

Sermon Topic: "Understanding the Holy Spirit" by Rev Teresa Wilborn

A. What the Bible tells us about the Holy Spirit

- The Holy Spirit is present and active throughout the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation.
The Holy Spirit was involved in creation (Gen 1:2) and is present at the end of Scripture (Rev 22:17). He is involved in God's redemptive plan for us
- Throughout the Bible, the Holy Spirit is in fellowship with the Father and the Son.
They are co-equal and co-eternal.
 - It is difficult to understand this triune relationship. It is not a $1+1+1=3$, because they are not 3 separate Gods. Rather, it is $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$, 1 God in 3 persons.
 - Legend also has it that the pretzel was created as an illustration of the Trinity by an Italian monk in the 17th century.
- The Holy Spirit acts, and has emotions like a person.
 - He empowers (Judges 14:5-6; Zech 4:6)
 - He intercedes (Romans 8:26)
 - He leads (John 15:26)
 - He talks (Acts 13:2; 16:6-7; Rev 2:7)
 - He guides (John 16:13)
 - He teaches (John 14:26)
 - He can be grieved (Eph 4:30)
- The Holy Spirit is Divine.
 - He is eternal (Heb 9:14)
 - He is all-powerful (Luke 1:35)
 - He is omnipresent (Psalms 139:7)
 - He is God (Acts 5:3-4)

B. Names of the Holy Spirit

- In the King James Version of the Bible, He is also referred to as the Holy Ghost, which is one and the same with more modern references that refer to Him as the Holy Spirit.
- In the OT, the Hebrew word for the Holy Spirit is *Ruach*, which means wind or breath.
In the NT, He is referred to by the Greek word *Pneuma*, which has the same meaning.
- In the Bible, the Holy Spirit is also referred to as the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of Jesus and the Spirit of Truth.
- He is also known as our helper, our councillor, our advocate and our comforter.

C. What the Holy Spirit looks like

- God made us in His image, and so we tend to think of God in human form. Certainly Jesus was human. But what about the Holy Spirit? He's invisible, and touches and speaks to us in supernatural ways.
- Jesus understood that it would be difficult for us to wrap our head around the Holy Spirit. This is why He told His disciples in John 14:17 that "the world cannot accept

Him [the Holy Spirit], because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be with you”

- The Bible often uses symbols to help visualise the Holy Spirit to help us understand His supernatural nature and power.
 - The Holy Spirit is like water – God sends Him to bring, growth, to refresh and to restore (Acts 2:17; Ezekiel 36:25-27; John 7:38-39)
 - The Holy Spirit is like wind – John 3:8, Acts 2:2
 - The Holy Spirit is like fire – Acts 2:3
 - The Holy Spirit is also like a dove – Matt 3:16

D. How the Holy Spirit works within us

- The Holy Spirit convicts non-believers (John 16:8) The Holy Spirit works in our hearts and minds to show us we are lost in sin. Once we realize we are lost and need redemption, He leads us to repentance and salvation. From that point on, the Holy Spirit dwells inside each of us (Romans 8:8-9)
- The power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us enables us to resist sin and become more like Jesus. We receive the transforming power of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 3:18). And so with the help of the Holy Spirit we are able to live more obediently, and love Jesus with a greater commitment.
- The Holy Spirit guides us into all truth (John 14:16) The Holy Spirit goes before us. He leads the way, and removes obstacles.
- He provides special gifts to those who serve Him. The prophet Isaiah, when foretelling the coming of Christ, described 7 gifts- a spirit of wisdom, understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, piety and a spirit of the fear of the Lord.
- In the NT, other gifts are described such as teaching, preaching, prophecy and tongues.
- Every believer is uniquely gifted to serve God (Eph 2:10)
- The Holy Spirit enables us to grow in the image of Christ – as described by the fruits of the Spirit in Gal 5:22 – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Without Him, none of us could live fruitful lives that reflect the desires of God.

E. Indwelling vs. Filling of the Holy Spirit

- All believers of Christ have God’s spirit dwelling within them from the moment of salvation. However, not all believers lead their lives being led or filled by the Spirit’s power. Sinful thoughts and actions hinder the work of God’s spirit in our lives. When we succumb to worldly desires, we grieve the Holy Spirit. In contrast, when we live in obedience to God’s will and His commands, others can see God’s spirit living and showing through us.
- Eph 5:17-19 refers to being filled by the Holy Spirit in the context of the church. In these verses, being filled with the Holy Spirit is contrasted with being filled, or drunk with wine. The idea here is about being led by God’s spirit, rather than being controlled by things of the world. Instead of wine, we might be controlled by power, or achieving success and recognition or a desire to please others more than God.
- When we are filled by the Spirit, it is reflected by an attitude of joy and thanksgiving. Instead of self-importance and self-promotion, we have a posture of humility towards God and submission to one another.
- Many of us may have heard that the filling of the Holy Spirit being described as an emotional experience that takes place at certain moments in our spiritual life. The concept of filling in Scripture is actually one of being controlled or influenced by the Spirit. There are times when being filled by the Spirit brings a mountaintop experience. But the idea of being filled by the Spirit is more about an ongoing sense of God’s spirit working in our lives, and not just a one-time experience. When we live out our faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit increasingly controls and fills our lives. This is what leads to true joy, thankfulness and right relationships.

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