

October 8 – Pneumatology, the study of the Holy Spirit

We have already discussed the fact that God is one, yet exists in three distinct persons. We've studied God the Father and God the son, Jesus Christ and this week we will look at God, the Holy Spirit. So right away you see that the Holy Spirit is part of the Holy Trinity and is therefore God!

Evidence that the Holy Spirit is God

1. His work during creation

Gen 1:2, *The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

2. Grants power to the early church

Acts 1:8, *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

Acts 2:4, *And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Acts 2:17-18 *"And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.*

3. Holy Spirit referred to as “down payment” of God’s presence in the life of a believer.

4. The Holy Spirit often seen as God’s present work on the earth or in ones lives

Isa 44:3, *For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.*

Isa 32:14-18 *For the palace is forsaken, the populous city deserted; the hill and the watchtower will become dens forever, a joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks; until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest. Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.*

What does the Holy Spirit do?

“The work of the Holy Spirit is to manifest the active presence of God in the world, and especially in the church.” (pg. 634)

In the Old Testament, the presence of God was seen as the “glory of God” and “theophanies”, while in the New Testament God’s presence is seen in Jesus, but after Jesus ascended he sent the Holy Spirit to act as God’s active present on the earth.

We see 4 aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit to bring evidence of God’s presence and to bless.

1. The Spirit Empowers
2. The Spirit Purifies
3. The Spirit Reveals
4. The Spirit Unifies
5. The Spirit responds to ones faith.

I. The Spirit Empowers

A. He gives life

Ps 104:30 *When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.*

Job 34:14-15 *If he should set his heart to it and gather to himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust*

John 6:63 *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no avail. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.*

B. He gives power for service

Num 27:18 *So the Lord said to Moses, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him.*

1 Sam 11:6 *And the Spirit of God rushed upon Saul when he heard these words, and his anger was greatly kindled.*

Isa 11:2-3 *And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear,*

John 1:32 *And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.*

Luke 4:1 *And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness*

Acts 1:8 *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

II. The Spirit Purifies

A. Christians are sanctified

1 Cor. 6:11 *And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

Gal 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

B. Non-Christians restrained

John 16:8-11 *And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe*

in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.
Acts 7:51 *"You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.*

III. The Spirit Reveals

A. Revelation to Prophets and Apostles

1. When we spoke about the canonicity of the Bible we spoke of the Old Testament prophets speaking for God through the spirit.
2. The New Testament Apostles act as the Old Testament prophets did.

B. Gives evidence of God's Presence

1. Gave evidence of his work in the Old Testament through Saul
1 Sam. 10:6-10 Then the Spirit of the *Lord* will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. Now when these signs meet you, do what your hand finds to do, for God is with you. Then go down before me to Gilgal. And behold, I am coming to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, until I come to you and show you what you shall do." When he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart. And all these signs came to pass that day. When they came to Gibeah, behold, a group of prophets met him, and the Spirit of God rushed upon him, and he prophesied among them.

Num. 11:25-26 *Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it. Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp.*

2. Gave evidence of God's presence in the New Testament through descending on Jesus as a dove

John 1:32 *And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. and tongues of fire at Pentecost*

Acts 2:2-3 *And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.*

C. He guides and directs God's people.

1. "led" Jesus into the wilderness

Matt 4:1 *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.*

Luke 4:1 *And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness*

2. telling Phillip to “go up and join this chariot”

Acts 8:28 *and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah.*

3. setting apart missionaries Paul and Barnabas

Acts 13:2 *While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."*

4. continually leads individual Christians

Gal. 5:16-26 *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.*

D. He gives God like atmosphere when He manifests His presence

1. Because the Holy Spirit is God, fully, He will at times bring conviction of sin, righteous and judgment

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

2. He pours the love of God into our hearts

Rom 5:5 *and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

Romans 15:30 *I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf,*

E. He gives us assurance of salvation

1. **Romans 8:16** *he Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,*
2. **1 John 3:24** *Whoever keeps his commandments abides in him, and he in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.*
3. **1 John 4:13** *By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.*

F. He teaches and He illuminates

1. Helps us remember truth

John 14:26 *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.*

2. Lead you to truth

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.*

3. Teach us truth to speak

Luke 12:12 *for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."*

4. Helps us understand God's work in our life

1 Cor. 2:12 *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.*

5. Helps us read and understand the Bible

Ps 119:18 *Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.*

IV. The Holy Spirit Unifies

A. Unified the church on the day of Pentecost

Acts 2:16-18 *But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: "'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.*

B. Continued to unify the church as they continued on mission

Acts 2:42-47 *And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple*

together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

- V. Holy Spirit responds to our faith.
Many examples in both the Old and New Testament show the Holy Spirit will bestow or withhold blessings according to whether or not he is pleased by the situation he sees.

A. Jesus was sinless and the Spirit “remained on him”

John 1:32 *And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.*

B. The Spirit blessed Samson mightily several times but ultimately left him because of his sin

Judges 18:25 *And the people of Dan said to him, "Do not let your voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows fall upon you, and you lose your life with the lives of your household."*

Judges 14:6 *Then the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and although he had nothing in his hand, he tore the lion in pieces as one tears a young goat. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.*

Judges 14:9 *He scraped it out into his hands and went on, eating as he went. And he came to his father and mother and gave some to them, and they ate. But he did not tell them that he had scraped the honey from the carcass of the lion.*

Judges 15:14 *When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting to meet him. Then the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and the ropes that were on his arms became as flax that has caught fire, and his bonds melted off his hands.*

C. Paul encourages the Ephesians not to “grieve the Holy Spirit”

Eph 4:30 *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. and also to the Thessalonians church*

1 Thess. 5:19 *Do not quench the Spirit.*

D. We are told to avoid sexual sin because the Holy Spirit resides within one body

1 Cor. 6:19-20 *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

Spiritual Gifts

I. God has used “spiritual gifts” throughout redemptive history, the question is how is the Holy Spirit equipping and enabling the people of God today?

A. Purpose of Gifts in the New Testament Age

Spiritual Gifts were given to equip the church to carry out its ministry until Christ returns

1 Cor. 1:7 *so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

B. How many gifts are there?

The New Testament epistles list 6 different lists of spiritual gifts. All the lists are quite different so we can assume that Paul was not trying to create an exhaustive list but rather listing gifts as they came to mind.

1. We all possess spiritual gifts as Christians (**1 Peter 4:10**)

at some time in our life. The Holy Spirit gives us spiritual gifts as He sees fit. (**1 Cor. 12:11**). Some of these gifts are for specific events or seasons like Stephen being filled with the Holy Spirit and seeing the glory of God that empowered him to preach while being stoned to death. (**Acts 7:55**)

But most gifts are given on a more permanent level or for the duration of one’s life. We see evidence of this in a person’s identity being tied to his gift. For example the bible refers to “prophets”, “teachers”, and others as those with specific gifts. We also see examples in several passages:

(Rom 12:6) (Rom 11:29)

Even though Christians are usually given spiritual gifts for their entire Christian life the Bible clearly states that the Holy Spirit may add more gifts to us or take gifts away from us based on how we steward them.

(1 Tim. 4:14)(Matt 25:29) .

2. So Christians can possess one gift or many gifts depending on the will of the Holy Spirit

1 Cor. 12:11 *All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.*

and their stewardship of those gifts. (**Matt 25:29**)

C. Are some gifts more powerful than others?

Paul speaks directly to this issue in (**Rom 12:6**). He indicates that our gifts can be strengthened and developed by God or over time with growth and maturity. He makes this clear when speaking to Timothy (**2 Tim. 1:6**). We see other examples in the scriptures where certain people had stronger gifts than others. Apollos was “mighty in the scriptures”

Acts 18:24 *Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures.*

Meaning he had a very strong gift of preaching and teaching.

Ultimately, both with the number of gifts and the strength of gifts we must keep in mind their purpose and the attitude we should have toward each others giftedness.

1. Gifts are given to strengthen the church (**Eph. 4:12**)(**Acts 1:8**)
1 Cor. 14:12 *So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.*
2. We should be thankful for the gifts of others not jealous or envious. (**1 Peter 4:10**)
1 Cor. 12:4-12 *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.*

II. What about the miraculous or sign gifts?

If we narrowly define miraculous as the “less common activity of God in which he arouses people’s awe and wonder and bears witness to himself” (Gruden Pg. 355) t. Then some gifts are miraculous by nature. Gifts like healing
Acts 3:10 *and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.*

Prophesying (**1 Cor. 14: 24-25**) and casting our demons (**Acts 19:11-13, 17**) or speaking in tongues when it is an actual foreign language and understood by others (**Acts 2:7**) are going to arouse people to consider God more than the gifts of teaching, service or administration. The debate then becomes, “do the miraculous gifts still exist?”

A. The Cessationist Debate, Have some gifts ceased?

Within evangelical Christianity there are 3 schools of thought. One says that all the gifts in the New Testament are in use today, while another says that the miraculous gifts are no longer in use today. This argument (cessationist) would say that the miraculous gifts were only given to the Apostles to authenticate the work they were doing at the time. They say it was necessary then, but not now because we now have the Bible. We must also realize the largest group is the third who are in the middle. They are neither cessationist nor charasmatics they are simply unsure.

B. So what is the correct view?

The argument centers around **1 Cor. 13:8-13**. This text tells us when the gifts will cease. We have to understand that the gifts were given for a specific reason, the mission of Jesus, and they won't be needed for all time. So when will they cease?

1 Cor. 13:8-13 *Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. o now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

To correctly answer this question we must understand the context of the text. Paul is interrupting his teaching on spiritual gifts to put them in proper context. He is saying that while we should “seek greater gifts” (**1 Cor. 12:31**), we should “seek love” (**1 Cor. 14:1**) all the more. He says that while gifts are good and useful they are not as good as love for at least 2 reasons:

1. Love lasts forever, gifts only for a season (**1 Cor. 13:8**)
 2. Love is perfect, gifts are imperfect (**1 Cor. 13:9-13**)
 - 3.
- C. He is saying that for now, New Testament age, the gifts fill a role, though imperfectly. One day something “perfect” and superior will fill that role and gifts will no longer be needed. So what is this “perfect”?

III. So what is “perfect”?

For several reasons I believe the “perfect” is the return of Jesus.

- A. The meaning of vs. 12 seems to indicate that vs.10 is talking about the Lord's return. We will only “fully know” as we are “fully known” when Christ comes back. Paul's use of the phrase “face to face” is a probable reference to several Old Testament passages where “face to face” describes meeting God personally. This will happen when Christ returns. (**Rev. 22:4**)
- B. The point of the passage is to show the superiority of love over gifts. He emphasizes that “love never ends”. To prove his point he argues that love will exist beyond even the Lord's return unlike the spiritual gifts. This would make Paul's argument for the superiority of the love most convincing.

IV. Finally, and more general in **1 Cor. 1:7**, we see the purpose of the spiritual gifts as building the church “until Christ returns.”