

theology of the holy spirit

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The Holy Spirit - Lover and Life-giver

It was through the Holy Spirit that you and I first felt the warmth of God's love. He has been described as "God's face turned toward us and God's presence abiding with us." (Clark Pinnock)

"...how do we grasp the breath of God?...How do we define Spirit?...it is easier to speak of Father and Son, if only because of the familiar family imagery." (C.P.)

The Holy Spirit is spoken of as water, wind, fire, breath, life - he is invisible yet incredibly powerful. But he is also a person who is sensitive, who loves us passionately and longs to have an intimate relationship with each of us.

- i. The Spirit is part of the triune God - three persons who love each other, and enjoy shared life.
- ii. He is creator and life-giver - the key to all Divine operations.
- iii. "The Spirit reaches out to creatures, catches them up and brings them home to the love of God." (C.P.)

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

- i. The Holy Spirit gave gifts to individuals; empowered leaders, enabled craftsmen, inspired prophets, psalmists and poets.
- ii. Old Testament prophets prophesied two things:
 - i. A specially anointed servant of God was to come - Isaiah 42:1-4; 11:1-2, later fulfilled in Jesus.
 - ii. An out-pouring of the Spirit on a whole people - Joel 2:28-29; Ezekiel 36:24-27, initially fulfilled at Pentecost.

For the faithful Jew, looking for the kingdom of God to come, the mark of the in-breaking of that kingdom would be a deluge of the Spirit!

The Holy Spirit upon Jesus

- i. The Spirit came first upon John the Baptist, preparing the way for Jesus.

- ii. Jesus was born through the power of the Spirit. Luke 1:35.
- iii. The Spirit came upon Jesus at his baptism, anointing him for his mission (Acts 10:37-38; Luke 4:14-21).
- iv. It was by the Holy Spirit that Jesus overcame temptation and lived in obedience.
- v. The ministry of Jesus was in the power of the Spirit. Matthew 12:28; Acts 10:38; Luke 4.
- vi. Jesus' final act before going back to heaven was to breathe on his disciples and say, "Receive the Holy Spirit." They did (!) on the Day of Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit and the Church

"The church is...an event in the history of the Spirit....a continuation of the Spirit-anointed event that was Jesus Christ." (C.P.)

We are baptised in one Spirit into one body (1 Corinthians 12:12-13), receiving our anointing as Jesus did:

- i. To worship God. Philippians 3:3; John 4:24.
 - ii. To continue Jesus' mission. Acts 1:8 - "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses."
"When the Spirit falls, mission is natural and spontaneous...
Mission is not something we do to expand the size of the church; it is something God does to gather and bring justice to the nations...
More than churches full of people, God wants people full of the Spirit."
(C.P.)
 - iii. To affirm the disenfranchised. Acts 2:16-18; Luke 4.
 - iv. To demonstrate in community a loving, relational God.
"The Trinity is an open, inviting fellowship, and the Spirit wants the church to be the same." (C.P.)
Mission and community belong together.
 - v. To use gifts, enabling us to serve effectively. 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Romans 12:4-8.
Gifts are "conduits through which God's love can flow...
Gift giving is an aspect of the work of the Creator Spirit who energises history until God's goals are realised." (C.P.)
- We are responsible for the gifts we are given. "Do not neglect your gift...Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them." (1 Timothy 4:14-15).
"I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God." (2 Timothy 1:6).

The Holy Spirit and Revival

Revivals are not excursions into the extra-ordinary - they are a return to the normality of the Spirit's presence and power.

“If renewal stops with spiritual delicacies, it will not fulfill its purpose... We need renewal not because we are bored but because a powerless church cannot become a mighty army.” (C.P.)

The Holy Spirit stimulates in us the desire, and enables us to pray. Romans 8:26-27; Ephesians 6:18.

The Holy Spirit and You

- The Holy Spirit in you is God's seal that you belong to him. Romans 8:9; Ephesians 4:30; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22.
- The Holy Spirit wants to fill you. Ephesians 5:18.
- He wants to have an intimate relationship with you.
- He wants to draw you close to Jesus and help you to follow him.
- He wants to make you like Jesus.
- He wants to use you to bring others to Jesus.

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Session Impact Form

How has this session impacted my understanding?

What parts of my character and attitudes have been challenged?

What issues do I need to deal with and pray through?

What practical action / changes can I make, in consultation with my discipler, in terms of my lifestyle / life?