

“The Holy Spirit - God With Us”

John 14:15-17

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I preached an introductory message on the subject of the Holy Spirit last week but today officially begins our 10-week summer series called “Wind and Fire – Knowing the Spirit”.

There’s been a fair amount of interest already expressed in this series.

So what do we expect?

- To understand what makes us different or like the Pentecostals and Charismatics?
- To get some hand-raising, “hallelujah”-shouting joy into our worship experience?
- To learn about speaking in tongues?
- My friend says the Spirit leads him or that the Spirit told him such and such. I don’t experience that. Is that biblical?
- The disciples were filled with the Spirit and did miracles of healing – are we supposed to do that or is that just for Benny Hinn?
- Some people seem so “alive” in their faith while I feel “comatose”. How do I get what they have or should I even expect it?
- “Everybody” talks about his or her “gifts”, gifts of the Spirit – do I have one, should I, how do I know?

The Holy Spirit is not a recent invention:

John Calvin in the 1500s honors the Holy Spirit by understanding and proclaiming the role of the Holy Spirit in becoming and living as a Christ-follower.

In the 1600s the Puritans, particularly John Owen, continued to emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit, leaving us profound and extensive writings on the Spirit’s ministry.

In the 1700s, the Great Awakening, in which preachers such as Whitefield and Edwards led the way in understanding and applying the Spirit's work in reviving his church and enabling it to pursue its mission.

In the 1800s Charles Finney contributed to a sea change, a new way of thinking about the Spirit's work, "attributing to human initiative much of what had previously been reserved for the Spirit's operation."

(Lovelace 120)

Finney also introduced the idea that the "baptism of the Spirit" was a second work of grace subsequent to conversion.

In the early 1900s Charles Parham began to teach that speaking in tongues was the initial evidence of having been "baptized" in the Spirit.

And in 1906 in Los Angeles with that same emphasis on tongues, during a series of meetings the Pentecostal movement began.

The Assemblies of God churches are the most significant example of a denomination that grew from that origin.

Just as during the Reformation (in the 1600s) and during the Great Awakening (in the 1700s) so during much of the 1900s, in reaction to the Pentecostal movement, other Evangelicals taught that the more spectacular gifts such as tongues were not a legitimate part of the Christian experience.

And during most of the 1900s Evangelicals and Pentecostals treated each other more like theological enemies than brothers in sibling rivalry.

In the 1950s and 1960s a renewed emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit swept into some of the "mainline" churches.

Because of their similar emphases on speaking in tongues, healing and other more spectacular gifts of the Spirit, and a doctrine of baptism of the Spirit as a second work of grace following conversion, they looked to the untrained eye to be the same as the earlier Pentecostals.

They were clearly not Pentecostals by tradition and so they became known as Charismatics (from "charis" in Greek which means gifts).

And so there were Lutheran “charismatic,” Presbyterian “charismatics”, Episcopalian “charismatics”, and even Catholic “charismatics”.

Because of the often, liberal doctrines of some of the “mainline” churches, many “Charismatics” couldn’t find a permanent home in those churches and new churches and even whole denominations sprang up – Calvary Chapels, Vineyards and other groups.

These groups were evangelical in their basic doctrines but “Pentecostal/Charismatic” in their worship/ministry experiences.

In continuing reaction to the Pentecostals and then the Charismatics some Evangelicals began to de-emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit—a theological “throwing the baby out with the bath water.”

Some felt they couldn’t pray to the Holy Spirit.

Others were afraid to lift their hands in worship lest someone think they were Pentecostal or Charismatic.

Praying for healing was relegated to the Oral Roberts and Benny Hinns of America.

But slowly over the past thirty years, for many reasons, including the growing influence of the youth culture, the emphasis and popularity of the music of the charismatics, the growth and influence of evangelical seminaries, not to miss the more important reason of the grace of God, the Pentecostals, Charismatics and Evangelicals have moved toward each other.

Simplistically stated, the Evangelicals brought truth (a strong emphasis on Bible exposition) and the Pentecostal/Charismatics brought spirit (a strong emphasis on experience).

We are privileged to live in an era when the excesses of experience have been tempered by more solid biblical exegesis and the limitations of the purely academic has been revitalized by a growing experience of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

If you have been part of Pentecostal/Charismatic traditions, you have much to learn from the Evangelicals.

If you have been part of the Evangelical traditions, you have much to learn from the Pentecostal/Charismatics.

We need each other.

Maybe more importantly we need to stop thinking in terms of EITHER Pentecostal/Charismatic OR Evangelical but rather think of ourselves as Christ-followers who “keep in step with the Spirit” as the Apostle Paul said it. (see Richard Lovelace, [Dynamics of Spiritual Life](#).)

I think most of us who are serious about our Christianity have had the experience of thinking to ourselves, “If only I could be with Jesus like the disciples got to be with him.”

- “If he was actually here and I could be with him, hear from him and talk to him, it would be so good.”
- I know I can pray to him and read his word but it’s not the same.
- “I mean two thousand years is a long time to wait for someone to come back.”
- “The disciples got to hear him and then ask questions – it was an on-going dialog – what an advantage!”
- “When things didn’t go the way they should, the disciples got to go back to Jesus to talk to him about it.”
- “When they were afraid (like when they almost capsized their boat on the lake) they called out to him and he was there.”
- “When they engaged in ministry, they knew Jesus was right there to guide them and encourage them.”
- “If only I could be with Jesus like the disciples got to be with him – it would sure be easier being a Christian.”

If you have ever thought it would be easier being a Christ-follower if Jesus was still here, you are not the first one.

When Jesus was toward the end of his work here on earth he began talking about going back to heaven with his Father.

His disciples were immediately distressed at the idea.

Like some of us, they couldn't imagine living the Christian life without Jesus' presence.

What Jesus told them then and what they experienced 50 days later totally transformed their perspective and their lives.

So important is our understanding of this issue that Pastor Dan Luebcke will address it again next Sunday.

In the weeks that follow we will see specific ways the Holy Spirit works in our lives but before that we must understand the Spirit's relationship to Jesus and to us.

What did the disciples experience 50 days after the death and resurrection of Jesus that totally changed their perspectives and lives?

During the disciples' distress over Jesus' imminent return to heaven, Jesus said to them:

John 14:16-17

"I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

And moments later in the same discussion:

John 16:13-15

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you."

In those five verses we have the primary purpose of the coming of the Holy Spirit.

But before I remind you what that is, let me tell you how the story of the first disciples ends.

The disciples were worried about losing Jesus and Jesus promises them the Holy Spirit.

I suspicion they didn't think it was a good trade.

Acts 1:4-5 "On one occasion (during the 50 days between his resurrection and his return to heaven), while he was eating with them, (Jesus) gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Acts 2:1-4 (After Jesus' ascension to heaven) "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Peter eventually stood up to preach to a crowd that had gathered and said, Acts 2:15-17 "These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: " `In the last days, God says,

I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Here's the point: Never again in the New Testament will you hear the disciples lament the absence of Jesus. Why not?

Because with the coming of the Holy Spirit, the disciples experienced again the presence of Jesus.

- As I said, they never again wished Jesus were with them.
- They never again wished they could talk to him or hear from him.
- They never again expressed disappointment that Jesus wasn't there to teach, encourage, protect or guide them.

Jesus was again "with" them in the person of the Spirit.

Now you might say, "Wait a minute, who is with the disciples and with us – is it Jesus or is it the Holy Spirit?"

And I would correctly answer, "Yes."

Maybe a comparison would help explain how it is both Jesus and the Spirit who were with the disciples after Pentecost and are with us today.

One of the things that drove Jesus' contemporaries "crazy" and left his disciples scratching their heads was when Jesus kept saying that he and the Father are one.

Today we have little difficulty thinking of Jesus, the Son of God, as the "exact representation" of the Father but that was not always so.

When Jesus was here he said, "to see him was to see the Father"

John 14:8-11 "Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me;"

The Disciples grew to understand and experience that to have Jesus, the Son with them was to have the Father.

They weren't missing anything.

That Jesus is God and the exact representation of the Father is a "big deal" in the New Testament – that to have one is to have the other.

Likewise after the coming of the Spirit, the Disciples realized and experienced that to have the Spirit was to have the Son – they weren't missing anything.

By knowing and responding to the Spirit they were not leaving Jesus to attach themselves to the Spirit.

It is not as if they were leaving one person to go to another – They hadn't switched allegiance.

And it was not that they now talked to the Spirit in hopes that he would convey the message to Jesus.

No, to have the Spirit was to have Jesus – He was with them.

Earlier I said that in just five verses in John 14 and 16 we see stated the primary purpose of the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Consistent with what I have already said, I want you now to see what that purpose is.

The Spirit comes to be Jesus “in” us and to bring glory to Jesus.

Theologian J.I. Packer put it this way: “The truth of the matter is this. **The distinctive, constant, basic ministry of the Holy Spirit under the new covenant is... to mediate Christ's presence to believers** – to give them... a knowledge of Jesus presence with them as Savior, Lord and God. (Packer, Keep in Step..., 50)

I’ve already discussed how the Spirit comes to be Jesus “in” us but I want you to see more biblical evidence of this.

Look how the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Spirit of Jesus:

- Acts 16:8 “When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.
- Galatians 4:6 “God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts”
- Philippians 1:19 “I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.”
- 1 Peter 1:11 “trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing...”

To Luke, Paul and Peter, to have the Spirit was to have Jesus.

It shouldn’t surprise us that Holy Spirit is so closely identified with Jesus.

The same Spirit who indwells us is the Spirit who was with Jesus throughout his earthly ministry from womb to tomb and beyond.

- Luke 10:21 “At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit...”

- John 1:32-34 “Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.”
- Acts 10:37-38 “You know what has happened ... how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power...”

So closely connected are God the Son and God the Spirit, that to have the Spirit is to have the Son.

And I have already shown you that when the Spirit came to the disciples at Pentecost, they never again complained about missing Jesus – because to have the Spirit was to have Jesus.

In fact so interchangeable is the presence of the Spirit and the presence of Jesus that Paul would write:

Romans 8:9-11 “You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹ 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.”

This is not to minimize the distinction between the person of the Son and the person of the Spirit but to show how the work of the Spirit is to give us the presence of the Son.

One of the things that I hope DOESN'T happen during this summer emphasis on the person of the Spirit is that we get confused and “weird” about who we are supposed to address when we speak and pray.

I don't want us to become so self-conscious of the exact name we are using that we worry about offending the Holy Spirit if we forget and say “Jesus” or offending Jesus if we intentionally say “Holy Spirit”.

God is one and the Father is not grieved or offended if we honor the Son and the Son is not offended if we address the Spirit.

I believe that the New Testament teaches that the primary purpose of the Spirit's coming is to be Jesus in us – to mediate the very presence of Jesus.

- Our study of the Spirit this summer is not about getting inside information to release supernatural power in our lives.
- It is not about discovering the gifts of the Spirit and learning how to utilize them.
- It is not even just learning how to overcome temptation and becoming more like Christ by the influence of the Spirit. (Packer, Keep in Step..., 26-47)

The ministry of the Spirit is that we might know, love, trust, and honor Jesus.

This study is about a relationship with the Jesus who is present with us in the person of his Spirit.

But this purpose is fulfilled in a certain way.

Notice the second part of the way I describe the purpose of the Spirit in our lives:

**The Spirit comes to be Jesus “in” us
and to bring glory to Jesus.**

The John 16 passage declares this unequivocally:

John 16:13-15

“But **when he, the Spirit of truth, comes**, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. **He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.** All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.”

The Spirit's work is to bring glory to Jesus.

To bring glory to Jesus is to reveal who he is.

Jesus says the Spirit does that by “taking from what is mine (what is true about Jesus) and making it known to you.”

Again look at the comparison of God the Son’s relationship to God the Father:

Right after Jesus got through talking to his disciples about the coming Spirit he prayed:

John 17:1, 6-8 "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you... I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. **Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me** and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.”

Jesus glorified the Father by making him known.

In similar fashion the Spirit will take all of who Jesus is, all that Jesus teaches, all that Jesus has done and apply it to us.

When Jesus says that the Spirit will take “**what is mine and (make) it known to you**” J.I. Packer says:

Jesus “must have meant everything that is real and true about me as God incarnate, as the Father’s agent in creation... as the world’s rightful lord... And all that is real and true about me as your divine lover, your mediator, your (guarantee) in the new covenant, your prophet, priest and king, your Savior from the guilt and power of sin...; and all that is true of me as your shepherd, husband and friend, your life and your hope, the author and finisher of your faith, the lord of your own personal history, and the one who will one day bring you to be with me and share my glory, who am both your path and your prize.” (Packer, Keep in Step.... 52-53)

We are describing a relationship with a Person – the Person of Jesus in the Person of the Spirit.

Writing 20 years ago, Richard Lovelace said this relationship “involves moving about in all areas of our life in dependent fellowship with a person: “So I say, Live by the Spirit”. When this practice of the presence of God is maintained over a period of time, our experience of the Holy Spirit becomes less subjective and more clearly identifiable... A normal relationship with the Holy Spirit should (include) a profound awareness that we are always face to face with God; that as we move through life the presence of his Spirit is the most real and (influential) factor in our everyday lives; that underneath the momentary static of events, conflicts, problems, and even excursions into sin, he is always there...” (Lovelace, 131)

The Holy Spirit is Jesus-God with us.

It is a relationship so close that the only way Jesus can describe it is as “in” us.

As Robertson McQuilkin put it, “Incredible as it may seem, God has planned my life around Himself - uninterrupted companionship with the greatest Love who ever lived! No getting an appointment a month in advance. No taking a number and waiting my turn. He doesn't just tolerate me. Outrageous mystery – God actually desires my company.” McQuilkin 79

The Holy Spirit comes to be Jesus “in” us and to bring glory to Jesus.
That's the Holy Spirit I want us to know better this summer.

250 years ago, long before the current emphasis and even controversies over the Holy Spirit, Joseph Hart wrote,

Come Holy Spirit come!
Let thy bright beams arise;
Dispel the sorrow from our minds,
The darkness from our eyes.

Convince us of our sin,
Then lead to Jesus' blood,
And to our wondering view reveal
The secret love of God.

Revive our drooping faith,
Our doubts and fears remove,
And kindle in our breasts the flame
Of never-dying love.

Show us that loving Man
That rules the courts of bliss,
The Lord of hosts, the Mighty God,
Th' Eternal Prince of Peace.

'Tis Thine to cleanse the heart,
To sanctify the soul,
To pour fresh life in every part,
And new-create the whole.

Dwell, therefore, in our hearts,
Our minds from bondage free;
Then shall we know, and praise and love,
The Father, Son and Thee.

Joseph Hart 1759
The Lutheran Hymnal