

# Spirit

John 14:12-31

Today we finish a three part series on **the Trinity**. Here is our summary so far:

## **The LORD is:**

- One God
- in Three Persons, eternally exchanging
  - Glory - Pure Delight
  - Love - Perfect Communion
  - Life - The Power of Existence

***Father, Son and Holy Spirit*** - equally divine, co-eternal - from eternity past to infinite future pouring into one another the glory of pure mutual delight; at the same time exchanging love in the communion of perfect relationship; and also overflowing into and through one another their very life - the power of existence by which the universe was made and each of us have our being.

If the Trinity makes your head hurt a little it means you're thinking about God in the right way. Augustine, the theological professor of the first 500 years of the church said, "***If you understand, it is not God you understand.***" God is utterly beyond our reach mentally. And yet that is precisely why Jesus came - to bring the light of truth into the darkness of our broken world and our fallen minds. That was our lesson last week:

1. Jesus is the Light	We walk in darkness
2. Jesus is Glorious	We are sinful
3. Jesus is Life	We were dead

**Jesus is the Light of the World!** He is the full and final revelation of truth by which we know who God is and what God is like. He is ***the Word of God*** in the flesh who brought the light of truth into our darkness. **Jesus is the All-Glorious One** - the Holy One who dwells in unapproachable perfection. By contrast we are covered with sin - all of us are sinners by nature and by choice and therefore we fall far short of His glory. Of course, this is precisely why Jesus came! For **He is the Giver of LIFE**. As the Author of Life Jesus spoke all things into being and just as He did that for the universe, He did that for each one of us! Jesus not only created you physically in your mother's womb, He also created you again spiritually at the moment you called on Him in faith!

Jesus is the Light of the World. He is the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep. **He is the resurrection and the life** - the One who conquered death so he could give us all eternal life in Himself!

Today we shift our attention to the Holy Spirit. Here are **three facts** to keep in mind about the Spirit of God before we focus on how we experience Him personally. Look at Romans 8:9-10

“You, however, are not in the flesh but in **the Spirit**, if in fact **the Spirit of God** dwells in you. Anyone who does not have **the Spirit of Christ** does not belong to him. But if **Christ** is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, **the Spirit is life** because of righteousness.” Romans 8:9-10

Notice how flexible Paul is with the names of the Spirit. In the space of two verses the Holy Spirit is interchangeably called “The Spirit,” “The Spirit of God,” and “The Spirit of Christ.” This demonstrates the first fact:

### **The Holy Spirit is Fully God**

“If in fact **the Spirit of God** dwells in you. Anyone who does not have **the Spirit of Christ** does not belong to him. But if **Christ** is in you... **the Spirit is life**.” Romans 8:9-10

Just as Jesus is one with the Father and equal with the Father, ***so the Holy Spirit is not less than God but is fully God*** - of the same divine essence as the Father and Son. In fact, in John 15 we learn that the Spirit *proceeds from the Father*:

### **The Holy Spirit is Fully Personal**

“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, ***who proceeds from the Father, he*** will bear witness about **me**.” John 15:26

The Holy Spirit is **not an “It” but is a “He.”** He is the third person of the Trinity - worthy of our direct worship, prayer and trust. So it is good and appropriate for us to sing songs like ***“Holy Spirit you are welcome here.”*** These help remind us that the Holy Spirit is fully God and is fully personal - and we need to deliberately cultivate our relationship with Him just as we do with Jesus.

One more point.

### **The Holy Spirit is all about Jesus**

“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, **he** will bear witness about **me**.” John 15:26

The main desire and practice of the Holy Spirit is **to bear witness about JESUS**. He is all about bringing glory, honor and praise to the name of Jesus. In this sense, the Spirit is often thought of as the “shy” member of the Trinity. Here is what Jesus said in John 16:14 -

### **The Holy Spirit is all about Jesus**

**“He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.” John 16:14**

The way we can tell the Spirit of God from other spirits, who DO try to masquerade as spirits of light, is by listening to see **if their message is focused on exalting Jesus**. If you are in a prayer or worship gathering in which the songs all talk about “the Spirit” and make little or no mention of Jesus you would rightly begin to wonder what “spirit” you are engaging with.

The same thing is true in your own life. If you sense a “spirit” is leading you to do something, say something, think something - THE TEST of whether it is God or something else is whether that thought or action or word **brings glory to Jesus Christ**. Here is one of the most misunderstood verses in the Bible:

### **The Holy Spirit is all about Jesus**

**“Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, *that the Father may be glorified in the Son*. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.” John 14:13-14**

This may sound to you like **a blank check promise** that Jesus will ALWAYS answer your every prayer. It categorically does not say that. Notice how this promise is presented. Twice it says **“IN MY NAME.”** Why do we pray “in Jesus’ name?” It’s not a set of magic words. It’s not an incantation. It’s a faith commitment. It’s an orientation - a mindset. We pray FOR JESUS’ SAKE - for the sake of His glory. We pray AS HE WOULD PRAY - in line with His purposes and plans. And we know Jesus’ primary purpose is to GLORIFY THE FATHER.

To the extent that **we pray IN JESUS’ Name** - to the extent that we pray for the GLORY OF JESUS ALONE - to THAT extent Jesus absolutely will answer our prayers. Every time. That is the role and purpose and focus of the Holy Spirit - to bring glory to the Risen Christ. The Holy Spirit is all about Jesus, and the more we follow His lead the more WE will be all about Jesus! Let’s look at **three gifts the Holy Spirit gives us**. First:

#### **1. The Holy Spirit Gives us Peace**

**“Peace I leave you; *my peace I give you*... Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” John 14:27**

In John 20 these are some of Jesus' last words to His disciples before ascending into heaven. Peace - He speaks to them and over them. Jesus knew that ***His departure was troubling*** to his disciples. So He gave them these comforting promises and reassurances - like what we saw earlier in John 14 about how He Himself will come back to take us to be with Him forever. "***Let not your hearts be troubled!*** Believe in God. Believe also in me!" John 14 is framed with these words of comfort - it starts and ends with them.

How can we have peace in troubled times? This is the first gift the Holy Spirit gives us!

### **1. The Holy Spirit Gives us Peace**

- The comfort of God's presence

"I will ask the Father and he will give you another Helper, ***to be with you forever.***" John 14:16

**Jesus was limited because of His human body.** He could not be everywhere with every believer. He was - and still is - limited to one space and time. This was the trade-off of the incarnation and part of the wondrous mystery of it. The Son of God took on the limitations of a human body!

***Like an olympic runner wearing a suit of armor,*** God the Son gave up none of His divine nature but found His divine abilities limited by their enclosure in full humanity.

The Holy Spirit has no such limitations! This is why Jesus said "***It's better for you that I go!***" The disciples must have thought - "What could be better than having the Son of God himself with you?!?" But Jesus knew the Holy Spirit would be far better - as He could dwell personally in the hearts of every believer from then on into eternity. **This Helper will be "with you FOREVER!"**

The main fear the disciples had was of being separated from Jesus. So he comforts them by saying, "I will be with you!" In the person of the Holy Spirit Jesus IS with us every minute of every day!

### **1. The Holy Spirit Gives us Peace**

- The comfort of God's presence

"The Spirit of truth... dwells with you and ***will be in you...*** I will come to you... In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, ***and I in you.***" John 14:17,18,20

Having the Holy Spirit inside of us IS having **GOD** inside of us. Believers are filled, as Ephesians 3 says, "***to the measure of all the fullness of God.***"

What greater comfort could there be than the presence of God with us?

**Isn't this exactly what we want in a crisis?**

- A loved one is **seriously ill or suddenly dies** - you want to be together with your closest family, don't you?
- There is a **car accident** or fire - you immediately call your husband or wife, your mom or dad, your kids.

If our human family plays this role for us - isn't there even greater comfort in knowing ***GOD HIMSELF is with us all the time and forevermore?*** The Spirit gives us peace in God's presence and also in the fullness of God's joy:

**1. The Holy Spirit Gives us Peace**

- The fullness of God's Joy

“These things I have spoken to you, **that my joy may be in you**, and that your joy may be full.” John 15:11

Peace in the Bible means way more than the absence of tension or conflict. It means the presence of wholeness, happiness and rest. God's promise of SHALOM in Christ is a wonderfully rich and deep promise. Jesus says to us, “My peace I give to you.” He does not give as the world gives - only to get something back from us. ***He gives as GOD gives - ONE WAY LOVE - He gives and keeps giving from His own limitless supply.***

Remember, God is the overflowing fountain of all joy and peace and life and love and goodness and righteousness and power and everything else. ***God is eternally and infinitely satisfied and happy and joyful IN HIMSELF.*** Because of this perfection in glory and eternal delight, God has an unending source of joy to share.

When Jesus says, “**that MY JOY may be in you,**” it is the joy of the Triune God. This is not the fickle happiness we experience in worldly pleasures. This is the eternal delight of God the Son in God the Father as bound together by God the Spirit. This is the essence of the fountain of life that IS GOD. ***This is the joy that comes into your heart and life at the moment you put your faith in Jesus.***

This is why our joy may be FULL. **It CANNOT mean a circumstantial happiness** in the world - a promise of health and wealth and prosperity. It cannot mean that here in John's gospel because Jesus says in John 16:33, “***In this world you will have TROUBLE.***” The ESV says “You will have tribulation.” That means distress, persecution, suffering - even DEATH. And yet, in the face of these threats and dangers and sorrows and losses we can still have a

FULLNESS OF JOY - because it is **JOY IN THE LORD** - not joy IN THE WORLD. Jesus connects this joy directly to PRAYER:

### **1. The Holy Spirit Gives us Peace**

- The fullness of God's Joy

**“Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, *that your joy may be full.*” John 16:24**

Again, ***this is not a promise that God will give us whatever we WANT.*** It is when we pray “in Jesus’ name,” and in pursuit of our JOY IN HIM. The command of Paul in Philippians 4 is not just to REJOICE. Christians should not just “fake it until we make it” with an artificial and surfacey joy. Because we **REJOICE IN THE LORD**. That is the key. When your joy is IN the Lord because your joy IS the Lord - He will give you the desires of your heart because God has BECOME the desire of your heart. That is the first gift of the Spirit - peace in the presence of God and in the overflowing joy of God!

Second:

### **2. The Holy Spirit Gives us Perception**

- Understanding God's Word

**“The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, *he will teach you all things* and bring to remembrance all that I have said to you.” John 14:26**

Think of how much **the apostles changed after Acts 2**. Jason will preach on that history changing day in two weeks. But what changed from Mark 16 when they all ran off in confusion and fear and Acts 2 when they preached boldly in various languages? One thing changed: ***the Holy Spirit arrived!***

Even though they were with Jesus for three years **they struggled to understand** who he was and even the most basic things he taught them. But that's because THEY DID NOT HAVE the Holy Spirit yet! ***You and I actually have a huge advantage*** over Peter, James and John during the time they were with Jesus. **WE HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT!**

We have the presence of God right in our hearts. We have the comfort, peace and joy of knowing God is with us every minute of every day. We also have the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit to “teach us all things and bring to remembrance all that” Jesus said and taught. Think how significant this promise is - how valuable this provision is!

God's Word is our light. Apart from His Word we walk in darkness. But the Holy Spirit puts that light directly in our hands. ***He is the One who opens the Bible to us.***

A pastor **friend of mine named Dan** became a Christian by reading the Bible in college. One time late at night he grabbed a friend and said, "Hey, let's read the Bible. I hear there are ***dragons in it.***" And so he and his friend - both totally unchurched and unfamiliar with anything in the Bible - proceeded ***to read the entire book of Revelation.*** As you might imagine, it scared the pants off of them and they did not understand it at all. But it set Dan on a path to learn more about Jesus and he later became a pastor, devoting his life to helping people understand the teachings of Jesus in the Bible.

The Holy Spirit used God's Word with Dan to first draw Him to the light of truth in Jesus and then ***to begin understanding the truth in God's Word.*** Listen to verse 21:

## **2. The Holy Spirit Gives us Perception**

- Understanding God's Word

"Whoever **has my commandments and keeps them,** he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and **manifest myself to him.**" John 14:21

What a gift it is **to HAVE God's commandments** - know them, understand them and treasure them in your heart. This is what it means to "hide God's Word in our hearts" so we might not sin against Him. We guard the Word of God - we protect it and keep it close to us. We meditate on it day and night, as David encourages us to in Psalm 1. The Holy Spirit helps us in this area ***AS WE DEVOTE ourselves to the study of Scripture.*** And as we OBEY, He shows us more.

Notice how understanding is a gift of God through His Spirit, but it is one we must **ACTIVELY RECEIVE** ***by studying and OBEYING the commands of Jesus.*** Jesus does not promise to manifest Himself to just anyone! He promises to make Himself more known to those who love Him and devote themselves to obeying His commands.

## **2. The Holy Spirit Gives us Perception**

- Knowing God's Will

"When he comes, **he will convict the world** concerning sin and righteousness and judgment... ***He will guide you into all truth.***" John 16:8,13

The Holy Spirit not only helps us understand God's Word but He makes sure we KNOW God's Will. The Holy Spirit operates like this in two ways - one negative and one positive.

I've asked Dave Osborne to help me illustrate this.

Negatively, **The Holy Spirit makes sure we know when we step out of line - He convicts us of our sin.** The Holy Spirit is like **a referee's whistle** for when we are straying out of bounds. This is called GODLY SORROW and it leads the believer to repentance.

- You say an ***unkind word to your wife*** **[whistle blows]** and immediately know it was wrong. You see it in her face. You feel it in your heart.
- You say a ***disrespectful word to your husband*** and feel a pang of guilt **[whistle blows]**. "Ooh. I was so right about that lazy bum but I definitely should not have said that in that way..."
- You get ***impatient with one of your kids*** when she tugs at your sleeve - after all, it's a big moment in the big game. **"Tweet"** goes the referee's whistle in your heart and a minute later you get up to go play with your daughter or son.
- You are in a meeting, giving a presentation and feel ***tempted to inflate the numbers*** to make yourself look good. You feel the Holy Spirit guiding you, His hand on your shoulder, whistle ready, and you humble yourself to tell the truth and not spin the situation.
- You are ***innocently sending email*** and an add pops up in your feed with a provocative image. Your mouse hovers over it for a fraction of a second and you feel - you tangibly feel the presence of the Holy Spirit referee.

That's the corrective side. The Holy Spirit is a professional at this. If we ever mess up it's not the Spirit who failed to warn us. It is we who failed to heed His warnings; His MANY warnings. On the positive side, the Holy Spirit also ***leads us to DO the things God wants us to do***. If only we will LISTEN to Him.

He not only convicts us of SIN - **He also convicts us of RIGHTEOUSNESS**. He shines His light on our path to show us the way we should go. It's like the Spirit has a watering can equipped with a flashlight - so He shows us where to sow some seeds so He can water them...

- You see ***a friend who seems sad*** or just a little off and the Spirit prompts you to ask how they are.
- You haven't seen someone for a while and the Lord brings them to mind ***to pray for them*** - and then you think, "I better call or text..."
- Sometimes the Spirit wakes you up in the middle of the night with someone very specific on your mind. Don't miss those opportunities for midnight prayer meetings!

The Spirit guides us into the will of God ***in both the big and small moments of life***. He leads us in the major, life-altering turning points - showing us, "This is the way, walk in it."



And HE leads us in the day to day, guiding our small choices to make them increasingly pleasing to the Lord and glorifying to Him.

Can you join me in saying thank you to Dave? And aren't we all thankful that it's the Holy Spirit who convicts us of sin, righteousness and judgment and not Dave Osborne?

Some of you know ***we still own a house in Chicago***. A year before moving down here we decided to buy a house that, looking back, we clearly should not have bought. Kristin never felt great about it - so this has become one of the great reminders to me, guys: **We ignore our wives to our own peril**. Anyway, we bought the house. A year later we clearly felt led to this special church in Tampa and moved forward in faith to sell the house and move. After 26 months on the market and over 120 showings we just signed the third short sale contract on that house - and PLEASE pray with us that the bank approves the short sale so we can close that chapter of our lives.

We have never second guessed the call of God to come here. ***He made His will very clear*** and has confirmed that in dozens of ways. In the big picture we knew this was God's will for us. In the day to day, managing things like a family of skunks under the back step of that house and a leak in natural gas right at the furnace... we have to trust God and do the best we can.

This is what the Spirit does. ***He helps us understand God's Word and KNOW God's will***. The third gift of the Spirit is related to this:

### **3. The Holy Spirit Gives us Power**

- To Obey

***"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."*** John 15:5

In John 14 Jesus says, ***"If you love me you will obey my commandments,"*** exhorting His disciples to guard and treasure His Words, promising the Spirit will remind them of His Words. Then in John 15 Jesus uses this image of the vine and the branches. The Holy Spirit is the means by which we can ABIDE in Jesus and He can abide in us.

### **3. The Holy Spirit Gives us Power**

- To Obey

***"If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you... that you bear much fruit."*** John 15:7-8

This is a **PROMISE** - *the believer in Jesus WILL bear much fruit* IF we abide in Jesus. How? We need to let His Word dwell in our hearts richly. We need to study and memorize and meditate on Scripture, asking the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth.

### **3. The Holy Spirit Gives us Power**

- To Obey

“Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love... This is my commandment, that you **love one another as I have loved you.**” John 15:9-12

As we abide in, **rest in, live in the infinite love of Christ**, His love will FILL US and flow through us. We won't have to force ourselves to love people, the love of Christ will spill out of us because that is what is inside of us. It will grow naturally from our hearts and lives as naturally as grapes grow from a grapevine.

**How are we to love one another?** “As I have loved you.” Just as Jesus loved us and gave up His life for us, so we are to lay down our lives for one another - serving each other sacrificially - giving ourselves away, placing the desires and preferences of others above our own.

Only the Holy Spirit can bear this fruit in our lives. You cannot **MAKE A GRAPE**, can you? If you held a grape seed and really focused on it, could you make it suddenly become a grape? Of course not! You have to plant that seed, cultivate the soil, water it and WAIT. Only God can grow a grape. And **only the Holy Spirit can grow His Fruit in our hearts and lives.** The primary fruit of the Spirit is LOVE. As we experience the love of God for us, that should be the main thing that people experience from us.

The Holy Spirit empowers us to obey and to bear fruit for the glory of God.

### **3. The Holy Spirit Gives us Power**

- To Bear Fruit

“Ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit.**” John 15:7-8

Again, the prayer promise here is not that God will give you that Corvette or new iPhone or special pair of shoes or heal that illness or fix that relationship right away. The promise is that **GOD WILL BE GLORIFIED** as you bear fruit in obedience to the commands of Christ.

### **3. The Holy Spirit Gives us Power**

- To Bear Fruit

“The Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father... **will bear witness about me.** And you also will bear witness.” John 15:26-27

The Spirit’s job is to bear witness to JESUS. He is all about Jesus - lifting up the Lord Jesus Christ so Jesus can draw all people to Himself. Our job is the same. That is the primary fruit God calls us to bear: the fruit of pointing others to the goodness and glory of Jesus - His supremacy above all things.

Finally, the Holy Spirit gives us power to persevere.

### **3. The Holy Spirit Gives us Power**

- To Persevere through every trial

“I appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and **that your fruit should abide.**” John 15:16

A crop that sprouts up quickly but then withers under the sun is useless, right? If the crop doesn’t bear fruit that LASTS - **that makes it to the harvest** - then it is just using up the soil for no reason. May we not just bear immature fruit - the little beginnings of godliness, the little buds of love, joy, peace and patience. May we bear fruit that abides - that grows to full maturity - that brings a harvest of glory and honor to the Lord!

This whole message of Jesus is intended to prepare the disciples for their greatest trial. He knows, “In this world you will have trouble.” **Their tribulation was coming** soon and coming with great intensity.

### **3. The Holy Spirit Gives us Power**

- To Persevere through every trial

“I have said all these things to you **to keep you from falling away.**” John 16:1

The Holy Spirit gives us power to stand firm through every trial - to endure to the very end. Brother, sister, hear this. **“No tribulation has come upon you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted or tried beyond what He knows you can handle. But in the tribulation, in the midst of the trial, He will provide a way out - He will give you special grace - so that you can stand up under it”** (my paraphrase of 1 Cor. 10:13).

Listen to two more verses about the Holy Spirit as we close:

### **3. The Holy Spirit Gives us Power**

- To Persevere through every trial

**“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.” John 16:7

Think about that. It was BETTER for the disciples to NOT have Jesus with them. They were better off with the Holy Spirit. And so are we! The Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts is the fullness of God, dwelling in us! Because Jesus ascended to heaven, He poured out the Holy Spirit - and the Spirit of the living God has been dwelling in the Temple of His peoples' hearts ever since!

### **3. The Holy Spirit Gives us Power**

- To obey, bear fruit and persevere

**“Whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”** John 14:12

Greater works THAN JESUS did! Imagine! This foreshadows the book of Acts but it also foreshadows Christian history. The life and ministry of Jesus only impacted a few hundred people, maybe a couple of thousand. After Jesus ascended to heaven and poured out the Holy Spirit, the Spirit empowered ALL OF THE BELIEVERS to bring the love and power and grace of Jesus ALL OVER THE WORLD.

This is how the early church multiplied and spread so rapidly - because they truly were able to do more and greater works than Jesus Himself did on the earth!

And this promise still applies today. WE can do greater things than Jesus did IF we abide in Him. If we walk with the Spirit. If we let the Words of Jesus dwell in our hearts. If we pray for the glory of God and in line with the will of Jesus. THEN the Spirit of God WILL bear fruit in us and through us to the unending glory of God!

Let's pray to that end!

*Where you go, I'll go*