

Date: 01-06-2018
Series: The Holy Spirit

A REFRESHER COURSE ON THE AWESOME SPIRIT OF GOD

(Selected Scriptures)

During the depression, a place in the hill country of West Texas called “Yate’s Pool” was a sheep ranch owned by (yes, you guessed it!) a man named Yates. Unfortunately, Mr. Yates wasn't able to make enough money to pay the mortgage, so he was in danger of losing his ranch. With very little money for clothes or food, his family (like many others) had to rely on help from the government.

Day after day, as he grazed his sheep over the rolling hills of West Texas, he worried constantly about how he would pay his bills. Then a team from an oil company came into the area and informed him that there might be oil on his land. They asked permission to drill a wildcat well, and he signed a lease contract.

At 1,115 feet they struck a huge oil reserve. The first well produced 80,000 barrels of oil a day. Other wells dug on his property were more than twice as large. In fact, 30 years after the discovery, a government test of one of the wells showed it could still produce 125,000 barrels of oil a day. And Mr. Yates owned it all!

The very day he purchased the land, he received the oil and mineral rights. Yet, he lived for years on welfare—he was a multimillionaire living in poverty. The problem? He didn't know the oil was there even though he owned it.

This is the first Sunday of 2019 and it is also a great time to get reacquainted with the divine “oil well” flowing deep within us from the very moment we believed in Christ—the third member of the Trinity called “the Holy Spirit.” Though I have taught many things over the years about the Holy Spirit, I have never dedicated an entire series of messages to Him. And that is what I would like to do here at the beginning of 2019. I would like all of us to get reacquainted with our awesome God anew and afresh. Since all of us who are saved are indwelt by Him and possess His wonderful power and presence, I hope that by the time we end this series, we will not only have a much, much greater appreciation of all He does in us, and for us, and through us, I also hope that this series will truly transform our lives and set us free to be all we can be for Christ, for Scripture tells us: “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Cor 3:17). The world, the flesh, and the devil bring bondage to mankind, the Spirit is the “bondage-breaker.” He brings liberty to us so we can soar like an eagle for God.

So, this morning, before we share sermons on all of the amazing things the Spirit desires to do in us, and for us, and through us in the weeks ahead, I thought it would be good to take some time to get reacquainted with Him.

Title: A Refresher Course on the Awesome Spirit of God

(Prayer)

Author and pastor A. W. Tozer once said the following convicting words:

“If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95% of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference. If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, 95% of what they did would stop, and everybody would know the difference.”

It is my prayer that my messages over the next several weeks will impact all our lives, our homes, and our church in a such a powerful way that everyone of us and all of those around us will know the difference. Let’s start with the most basic question:

1. Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is God, co-equal with the Father and the Son, and works in perfect harmony and unity with them. He is not an impersonal “force” (as in the *Star Wars* movies) but an eternal person who is omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (knows everything), and omnipresent (exists everywhere). He always **has** existed and always **will** exist.

That He is a person and not an impersonal force is seen over and over in Scripture. First of all...

He has a **mind** (He gives counsel, inspires Scripture, speaks, teaches, and testifies). He has a **will** (He directs people, gives spiritual gifts, and gives life to those who believe). He has **emotions** (He loves, experiences joy, and can be grieved, insulted, and quenched).

The **OT** refers to the Holy Spirit 79X in 21 of the 39 OT books (51%).
The **NT** refers to the Holy Spirit 245X in 23 of the 27 NT books (85%).

The Spirit of God is seen for the first time **in the Bible in Genesis 1:2** “hovering over the face of the waters” at creation, and, as we saw last Sunday, in the final verses of Revelation **where “the Spirit and the bride”** invite sinners to “come” to Christ for His free gift of everlasting life (in Rev 22:17).

Beyond any doubt, Scripture teaches that the Holy Spirit is God Almighty:

Acts 5:3-4-----But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart **to lie to the Holy Spirit** and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? **You have not lied to men but to God.**”

2. How is the Holy Spirit symbolized in Scripture?

There are eight word pictures in Scripture that symbolize the Holy Spirit

(two of them are in the Old Testament, and all eight of them are in the New Testament).

- A. **He is like a cloth** wrapping around Christ's disciples so they could do things for God that they could not do before Pentecost.

Luke 24:49-----⁴⁹ "Behold, I send **the Promise of My Father** [the Holy Spirit] upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are **endued** [Greek—clothed] with power from on high."

- B. **He is like an** innocent and blameless **dove**.

We all know the Scripture, "be wise as serpents and **harmless as doves**."

A dove represents innocence and righteousness. And we see this in the baptism of Christ. Jesus told John to baptize Him because:

Matthew 3:15-----"...it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."

And what happens next?

Matthew 3:16-----¹⁶ When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending **like a dove** and alighting upon Him.

So in v. 16, the Spirit inaugurates Christ's ministry of righteousness and in v. 17, the Father authenticates it:

Matthew 3:17-----¹⁷ And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

- C. He is like **fire**.

Throughout the Bible, fire symbolizes the presence of God. In the OT you have the God in burning bush, descending on **Mt. Sinai** in fire, and going with Israel as the **pillar of fire** by night. And in Acts 2:3, when God sends the Spirit at Pentecost, He comes in the form of fire:

Acts 2:3-4-----³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, **as of fire**, and *one* sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with **the Holy Spirit** and began to speak with other tongues [languages], as **the Spirit** gave them utterance.

The fire that rested upon each person must have reminded the disciples of the Exodus event and God's presence in the pillar of fire by night.

D. He is like **oil**. (= olive oil)

In Bible times, and even today, we anoint people with oil. It symbolizes appointment to an important position. Jesus is the Messiah (meaning “anointed one”) and was anointed with the Holy Spirit for ministry:

Acts 10:38-----...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth **with the Holy Spirit** and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

(1 John says that believers also have an anointing from the Holy Spirit, which we will say more about later in this series.)

E. He is like a **guarantee** (or, down-payment).

The indwelling Holy Spirit is God’s guarantee that what He gave us when we first believed in Christ is ours forever—it is **eternal** life!

Ephesians 1:13-14-----...having believed, you were sealed with **the Holy Spirit of promise**,¹⁴ who is the **guarantee** of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His [the Father’s] glory.

In Eph. 1, we are told that the Father **planned** our salvation; the Son **purchased** our salvation, and the Spirit **protects** our salvation. Eph. 1:13 tells us that **because we were sealed** with the Spirit of God, He guarantees that we will be with God forever!

F. He is like a **seal**.

We see this in Eph. 4:30 as well:

Ephesians 4:30-----³⁰ And do not grieve **the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed** for the day of redemption.

Everyone who is born again through faith alone in Christ alone is securely sealed by the Holy Spirit and will (and CANNOT) ever be condemned to hell.

G. He is like **water**.

The moment we believe in Christ we are regenerated and made new by the Holy Spirit:

Titus 3:5-6-----⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through **the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit**,⁶ whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior...

Not only that, we are spiritually baptized into the body of Christ by the Spirit as well:

1 Corinthians 12:13-----¹³ For by **one Spirit** we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into **one Spirit**.

The Holy Spirit is the spiritual water who baptizes us into the body of Christ, the church, and He is the spiritual water we have drunk.

[Not water baptism—that’s different. This is speaking of “spiritual baptism the moment we are saved. (Thrall Car vs. FBC)]

H. He is like **wind**.

Can you see the wind? No. Does the wind sometimes come out of nowhere and just start blowing like crazy? Yes. The wind is invisible, unexpected, unpredictable, and has amazing power. So is the Spirit of God!

Everyone who ever gets saved, gets saved because the wind of God—the Holy Spirit—has blown upon them. Jesus said:

John 3:8-----⁸ The **wind** blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. **So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.**”

In Ezekiel 37, **Israel is pictured as a valley of dry bones**. It is dead, lifeless, a pile of bones. But one day, God will send the wind of the Holy Spirit upon Israel, and when **the wind hits those bones**, they will come alive by faith in their newfound Messiah, Jesus!

And in Acts 2, Luke wrote that the coming of the Holy Spirit sounded just like a ferocious windstorm:

Acts 2:2-----² And suddenly there came a sound **from heaven**, as of **a rushing mighty wind**, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Just as a new rocket blasting off needs a lot of fuel to get out of the earth’s atmosphere, the church of Jesus that began on the day of Pentecost needed a lot of spiritual fuel if it was going to succeed, and it got that fuel in the person of the Holy Spirit! And hallelujah, the Spirit of God is still fueling the church 2000 years later! Jesus said that the gates of hell would not be able to withstand His church!

Application

Take comfort in the fact that the Holy Spirit dwells within you as you begin 2019.

Wherever you go and whatever you face, God Himself will be with you every step of the way!

(He's cloth, dove, fire, oil, guarantee, seal, water, wind.)

On the advice of Dr. Alexander Graham Bell (the man who invented the telephone), the parents of Helen Keller (who was blind and deaf) sent for a teacher from the Perkins Institution for the Blind in Boston, MA. Anne Sullivan, a 19-year-old orphan, was chosen for the task of instructing 6-year-old Helen. It was the beginning of a close and lifelong friendship between them. By means of a manual alphabet, Anne "spelled" into Helen's hand such words as *doll* or *puppy*. Two years later Helen was reading and writing Braille fluently. At age ten, Helen learned different sounds by placing her fingers on her teacher's larynx and "hearing" the vibrations. Later Helen went to Radcliffe College, where Anne spelled the lectures into Helen's hand. After graduating with honors, Helen decided to devote her life to helping the blind and deaf. As part of that endeavor, she wrote many books and articles and traveled around the world making speeches. Since Helen's speeches were not intelligible to some, Anne often translated them for her.

Their nearly 50 years of companionship ended when Anne died in 1936 at the age of 69. Helen wrote these endearing words about her lifelong friend:

My teacher is so near to me that I scarcely think of myself apart from her. I feel that her being is inseparable from my own, and that the footsteps of my life are in hers. All the best of me belongs to her—there is not a talent or an inspiration or a joy in me that has not been awakened by her loving touch.

(Closing comments)