

The Basics of Christianity

Who is the Holy Spirit?

Romans 8:5-17

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INTRODUCTION:

This morning we are continuing with "The Basics of Christianity" series. The purpose of this series is to make us more effective in our witness to those outside the church who still need to know about the Gospel.

This morning I would like to consider **Who is the Holy Spirit?** You will need fasten your seatbelts this morning because in the next 30 minutes we are going to try to present Who the Holy Spirit is, His role, and how we can get Him to dwell within us.

I am concerned that there may not be enough sermons preached concerning the Holy Spirit. He is such a large part of our Christian lives. He dwells within us, but because He is Spirit and we are of the flesh, it is sometimes hard for us to recognize His presence. Let's try to clear up our understanding this morning.

All Stand and Read Scripture

Romans 8:5-17 (NASB95)

⁵ For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, ⁷ because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*, ⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. ¹⁰ If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹ But 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.

¹² So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— ¹³ for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*.

Prayer

We are all born "in the flesh" as Paul calls it. Because of sin, we have been separated from God. This sin causes us to think about worldly things and to focus on ourselves. According to verse 6, we are driven by the **law of "sin and death"**. As sinners, we are unable to please God and are spiritually dead.

God sent His Spirit that He might indwell within us when we believe in His Son who died on the cross for our sins. But also, according to verse 6, when the Spirit dwells within us, we are driven by the **law of "life and peace"**. **The "law of life and peace" supersedes the "law of sin and of death"**.

ILLUSTRATION:

Let me illustrate what I mean using the law of gravity. A Boeing 747 jet weighs approximately 300 tons. When you apply the law of gravity to a 300 ton jet, you would conclude that it would be impossible for that plane to fly. But, when you look at the power of its engines, and watch it take off, you realize that there is a higher law in force, which does not deny the law of gravity but it simply supersedes it.

When we accept Christ into our life and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, the law of sin and death still works in our flesh, but, just like the air that is forced below the wings of the 747 to give it lift, our life is superseded by the law of life and peace through the Spirit.

When we yield to the Spirit and begin to pray and work by His guidance, He begins to do things through us that we could never expect or imagine.

BODY:

I. Identification: Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is included in the Trinity, which is made up of 3 distinct persons: The **Father**, the **Son**, and the **Holy Spirit**. Matthew 3:16-17 gives a beautiful picture of the Trinity in the Bible:

Matthew 3:16-17 (NASB)

16 After being baptized, Jesus (the Son) came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God (the Holy Spirit) descending as a dove and lighting on Him, 17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens (God) said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

The Holy Spirit is God and has existed eternally. He has had no beginning and will have no end. Although the word trinity is not found in the Bible, the Bible does teach that they are somehow One and yet Three. How can that be?

From a human perspective, it seems impossible that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit can all be God, but at the same time be three separate entities. How can God be three persons in one?

ILLUSTRATION:

Neil likes to use the following example to show how one object can take on different forms on earth. Take the case of water. When it is below 32 degrees Fahrenheit it takes on the form of solid ice. When it is between 32 and 212 degrees it is in the form of a liquid. When it reaches the boiling point of 212 degrees it becomes steam. Ice, liquid, and steam appear to be different, but they are the same, just in different forms.

The scriptures make it clear that God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all one, living eternally. They are a unity, yet they are individual, and they are one.

As we read in our text this morning, it is very clear that the Holy Spirit is a divine person who dwells within every Christian.

We also know that the Holy Spirit was the author of the Bible. Yeah, it was written by man, but their writings were inspired by the Holy Spirit. The more you read and study the Word of God, the more you see this divine inspiration in place. Such as the fulfilled prophecies of the Messiah.

If you want to know the Spirit and the mind of the Spirit, "Here it is"! He wrote the Book!

(Hold up the Bible) When our thinking is shaped by this Book's message and we submit to it, we, as Paul put it, have the Spirit dwelling within us and we have been adopted as a child of God and a fellow heir of Christ.

II. Role: What Does the Holy Spirit Do?

1) He Convicts Us of Sin.

John 16:7-11 (NASB95)

⁷ But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. ⁸ And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; ⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰ and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; ¹¹ and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

ILLUSTRATION:

Wayne Smith, a preacher for many years in Lexington, KY, whose church has multiple morning services, tells about a college girl who came to the early service and heard the sermon. She said, "I heard that morning about how we need to humble ourselves before God and respond to Him in faith, confessing His name and be baptized and I wanted to go forward in the worst way. But something inside me kept whispering, 'No, you need to wait awhile, you need to learn some more,' so I didn't go forward. All the way home that kept gnawing on me, convicting me, so I went for a drive and came back to the next service. I sat through the same sermon again and when it was over I came forward and was baptized. I'm so glad I did."

That's a good example of the Holy Spirit working through the conscience to convict. He does that before you become a Christian and continues to work that way after you surrender to Him, convicting us to live to please God.

2) The Holy Spirit Enhances Our Personality.

Galatians 5:22-23

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

When we exhibit rudeness, selfishness, anger, impatience -we're out of control! Out of the control of the Holy Spirit. Being a Christian is not just coming to Church and singing songs, praying and listening. Jesus wants to be Lord of our lives, the Holy Spirit wants to assist us in our effort to serve Him and be like Him every hour of our existence.

3) The Holy Spirit Guides Us in Our Daily Lives.

There are several occasions in the Bible where the Holy Spirit directed people. In **Acts 16** it is clear that Paul was forbidden by the Holy Spirit to go into Asia and was guided instead to Macedonia. In **Acts 8** Philip was told by the Spirit to approach the Ethiopian eunuch and clarify the passage of scripture that he was reading.

There are two very distinct times when I believe I was directed by the Holy Spirit.

ILLUSTRATION:

I was a junior or senior in high school and was plowing a long narrow field that belonged to my grandfather Lowry. I was singing and praising God in song as I plowed. When I finished with a song, I would randomly start with a random beat and note and let it lead me into another song. This had gone on for some time and I am sure no one could hear me above the tractor noise except God. I received a chill across my body and heard the Spirit in an silent voice tell me to attend Bible College and go into the ministry.

The second time was about 11 years ago. June and I had not been attending church and decided that we needed to start again. We looked at several churches in the Kansas City area and couldn't find a traditional service in a church that we liked. One day as I was working in the shop, I felt the Holy Spirit say to me, "**If you can't find one, start one.**" Just a few weeks later, we attended Greenwood Christian Church and found our church home. After two years, the minister left and I was selected to minister here until they could find someone to take my place. **I guess they are still looking!** I truly believe that this ministry is happening because of the Holy Spirit's call that day in the shop.

Maybe you have experienced a similar experience. The Holy Spirit will guide us, when He needs you to accomplish God's will. The important thing to learn here is that the Bible teaches that He will guide you, so be open and sensitive to His leading.

4) He Intercedes for Us in Prayer.

Romans 8:26-27 (NASB95)

²⁶ In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words; ²⁷ and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*.

The Holy Spirit is our prayer partner. How wonderful God is to provide such matchless assistance in our prayer.

5) The Holy Spirit Comforts Us.

There are many ways that the Holy Spirit can comfort us. One is that all things will work together for good for those who love the Lord. Despite the trials that we face on this earth, if we remain steadfast in our faith, God has promised eternal life with Him in Heaven when we die or Jesus comes again.

Another is that we have a hope that the world cannot have.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NASB95)

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain

will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

When Dad died on October 16th, 2013 I was and still am at complete peace with his death. I would certainly like to see him again and be able to visit with him, but I am completely comforted knowing that he was a child of God and, if I remain steadfast, I will get to see him again in Heaven.

6) The Holy Spirit Will One Day Raise Us from the Dead!

Those who have the Holy Spirit in them have a "glorified" body to look forward to one day when Christ comes.

Romans 8:11 (NASB95)

¹¹ But 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.

Death will be swallowed up in VICTORY! Everyone who dies and is a true follower of Jesus Christ will experience a new imperishable being at the second coming of Christ. The scriptures say it will happen in the twinkling of an eye. Won't that be wonderful! Millions and perhaps billions of people will be made alive again. Every person that has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit will be alive again eternally with God in Heaven.

Now, just think of all the things the Holy Spirit does for us. He convicts us of sin, He enhances our personality, He guides us in God's Will, He intercedes for us in prayer, He comforts us in our trouble, He raises us from the dead and more.

So, the most important question to answer this morning is **How can I receive the free gift of the Holy Spirit?**

III. Interaction: How Can We be Filled with the Spirit?

1) Comply with God's Conditions to Receive It.

Acts 2:38 (NASB95)

³⁸ Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible teaches that every person that submits to Christ will receive the Holy Spirit at their conversion. It is not a gift that we can earn. It is a free gift from God. We receive it by believing in Christ, repenting of our sins, and obeying Christ's command to be baptized for the remission of sin.

2) Saturate Our Minds with Scripture.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB95)

¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Maybe the most powerful way the Holy Spirit works is through the Word. When we read, study and memorize the Scripture we allow the Spirit use that scripture to direct us in our life. We are able to distinguish between good and evil and make the right decisions in life.

3) Be Filled with the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:17-18 (NASB95)

¹⁷ So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

The comparison here between wine and the Spirit helps explain the phrase.

ILLUSTRATION:

If we talk about someone who is filled with liquor we mean that he has surrendered his own control and the liquor is controlling his actions. If we talk about someone being filled with the Spirit we are talking about someone whose actions are dominated by His love. When the Bible talks about being filled with the Spirit it means that we are to be dominated by the Spirit.

We allow Him to control us. We read His Word and live by it.

CONCLUSION:

Our desire and our prayer this morning should be like a song we sing.

Break Thou the Bread of Life

(Sing) O send Thy Spirit, Lord, Now unto me, That He may touch my eyes and make me see:

Show me the truth concealed Within Thy Word, And in Thy Book revealed I see the Lord.

Do you have the Holy Spirit dwelling within you?

As we read in our scripture, "If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ." If you do not belong to Christ, then you are not an adopted child of God and you have no hope of an eternity with God in Heaven.

The Family of God.