on the Holy Spirit. Some of you will be studying it in your small group or Sunday School class so I don't want to just repeat things I wrote in the book. If you haven't read it, I would encourage you to get a copy and read it. It will give you some understanding of who the Holy Spirit is and what he desires to do in and through your life.

Some of you may have never heard of the Holy Spirit until you came to this church. Some heard the Holy Spirit mentioned in your church, but only as part of a prayer or benediction, or only on Pentecost Sunday but you never thought about the Holy Spirit's role in your daily life. You never thought about life with the Spirit. Let me share some reasons why perhaps we are confused about the Holy Spirit or why you didn't hear much about him in your church growing up. I share some of these in the first chapter of the book.

**The whole idea of the Trinity.** I know, the whole idea of One God, eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit is simply beyond our ability to grasp. We try to explain, we try to illustrate, "the Trinity is like....God is like..." The truth is God isn't like anything or anyone else. He is transcendent, he is incomparable. Though he reveals himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, still His nature and character, His person is beyond us. So when we begin to talk about the distinct persons of the Trinity – when we try to break this down and talk about the roles of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it is still beyond us to categorize and define distinct roles. Does Jesus live in our heart or does the Holy Spirit live in our heart or does Jesus live in our heart by the Holy Spirit? Did God create the heavens and the earth or did Jesus

speaking it into existence or did the Holy Spirit who according to Genesis was brooding or hovering over the whole earth create it? And the answer to some extent is yes. Yes, all the above. The answer is Yes because it is One God, eternally existent in three persons, revealing himself and his nature to us through Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

My point is the Holy Spirit is a part of the Trinity, so when anyone is talking about the Holy Spirit, they aren't talking about some strange or spooky happenings, they are talking about the Spirit of God. There is nothing scary or strange about the person and workings of the Holy Spirit, in spite of what some of you may have heard. Another reason for confusion...

**The Holy Spirit is unseen.** While we can picture the Father or we can get a mental image of the Son, it is hard for us to try to picture the Holy Spirit. In fact, coming up with one image is made even more difficult because the Holy Spirit is symbolized in a number of ways in the Scripture including a dove, oil, fire, a rushing mighty wind, a river, a cloud of glory, etc. All of these are images of the Holy Spirit and all of them reveal something of his nature and his work, but it's hard for us to try to pin down one particular image or idea concerning the Holy Spirit. Another reason we may not understand the Holy Spirit or know much about him:

**The Holy Spirit doesn't call attention to Himself.** Jesus said speaking of the Holy Spirit, **"He will not speak on his own...He will bring glory to me."** **John 16:13-14** The Holy Spirit speaks of Jesus, glorifies Jesus, testifies of Jesus, bears witness of Jesus, reveals Jesus, but He doesn't say much about Himself. Another reason for confusion...

**Overemphasis on the more dramatic manifestations of the Holy Spirit.** It isn't that we have neglected to speak of the Holy Spirit, but rather we have emphasized only one aspect of the Holy Spirit. In our churches we have often emphasized the baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues to the neglect of emphasizing Life with the Spirit! There is so much more to the Holy Spirit and his role in our lives than just Spirit Baptism. That experience is a gateway to even more of that life with the Spirit that he desires for us. More on that in the coming weeks.

Let me share one bit of clarification before we go any further. We will be talking about this separate experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit in the coming weeks, but understand that when you are saved the Holy Spirit takes up residence in your life at conversion. Jesus said, **"I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."** **John 3:5-6.** Again

in John 6 Jesus said, “**The Spirit gives life...**” **John 6:63**. This is why we call salvation being born again. You make Jesus Christ the Savior and Lord of your life and the Holy Spirit takes up residence in your life. He gives you a new heart and a new destiny and begins this sanctifying process by which you become like Jesus, reflecting his nature and character in your life. If you are born again, you have the Holy Spirit living in your heart but the bible also speaks of the baptism in the Holy Spirit which is separate from conversion and salvation, but which is an additional empowerment for service.

I believe the disciples were born again when after the crucifixion and resurrection Jesus appeared to them. The bible says he breathed upon them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” John 20:22. I believe the Holy Spirit took up residence in their heart and salvation, conversion, regeneration, new birth, whatever you want to call it, happened right then. But he then told them to wait in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from Heaven and then they would be witnesses of him to the whole world.

Understand, everything that Jesus secured and provided for us through his sinless life, his atoning death and his triumphant resurrection is given to us or made available to us through the work of the Holy Spirit. We have been experiencing life with the Spirit even if we didn’t realize it. But there is room for us to grow in our experience. Let’s look at what we know about the Holy Spirit.

**The Holy Spirit is fully God as seen in his nature.** He has all the attributes of God, i.e. He is eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent.

**The Holy Spirit is fully God as seen in His acts.** We mentioned he was active in creation in Genesis. Job declares, “The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.” Job 33:4. He is the agent of the new birth as we mentioned. We must be born of water and the Spirit. He is the agent of resurrection. “And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.” Romans 8:11

**The Holy Spirit is fully God and as such, we refer to him in personal, not impersonal ways.** The Holy Spirit is not a force at work, he is best thought of as a person. He has the characteristics associated with personality: intelligence (or mind), will, and emotion or feelings. The Holy Spirit is more than a source of spiritual power for the believer. Power is impersonal.

We want to get hold of power and use it. The Holy Spirit is a person. He wants to get hold of us and use us for our good and for the common good and to bring glory and honor to Christ.

In *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*, I listed 77 different aspects of the character and personality of the Holy Spirit and the various ways he works in us and in the church. We certainly aren't going to discuss them this morning, but let me show you a partial list just to give you an idea, an overview.

**What do we know about the Holy Spirit?** The Bible reveals the Holy Spirit as:

**The Comforter (John 14:16)** - Another like me to be with you - comforting and guiding.

**The Spirit of Adoption (Romans 8:15)** the Holy Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. By the presence of the Holy Spirit we know we are his kids!

**The Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel and might (Isaiah 11:2)**

**The Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:29)**

**The Spirit of truth (John 14:17). He guides us into truth (John 16:13)**

**The Spirit of holiness (Romans 1:4) .**

**The Holy Spirit is eternal (Hebrews 9:14)**

**The Holy Spirit has a mind (Romans 8:27)** This implies not only thought but will and intention.

**The Holy Spirit knows the thoughts of God (1 Corinthians 2:11)**

**The Holy Spirit has a will (1 Corinthians 12:11)**

**The Holy Spirit has feelings. He can be grieved, provoked, quenched. (Eph. 4:30; Ps. 106:33; 1 Thess. 5:19)**

**The Holy Spirit speaks (Acts 8:29)** "The Spirit told Philip, 'Go to that chariot and stay near it.'"

**The Holy Spirit prays and makes intercession (Romans 8:26)** "In the same way the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express."

**The Holy Spirit teaches us (John 14:26)** "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit...will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

**The Holy Spirit leads us (Romans 8:14)** "Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."

**The Holy Spirit performs signs and miracles (Romans 15:19)**

**The Holy Spirit reveals things to men (1 Corinthians 2:10-11)** “But God has revealed it to us by his Spirit .

**The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ (John 16:14)**

**The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin (John 16:8)**

**The Holy Spirit testifies of Christ (John 15:26)**

**The Holy Spirit empowers men and the church (Acts 1:8)**

**The Holy Spirit illuminates the Word of God to the believing mind (2 Corinthians 3:14-18)**

**The Holy Spirit leads and guides the leadership of the church (Acts 16:6-7)**

**The Holy Spirit calls men and women to ministry and service (Acts 13:2)** “while they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them...the two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit...”

**The Holy Spirit purges and purifies His church (Acts 5:1-11)** Ananias and Sapphira

**The Holy Spirit enables us to love one another (Romans 5:5; 15:30)** “Because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.” “I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit.”

**The Holy Spirit unifies believers (Ephesians 4:3-6)** “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

**The Holy Spirit edifies the body of Christ through the gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:1-11)**

**The Holy Spirit gives boldness to witness (Acts 1:8)**

**The Holy Spirit invites and draws men and women to God (Revelation 22:17)**

**The Holy Spirit is a pledge of our inheritance (Ephesians 1:13-14)**

**The Holy Spirit abides with us forever (John 14:6)**

**The Holy Spirit brings to our remembrance the things Jesus said (John 14:26)**

**The Holy Spirit enables and empowers us to overcome sin in our life (Romans 8:1-4, 13)**

**The Holy Spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ at salvation (1 Corinthians 12:13)**

**The Holy Spirit produces in us the character qualities of Christ (Galatians 5:22)**

**The Holy Spirit supplies strength to our inner man (Ephesians 3:16)** “I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being.”

**The Holy Spirit helps us with our worship (Ephesians 5:18-19)** “Be filled with the Spirit,

speaking to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord....”

### **The Holy Spirit flows in our life like a river (John 7:37-39)**

That’s quite a list. And this is just a partial list. What a powerful role the Holy Spirit is to play in the life of the believer. Now, why have I taken time to list all of these things? (And if you want a more complete list with the Scripture references, all of these, plus more, are in the first chapter of my book.) I want you to see the active role the Holy Spirit is to play in our life as followers of Christ. As you examine this list, consider what a life with the Spirit would mean for you. Now let me ask you:

**Given what we know, should you be reluctant to invite the Holy Spirit’s full and complete involvement in your life?** Think about it. Can you think of a reason why you should be hesitant to encourage the Holy Spirit’s involvement in your life? Based upon what we’ve learned, we can say that the Holy Spirit wants to bring comfort to you, to assure you that you have been adopted into God’s family. He wants to impart wisdom, understanding, grace and truth to your life. He wants to purify and sanctify you so you can walk closer to God. He wants to remind you of what Jesus taught and how that applies to your life. He wants to enable you to love God and each other even more. All of that sounds good doesn’t it? There is certainly no reason to be anxious about opening your life to the will and work of the Holy Spirit given his goals and desires for your life so far.

**Given what we know, what does this say about God and his desire for us?** It indicates to me his ongoing desire to reveal himself, his purposes, his will to us. Consider we said the Holy Spirit knows the thoughts of God and reveals them to us. The Holy Spirit knows the mind of God and prays in agreement with the mind and will of God for us and through us. This indicates to me that God wants to communicate with us and he does so by His Holy Spirit. This tells me that God wants me to know the truth and to live by that truth. He wants me to overcome sin and temptation and he enables me to do so by the indwelling power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

You see, God didn’t just set us adrift in this old wicked world and tell us to do the best we could. He has equipped us and empowered us with His very presence, the indwelling presence of his Holy Spirit. And the power of the Holy Spirit that is at work in us is the very

same power that raised Jesus from the dead. Romans 8 tells us if that same power of the Holy Spirit is dwelling in us, we can walk in victory over sin. We can't do it alone by our own effort, but we can do it with the help of the Holy Spirit working within us.

What does all of this say about God's desire for us? It tells me that God wants us to be learning and growing, taught by the Holy Spirit, God's word illuminated to us and made alive in us by the Holy Spirit. It tells me that God wants us to be bold witnesses by the power of the Holy Spirit. He wants us to walk in holiness, living lives that reflect and reveal to the world around us that the Holy Spirit, the Holy presence of God is living in us and because of that, we are making holy choices, living holy lives.

All of these dimensions to the personality of the Holy Spirit are to help us see what a rich experience we can have as we walk in the Spirit and live by the Spirit. All of this indicates that God desires that we walk in continual fellowship with him, being renewed daily, being sanctified, growing, gifted, equipped, refreshed, empowered, made alive, never alone but always directed and led by his precious Holy Spirit. All of this tells us he wants even more for us than we can imagine.

This is what I want for us as a church, this is what I want for us as followers of Christ. I want us to be aware of His presence. I want us to be open to all that Jesus has for us through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said, **"If you then...know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?" Luke 11:13**

If you are a born again believer, then Jesus lives in your heart and life by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. But let me ask you, **Have you given the Holy Spirit access to every area of your life?**

**Are you open to all that Jesus wants to do in your life through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit?** If so, ask the Father to pour out his Holy Spirit upon your life. Ask the Holy Spirit to advance into every part of your life. Make yourself available to the Holy Spirit of God. Tell him you are available. Tell him you are depending upon him, upon his power and presence to work in your life. Tell him you want to experience Life with the Spirit in all of His fullness!