

Introduction...

If you only had 3 hours to spend with the people you cared about most, what would you do? Would you talk about how much they mean to you? Would you reminisce about the time you spent together? Would you say all the things that you couldn't bear to leave unsaid? You would probably do all those things and more, **but One thing is certain**, if you knew you only had 3 more hours to spend with the people you loved most, you wouldn't waste your time. You would do all that you could to make that time count.

As we read through the gospel of **John and come to the 14th chapter**, we understand that Jesus' time with the disciples is almost at its end. In just a few short hours he will be arrested and His trial will begin. That trial will stretch on through the night. In the early morning hours, he will stand before Pilate. By 9 am He will be presented to the people and condemned. By noon, He will be nailed to the cross, bow His head and give up His life.

By the time we get to **John chapter 14**, Jesus has about 15 hours to live, but He will only spend about 3 of those hours with the 12. So, what does Jesus talk about in these final hours? For starters, He wants to comfort them. He wants them to know that God's plan is right on track. They don't need to abandon the gospel; they don't need to seek salvation in any other way. They have put their hope in Him and nothing needs to change that.

But there is something else that dominates his final hours with the 12. He wants them to know that He is going to be leaving them but this is actually a good thing because **when He leaves Someone else is going to come**.

John 14:15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

John 16:7 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 when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰ concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; ¹¹ concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

Transition...

For the disciples, the coming of the Holy Spirit was good news. He would continue the work that God the Father and Christ the Son had begun. He would comfort them in the absence of Jesus. He would be a helper for them as they carried out the Great Commission but at the same time His coming would have an impact on the whole world.

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit is the Cinderella Story of Christian Doctrine. He is the person of the Trinity that we seldom talk about, but this morning we are going to focus our attention on Him almost exclusively. I don't have 3 hours like Jesus, but in the next 40 minutes or so I want us to answer 3 questions about the Holy Spirit: **Who He is, What does He do and Why does His presence matter to us.**

Sermon Focus...**I. Who is the Holy Spirit**

The word for “*spirit*” in the OT is the Hebrew term “*ruahk*.” In the NT the word for spirit is “*pneuma*.” Both of these terms are used in other places to refer to wind or breath, as well as life, motion and activity. This has caused some, like the Jews, to think of the Holy Spirit as the impersonal force or power of God. Muslims teach that the Spirit of God is an angel sent to do God’s bidding. **But the Bible is quite clear that the Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force, nor an angel; but rather He is the third person of our Triune God.**

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is a person by drawing out attention to the personal attributes that are ascribed to Him. The Holy Spirit grieves (**Eph 4:30**), He intercedes for us (**Rom 8:26-27**), He speaks (**Mk 13:11**), He creates (**Gen 1:2**) and He can be blasphemed (**Mk 3:28-29**). The Holy Spirit possesses wisdom and understanding (**1 Cor 2:10-12, Isa 40:8, Psa 139:23**), He acts according to His own will (**1 Cor 12:11**), and He is the One who sets apart men to special tasks of ministry (**Acts 13:2, 4**).

These are not the actions of a force or a power. The Holy Spirit is an intelligent, emotive, interactive, powerful, independent and personal being.

In the passage we read earlier from **John 14:16**, we see Jesus refer to the Holy Spirit as a HE.

V. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another *Helper*, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the *Spirit of truth*, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees *him* nor knows *him*. You know *him*, for *he* dwells with you and will be in you.

The Holy Spirit is more than an impersonal force; He is a personal being. But He is also more than just a person, He is a divine person. In **Hebrews 9:14**, He is called the *eternal Spirit*. In **Acts 5**, when Ananias and Saphira lied to the Holy Spirit they are said to have lied to God. He shares in the immensity of God, the omnipotence of God, the foreknowledge of God, the omniscience of God and the Sovereignty of God.

The Spirit is God, like the Father and the Son. He stands alongside them as an object of worship. He is called the *Holy Spirit* because by His very nature He possesses the attribute of divine holiness. The Holy Spirit is God, but He is not the Father nor the Son. He is His own divine person equal in glory and majesty to the Father and the Son.

This is orthodox Christian teaching. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the trinity, but we don’t often think about the Spirit in this way. Within the Godhead, the Holy Spirit is probably the most neglected, the least cherished, the most misunderstood. **Modern charismaticism** has a lot to do with our misunderstanding of the Spirit. **But one of the reasons that we focus more on the Father and Jesus, than the Spirit, is that this is the Spirit’s work.**

John 16:13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ **He will glorify me**, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Whether we realize it or not, the Holy Spirit draws our attention away from Himself and He directs our focus to Christ, He magnifies the Work and Word of Jesus. His task is not to highlight our subjective spiritual experiences, but to amplify our love for Jesus.

But there is something else in this passage that we need to consider. In verse 13 Jesus said, “When the Spirit of truth comes...” and we need to be careful that we don’t misunderstand what this means. This does not mean that the Holy Spirit hasn’t been in the world up to this point, **but that He was coming into the world with far greater energy and far wider influence than before.**

After Christ's ascension into Heaven, the Holy Spirit came down into the world and was poured out upon men in such a way that it would seem as if He was coming for the first time. But the OT makes clear that He has been active in the world from the very beginning. **Let's look at the Presence and Work of the Holy Spirit throughout Scripture.**

II. What the Holy Spirit Does (OT)

We first read of the Holy Spirit during the creation account. In **Gen 1:2**, we learn that He was hovering over the dark and disordered waters, ready to bring order and life to the new creation.

The primary function of the Holy Spirit in the OT is as the Spirit of prophecy. He revealed the Word of God to holy men who then proclaimed that word to the people and wrote it down for our instruction. That familiar phrase, "Thus saith the Lord..." is evidence of the Spirit's work of revealing God's message to God's people.

After the Exodus, we learn that the Holy Spirit was poured out on certain men in order to equip them with the skill to create the artistic pieces that God wanted to fill the temple. You may remember that the instructions for the temple were incredibly detailed. Everything is to be done just so, and everything is to look a certain way. The curtains are to have a certain type of thread and a certain color of thread. The tables are to be a certain size and made of a certain wood and then covered over with gold. The lamp stands are to be made a certain way and then all of the elements are to be covered over with detailed artwork and design elements.

To pull off this massive work of construction and this incredibly detailed work of decorating; God gave His Holy Spirit to men.

Exodus 31:1-6 The LORD said to Moses, ² "See, I have called by name Bezalel...³ and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, ⁴ to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, ⁵ in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft. ⁶ And behold, I have appointed (others), of the tribe of Dan. And I have given to all able men ability, that they may make all that I have commanded you:

Later in Exodus 35:30,

Exodus 35:30 Then Moses said to the people of Israel, "See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel...of the tribe of Judah; ³¹ and **he has filled him with the Spirit of God**, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship, ³² to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze, ³³ in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every skilled craft. ³⁴ And **he has inspired him to teach**, both him and Oholiab the son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan. ³⁵ **He has filled them with skill** to do every sort of work done by an engraver or by a designer or by an embroiderer in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, or by a weaver- by any sort of workman or skilled designer.

God filled these men with the Holy Spirit to be artists and craftsmen. God gave them the artistic ability and skill that would allow them to make the things inside the temple beautiful and glorious (**Exodus 28:40**). Not only did God give these men artistic gifts that would be used to build the temple but he also made these gifts evident to His people so that they would rejoice together in the Lord's goodness.

The Holy Spirit is also present in the OT in the lives of those in leadership. The Judges: Balaam, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson and Azariah, were filled with the Spirit of the Lord. The Spirit of the Lord anointed the kings and empowered David to be victorious in battle.

In Proverbs the Spirit brings wisdom and guides us in understanding. The Prophets were filled with the Spirit to the point that they were known as "Men of the Spirit." Their entire work as prophets was inspired by the Spirit of God. But the OT prophets help us anticipate that the Holy Spirit's work is actually going to increase in the age to come

Joel 2:28 "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. ²⁹ Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

III. What the Holy Spirit does (NT)

The first thing we notice of the Holy Spirit's in the NT is how He is at work in the life of Jesus. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. As His public ministry began, it was said that He would baptize people with the Holy Spirit and with fire. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus at His baptism. The Spirit led Him into the wilderness, and when He returned to Galilee it was in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The first time we hear Jesus preach in the gospel of Luke He quotes from **Isaiah** saying, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor." Jesus prayed in the Spirit, He was led by the Spirit, He taught on the Spirit, and He promised to pour out the Holy Spirit onto those who came to believe in Him.

The "pouring out" of the Holy Spirit is an expression that refers to the gospel age when the Spirit's primary work is to bring people to saving faith in Christ, to grow them in that faith, and sustain them in that faith until the end comes.

IV. Why this matters for us today

let's look more specifically at the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. I have divided His work into eight categories and as we work thorough these will come to understand how vital the Holy Spirit is to our Christian life.

1. The Spirit convicts us

John 16:7... But if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰ concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; ¹¹ concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

Notice first, that the Holy Spirit brings: conviction of sin, righteousness and judgment. For believers, we understand that the Holy Spirit has worked in us to convince us of our sins before God, of the righteousness of Christ that we need, and of the certainty that judgment will come.

This progression is the way we understand how God works in our heart and mind to draw us to saving faith in Christ. But there is more to this text. The Holy Spirit also brings this conviction of sin to the unbelieving world. **The Spirit exposes sin. He puts a giant spotlight on it and causes the world to see the ugliness that they want to deny.**

The world wants to brag about its own supposed goodness but the Spirit draws attention to Jesus' righteousness, which was enough to cause the Father to welcome Him into Heaven. Judgment is coming and the world wants to act as though nothing is wrong, but the Spirit bears witness to the justice of God that will be poured out on Satan and all those who are his children. ***The Spirit Convicts.***

2. The Spirit converts us

John 3:3 Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" ⁵ Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water ***and the Spirit***, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' ⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. **So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.**"

In this conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus is talking about the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that causes us to be born again. This is the Holy Spirit's work. He removes our blindness so that we can see our need of Christ. He breathes life into our souls and brings us out of our deadness to sin. He removes our heart of stone and gives us a living heart of flesh.

The Holy Spirit does this work in every believer and there is no genuine saving faith in Christ apart from this converting work of the Holy Spirit.

3. The Spirit applies to us all that Christ accomplished.

The whole of **Romans 8** is about how the Spirit has set us free from sin and death. In Christ, the Spirit is at work in our life to help us live and enjoy the peace and comfort of Christ. Everything that Christ accomplished for us is applied to us by the Spirit, even the promise of resurrection.

V. 11 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."

The Spirit bears witness in our hearts that we are children of God and fellow heirs with Christ (**Rom 8:16-17**), He groans within us and causes us to long for the day when Christ will return to set all of creation free from the curse of sin and death (**Rom 8:23**), He helps us in our weaknesses and intercedes/prays for us with groanings too deep for words, and He will sustain us in the faith making us more than conquerors until the day our Lord appears.

4. The Spirit dwells with us forever

John 14:15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

Now, we know that in the OT the Holy Spirit was active in the hearts and lives of God's people, but not in the same way as in the NT. For instance, King Saul was anointed with the Holy Spirit but because of his sin the Bible says that the Holy Spirit departed from Him. That's why when King David confessed his sin he prayed in **Ps 51**,

¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

But Jesus wants us to know that a change has come in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. When He comes on those who love and obey Jesus, He will not leave. He will not be taken away from us, but will be with us and will remain with us, forever. He will continue to convict us, to lead us to repentance, and to restore us to faithfulness...until Christ comes (**Phil 1:6**).

5. The Spirit teaches us

John 14:25 "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

This instruction had special significance for the Apostles but it is important for us as well. The Spirit of God reveals to us the things of God, the things that pertain to salvation and the Christian life.

1 Cor 2:11...No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

6. The *Holy* Spirit sanctifies us

This should be no surprise to us, after all He is called the *Holy* Spirit and he works in us so that we will bear the fruits and become more like Jesus.

Gal 5:22 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.

7. The Spirit equips us

He fills us with courage, not fear. He fills us with wisdom, faith and joy. He grants us gifts that we are to use for the building up of the body of Christ. He empowers our service to God and to one another.

8. (And finally) The Spirit seals us for the eternal inheritance that we will receive when Christ returns in glory (**Eph 1:13-14**). Like those overpriced embossing seals that we buy so that we can stamp an impression on our books, the Holy Spirit has placed His seal upon us declaring that we belong to God and our place in His kingdom secure.

Conclusion...

The whole of our Christian life is initiated, empowered, and sustained by the Spirit of God working with the Word of God to bring us into the presence of God. **Without the Holy Spirit there would be no Bible (2 Tim 3:16). Without the Holy Spirit there would be no Gospel Witness, the Spirit works in us to accomplish the great commission. Without the Holy Spirit there would be no believers because our dead hearts would never come to life on their own. Without the Holy Spirit there would be no Church.**

The whole of our Christian life is dependent upon the Holy Spirit of God, the third person of the Trinity.

Let's ask God to give us more of the Spirit's presence and power in our lives. Let's ask the Spirit to shift our sanctification into overdrive. Let's ask the Spirit to pour out His power in our church and in our lives. Let's ask the Spirit to convert our loved ones. Let's ask the Spirit to make the church more loving, more faithful, more compassionate, more like Jesus.