

Doctrine

God The Spirit

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Assorted

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So this morning we are continuing in our series of doctrine, and we're talking about the foundational truths or beliefs of Christianity. What is it that we believe when we claim to be followers of Christ Jesus? And for the first few weeks we have been spending time talking about the Trinity. What do we believe about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit? And today we are going to take some time to focus on God the Holy Spirit.

And if we are honest, sometimes God the Holy Spirit is treated as the red - headed stepchild of the Trinity, right? When we talk about God the Father, we can make sense of that. And most people can picture and understand a father figure. When we talk about God the Son, of course we have images in our head of Jesus, and whether He's with children, or carrying a lamb, or knocking on a door, or walking on water, we have images in our mind.

But when we talk about the Holy Spirit, the best image we have is a dove. How are we supposed to relate with and understand a dove, right? I mean, how do we make sense of this? How are we supposed to understand it? I mean, we pray to God our Father, we sing songs about Jesus, and we say things like, "Jesus loves you." But if someone were to ask you to describe the Holy Spirit, what would you say?

How would you describe the Holy Spirit? I think part of the problem as to why this is so difficult is because we do know Him as the Holy Spirit or the Holy Ghost. And it is difficult to explain a spirit or a ghost. And ultimately we may all get these weird images in our heads of ghosts, like Casper the friendly ghost, or Slimer from Ghostbusters. All right, this just shows how old I am. How many of you guys know Slimer? Raise your hand.

Some trying students. All right, that's good. We got some trying students. Okay. Or Jacob Marley, right? We have these images of ghosts in our head. But the Holy Spirit, you need to know this, is not the strange or mysterious side character of Christianity. No, God the Spirit is God. He is present and He is active. And the Scripture is very clear that if you are a follower of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit isn't just someone you need to understand.

He is someone you need to know. The first thing you need to know about the Holy Spirit is He is a who. He is a spirit and He is the third person of the Trinity. God in three persons and yet one being. They are all God, but in different forms with different functions. This is what we have been talking about. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit all work together, and every single one of them is God.

And so as we continue in this series on doctrine, I'm going to start again by reading the missionary church's statement regarding the Spirit. How do we understand the Spirit based off of Scripture? And then I want to look at that very Scripture and remind us that the Holy Spirit was present in the Old Testament and the New Testament before the day of Pentecost. Usually when you ask church people about the Holy Spirit, the number one story that comes to their minds, and rightly so, is the day of Pentecost in the book of Acts.

When the believers are huddled in an upper room and we read about the story that the Holy Spirit came and separated and rested on every one of them and looked like tongues of fire. And then Peter stands up full of the

Spirit and presents the good news of Jesus Christ, and thousands come into the church. But I need you to know that the Holy Spirit existed before that moment in Acts chapter 2, and we are going to see that today. I want to share with you eight things that the Holy Spirit does in the life of a believer.

There are more than these eight, but we're just going to focus on these eight. And then I want to end today's message by sharing with you three things that the Holy Spirit is. So let's pray, and then we will talk about the dove in the room. All right. Heavenly Father, we do come before You. We thank You for Your grace and Your mercy in our lives.

We thank You that as we are going to read today in the Scriptures, that when we confess Jesus as Lord, we are truly inviting the Holy Spirit to come within us, to guide us and lead us and direct us, to bring conviction, to give us hope. These are all things that come through the Spirit. And so we are grateful that God, You as creator of the universe, God three in one, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, wants to have a personal and intimate relationship with us.

And for that, we are grateful. And so help us to take that next step towards You. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Let's start with this statement from the missionary church. And again, as we read this, this is our statement as a missionary church, but this is the foundational statement of understanding God the Spirit. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the third person of the triune God, proceeding from and sent by the Father and the Son.

He is the personal expression of God's power, instrumental in all of His works. He is the author and the illuminator of sacred Scripture. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He is the agent of new birth, the one by whom we are baptized into the body of Christ.

And as the Spirit of holiness, He indwells every believer and His church, purifying and empowering His people for holy living. He guides us into truth. He comforts and encourages us, and He enables us to fulfill the great commission. He produces His fruit in the lives of believers and gives them spiritual gifts for the good of the church.

Now that is a very densely packed paragraph, isn't it? Explaining what the Spirit is, who He is, and what He does in our lives. I want to read to you two more statements from the missionary church document called Salvation and the Spirit-Filled Life. And again, I want you to know that these are available for you out there in the reading room. We have on the wall some of our literature, and these could be found in some of that literature.

Salvation and the Spirit-Filled Life. We believe that God intends to transform His redeemed people by conforming them to the image of His Son through the infilling and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, the process of being made holy, sanctification. Though this work begins with God's gracious initiative, it begins with Him and can only be accomplished by His life - giving power.

Believers, our part, must cooperate and fully yield themselves to the Lordship of Christ. Believers are called to decisively surrender their wills, be renewed in their minds, and have their hearts purified as they continuously, it is a daily thing, offer themselves as living sacrifices to God. Because I always say, if you are a living sacrifice, that gives you the freedom to crawl off the altar, right?

We are a living sacrifice. It is a daily choice we make. We believe that a living faith must express itself in a life of loving obedience to God and in loving service to others. Our vertical relationship with God and our horizontal relationship with one another. Genuine faith will inevitably produce good works, which are born out of gratitude for salvation and are ultimately done for God's glory.

Christians are called to live by the power of the Holy Spirit as citizens of the kingdom, serving as God's agents of transformation for society, culture, and the created world. When you and I surrender our lives to Jesus, that is our part in the process. We simply surrender to Him. The Scriptures say that we receive the Holy Spirit.

Acts chapter 2, verse 38, Luke tells us that Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins. And when you do that, you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." This is a full stop point in Scripture. It is an amazing truth that the Spirit actually comes into us and helps us to fulfill our calling and that this is available to every single person that would put their faith in Jesus Christ.

And you and I need to know the truth that this was not the case before Jesus. The Holy Spirit wasn't available to every Israelite, to every Jewish person, to every Gentile that even came into the Jewish faith. In the Old Testament, what we see is that the Holy Spirit still existed, but He only came upon certain individuals to help them accomplish their God-given purpose.

But the Spirit was not on everyone. So let's look at a few examples where the Spirit was present in the Old Testament and poured upon certain individuals. Judges chapter 3, verse 10, reading about the judge Othniel, we see that the Spirit of the Lord came on him, on Othniel, so that he became Israel's judge and went to war. The Spirit of the Lord, the Holy Spirit, came upon him and gave him the ability to lead the Israelites through that time.

Numbers chapter 27, verse 18 says, "So the Lord said to Moses, 'Take Joshua, son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit of leadership, and lay your hand on him.'" God had given His Spirit to Joshua to help lead His people, just like God had given His Spirit to Moses. And in Exodus chapter 31, verses 1 through 3, we read, "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'See, I have chosen Bezalel, son of Uri, the son of Hur of the tribe of Judah.

And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, and with knowledge and all kinds of skills, because he was one of the two men that God had gifted to use His hands in order to create things for the temple of God.'" The Spirit was poured upon him, a supernatural pouring of the Spirit. And so we see that in the Old Covenant, in the Old Testament, the Spirit still existed, but He was not available to everybody like He is in the New Covenant.

And so today, as you and I are part of this New Covenant, this new promise through Jesus Christ, we are given the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit does many things for us as His followers. So I want to take you through eight things that the Holy Spirit does in the life of a believer. One that we have already mentioned over and over again this morning, the Holy Spirit dwells within us. The Holy Spirit dwells within us.

1 Corinthians chapter 6, verses 19 through 20, the Apostle Paul says, "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? So you are not your own. You were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies." This comes in the context of the Apostle Paul addressing those believers that lived in Corinth that were beginning to do things with their body that were dishonoring to God.

And so the Apostle Paul says, "Listen, the Holy Spirit is inside of you, and so you should treat your body with greater honor and greater respect, because your body is actually the temple of God. The Holy Spirit, God the Spirit, dwells within you for the rest of your natural lives." That can be a little scary, right? Am I not the only one that thinks about that and goes, "Man, I don't know that my body is good enough to house the Holy Spirit," right?

We all know we make mistakes. We all know that we have done things that are wrong. But this is why the Apostle Paul is saying to us it's so important that we recognize the truth that the Holy Spirit is living within us. Sometimes I'll hear people say as they're trying to help others make the best decision, "Well, what would you do if Jesus was sitting here with you?" And the real thing should be, you do realize Jesus is inside of you, that God the Spirit is in you. He knows what you're doing.

It's not what if He is there. And so we are called to be holy because He is holy. Our bodies become the temple. And if you read about the temple in the Old Testament, it will just even make you more fearful of what was

allowed and wasn't allowed in the temple. And now we are that temple. The Spirit dwells within us. The second thing that the Spirit does for us according to Scripture is that He teaches us and He reminds us.

John chapter 14, verse 26, Jesus says, "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything that I have said to you." Did you guys know that by having the Spirit living inside of you, He helps you understand and make sense of the Scriptures? Did you know that? He reveals truths to you.

Have you ever encouraged a family member, a friend, a neighbor, a coworker, somebody that you care about, have you ever encouraged them to read the Scriptures and they come back to you and they're like, "I tried and I don't understand any of it"? That's probably a truthful statement. It is the Spirit that reveals truths to us. It's the Spirit that helps us understand what we are reading. Now, that doesn't mean that they can't understand truths. God can reveal that to them. And it also doesn't mean that as a follower of Jesus, I always read the Scriptures and I understand 100 % of what I'm reading, right?

That's not the case either, but there is truth that's revealed. And one of the beautiful things about doing life in community, about reading Scripture in community, is that it has happened in my life on many occasions where I know that God, through His Spirit, has used somebody else to reveal truth to me about Scripture. Yeah? And so God is using the Spirit through other individuals to teach me and to remind me.

There have been many times I've heard messages and it's like a light bulb goes on in my head and I go, "How did I never see that before," right? Because that's the Spirit speaking truth into my heart and into my life. The third thing that the Spirit does is encourage us. He encourages us. Acts chapter 9, verse 31 says, "Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened.

Living in fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers." As believers, you and I are the church. It is not a building on a street corner. It's not this building that you sit in. It is you and I, and we can receive encouragement through the Spirit. Now, just because we have come to know Jesus, just because we have allowed the Spirit to come inside of us, doesn't mean that life will stop being difficult.

Please tell me I'm not the only one that even though I've confessed Christ, I still have difficult days, right? I'm not the only one. We still have difficult days, but the Spirit promises to be with us in the midst of those days and to encourage us and that we can have joy in those times. I always tell people, "Listen, there might be days that I'm not happy. I could have a bad day and I'm just not happy. I don't have the emotion of happiness, but I can still have joy because joy is a choice.

I choose to have joy in the midst of whatever is going on. Again, may not be happy, but I can be encouraged by the Spirit to know that I'm not alone." The fourth thing that the Spirit does according to Scripture is guide us. Guides us in the decisions we make every single day of our lives if we will allow Him to. Gives us direction. Acts chapter 13, verse 4, speaking of the missionary journeys of Paul, we read that the two of them were sent on their way by the Holy Spirit.

They felt led by the Holy Spirit. And so they went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. Every single step along their journey, all three missionary journeys, the Apostle Paul was led by the Holy Spirit. He was guiding them. And as we grow in our faith, we learn to better heed the direction of the Spirit. We can feel His nudges that keep us on track. He will let us know when it's time to stay and when it's time to move on, and He will help direct our steps.

Now, let me just be clear about something. One of the number one questions that people will come into my office to ask me about is that they have a big decision coming up in their lives. And they say, "Pastor, I want to know where the Spirit is leading me. I want to know what God wants me to do. How do I determine the direction of God in my life?" And my answer to every single one of you and anybody that would come into my office and ask that question, number one is to look at Scripture. Scripture is God's spoken word. It is there.

It is alive. And so if you're looking at a decision you have to make in life, and Scripture obviously points to one as wrong and one as right or says, "This one is a direction you shouldn't go," well, then we have our answer. I don't need to look any further because God is never going to contradict what His word says. Now, obviously, most people that come into my office, they're not asking me about a morally right or wrong decision. And so they say, "Great, Pastor. I don't think the Bible says, 'Thou shalt choose job A,'" right?

I say, "Okay, yep, that's fair enough ." I said, "Okay, so now the second thing we're going to do is we are going to pray and ask the Spirit to guide us. We're going to ask for God's wisdom. Give us insight into this." It's good. It's a spiritual exercise to make a list of pros and cons, okay? God has given us a mind to do that. And so we look at that and we make a list of pros and cons and we say, "God, guide me, direct me, give me wisdom in making this decision ." And they say, "Okay, I've done that ." And both have pros and cons and both look okay.

And I say, "Okay, step number three is to probably ask those around us that we respect, that we know have the Spirit of God living in them, ' Hey, is there a direction that you are feeling me being nudged towards in this?'" And God can speak through other people. And then I say, " You know what? If you're still not sure, here is what I believe about our God based on Scripture. If neither decision is morally right or wrong, you have sought His direction, you have sought other people, and you still are not sure, can I just tell you, you know what?

Go ahead and make a decision. Just choose A or B and it's okay. And if for whatever reason you chose the wrong one, I believe that God is big enough that He can get you back on track ." Because the Spirit will guide us as we listen to Him. He does lead us in those ways. All right, number five. I spent too much time on that one. Here we go. Number five, He warns us. He does give us warnings. He leads us in a way.

Not only does He guide us in right paths, He can warn us of difficult things that are coming. Acts chapter 20, verse 23, we read that Paul said, "I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me." So he is being guided by the Spirit, but he's also being warned by the Spirit of things that are going to happen. And I have had conversations with individuals on rare occasions where the Spirit of God kind of gives them a heads up of something that is going to come their way to help them prepare.

They're crazy stories. I've never had it happen to me personally, but I've had people tell me, " You know what? I truly feel that God told me I was going to lose my mother or I was going to lose my father." Before it even happened, He was preparing me for that. And I go, "That's crazy ." But I believe that the Spirit can do that. He does give us direction. He warns us. He leads us. The sixth thing the Spirit does is give us hope. He gives us hope.

Romans chapter 15, verse 13 says, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust Him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of who? The Holy Spirit." He gives us hope. Sometimes in life, we just need a little hope. As we grow in our relationship with God, we can learn to experience hope and peace through the power of the Spirit.

And I have noticed in my own life a dramatic difference in one's outlook on life depending whether they have the Spirit or not. I have run into many individuals that you would say, " You know what? Their future, their life is hopeless. There's nothing they can look forward to ." But those individuals have the Spirit of God living in them, and they are the happiest and most filled with joy and most hopeful people I've ever met because they have the Spirit, and the Spirit gives hope.

I've met other individuals that seem like they have it all. They have everything, anything you could ever ask for or imagine, and yet their life is hopeless because they don't have the Spirit. You see, the Spirit gives us hope in this world. The seventh thing that the Spirit does is He tells us the truth. He guides us and leads us to the truth. John chapter 16, Jesus says, "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear.

But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own, but He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come." You know, in a world where it is becoming increasingly more difficult to know what is true and what is not, you and I need to learn to depend on the Spirit

to guide us into truth, to show us what to believe, to show us the direction, that He would give us the Spirit of discernment within us so that spiritually speaking, we would know the difference between truth and falsehood.

And finally, the Spirit helps us to pray. He helps us to pray. Romans chapter 8, verse 26 says, "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us through wordless groans ." So those of you that have been raised in the church, what do we call those wordless groans or some denominations? Speaking in tongues. All right? Now, if you've never heard the phrase speaking in tongues, you can have a really fun afternoon.

Just Google it, all right? Find out what that is. Now, let me just tell you what the missionary church's stance is on tongues. I have people sometimes ask me that. The missionary church believes that the Spirit can still give people the gift of tongues where, again, if you've not heard of this, it's a prayer language, I guess, in a way that you are speaking to God and you're making groans and mumbles and things like that. I've never spoken in tongues, so probably somebody better can explain that to you. Missionary church has no problem with that.

Obviously, if you've been coming here for a while, you probably haven't heard a lot of speaking in tongues. I can't answer the question as to why for that, okay? But we are okay with it. We just follow what Scripture says that if somebody is going to speak in tongues, especially publicly, there should be an interpretation, right, so that it can benefit the body of Christ. So if somebody I know there are people in the congregation when we are worshiping sometimes that do speak in tongues, and that's fine. There doesn't need to be an interpretation then.

But if we were to have somebody come up front and do that, not only would we weird a lot of people out, but there would need to be an interpretation. That's what Scripture says. God is a God of order, not of disorder. And so we do believe that. But I want you to know that even in Romans 8, it's not just talking about speaking in tongues, how we interpret it, but it's even in those times that the Spirit intercedes for us. I think every single one of us has had moments in our Christian life where we were going through some trial, some heartache, some difficulty where we truly didn't even know what to pray to God, and we just fell on our knees and said, "God, help us," right?

That's when the Spirit can also intercede for us and cry out to God the Father as to what is going on in our hearts and in our lives, and we can trust that He will intercede. Again, I told you this is not an exhaustive list of what the Spirit does for us, but it's a start. As I was thinking about this, it might be a fun idea for some of you, maybe in the next month, to open up your New Testament, start in Matthew, go all the way to Revelation, and anytime the Holy Spirit is mentioned, anytime there is a verb, an action word as to what the Holy Spirit does, that you would write down.

This is what the Spirit does for us. The Spirit, God the Spirit, the third part of the Trinity, plays a very active role in our lives. Some other things that He does according to Scripture is He draws us to Himself. The Holy Spirit reveals Jesus to us. He bestows spiritual gifts on us, which would be a whole nother message about the spiritual gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to us. And He also convicts us of sin. I knew I spent too much time on that.

Let me just tell you three things the Holy Spirit is, and I'm just going to go through these really quickly. The Holy Spirit is personal. He is personal. We should not imagine Him as a ghost or as some kind of weird part of the Trinity. He is personal. 1 Corinthians chapter 2, verses 10 through 11 says, "The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them?"

In the same way, no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God ." We also see that He can be grieved in Ephesians chapter 4, verse 30, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. The Spirit is a sign of our redemption before God the Father." He intercedes for us. He makes decisions according to His will. He appoints specific people to specific tasks. He is personal. The Spirit is also divine. And I'm not going to read this.

Acts chapter 5, I just want to affirm to you again, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, they are all God. They possess the characteristics of God, omnipresent, omniscient, eternal. They are creators. Remember the acronym hands. Do you guys remember this from last week, the acronym hands? Remember that the Holy Spirit has the honor of God, the attributes of God, the names of God, the deeds of God, and the seat of God. The Holy Spirit is God.

And finally, the Holy Spirit is active. Ephesians chapter 1, verse 13 says, "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in Him with the seal, the promised Holy Spirit." He does all of these things in our life. And because the Holy Spirit is personal, we can know Him and fellowship with Him. Because He is divine, the Holy Spirit, that means that we can worship Him and obey Him.

And because He is active, we can rely on His perfect work in our lives. And so be reminded of the amazing time in which you and I live. In the Old Covenant, in the Old Testament, the Spirit ministered corporately in Israel, and He was given to select individuals, kings and priests and prophets, but not to everybody. But in the New Covenant, you and I are now living in a time that was prophesied about where the Spirit would come upon us and reside within each believer individually.

The greatest prophet of the Old Testament, the prophet Joel-- just kidding, but good prophet-- he is quoted in Acts chapter 2, verse 17. He said, "In the last days, God says, 'I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams.'" You and I will have the Spirit poured upon us, and that is the time in which we live. What a blessing it is to live in this time.

I know I've told you before, when we get to heaven, if we have conversations with individuals, if we even care, I know many of us want to go to David and Moses, and we want to ask questions about what life was like and what it was like to do this and to do that. Can I tell you, I think there's going to be a lot of people that would come up to you, and they're going to say, "What was it like to have God dwelling within you? What was that like?" That is the time that you and I live in. Let me close with an analogy from C.S.

Lewis to maybe help wrap this whole thing and put a bow on it. You know that among human beings, when they get together in a family or a club or a trades union, people talk about the spirit of that family or club or trade union. They talk about its spirit because the individual members, when they're together, do really develop particular ways of talking and behaving which they wouldn't have if they were apart.

It is as if a sort of communal personality came into existence. But of course, it isn't a real person. It is only rather like a person. But that's just one of the differences between God and us. What grows out of the joint life of the Father and the Son is a real person and, in fact, is the third of the three persons who are God, the Holy Spirit. You probably have to go back and reread that five times for it to make sense.

All right? C.S. Lewis had a good way of doing that. God the Spirit, 100 % God dwelling within us, the hope of the Holy Spirit. As always, the altars are open. If you need prayer for something that's going on in your life or whatever else, we would love to pray with you on the sides. Again, invite the Spirit to come and live within you and get ready for the ride of a lifetime because it truly is. Let me pray. Heavenly Father, thank You for the Spirit which You give to us.

Thank You that the Spirit lives within us, truly dwells within us, and for the hope that He gives us, for the encouragement that He gives to us, the ways that He helps us understand Scripture and understand You better, for the ways that He warns us, for the ways that He reveals You to us. God, we are so grateful.

And if there is anyone here today, anybody that's listening on the radio, anybody that's watching online that has not invited Your Spirit to come within them, I pray that they would do that today as they proclaim Jesus as their Lord and Savior, as they repent of their sins and turn to You, that You would continue to transform us into that new creation so that we can be Your agents in this world. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

