

Foundations #4 – The Holy Spirit

He descends like a dove, He baptizes with fire, He comforts, guides and corrects; He is the Spirit of life, that sense of truth, the voice of God. When you are alone, lost and afraid, He will carry you home.

Over and over again, the Bible mentions the Holy Spirit, or as He is called in the King James, the Holy Ghost. Actually, the Spirit of God is mentioned over 800 times in the Bible.

In fact, if you start reading the Bible from the beginning He is mentioned in the very second verse. Genesis 1:2, *“Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”*

Over the past 3 weeks we have been in this series called Foundations. We have studied about Man, about God and about Jesus. Today we are going to have a look at the third member of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.

This is a very important study. So important in fact, that like our study about Christ and about God. I don't know if I am wise enough and learned enough to do this correctly.

Any time you are talking about a member of the Trinity, the subject is so awesome and the consequences of our conclusions so tremendous that I can only approach this subject with a humble heart. The seriousness of the passage in Matthew makes me even more aware of my need to rightly divide the Word of God.

Matthew 12:31-32, *“And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”*

The **Holy Spirit is the point at which the Trinity becomes personal** to the believer. Many times we think of the Father as supreme and far off in heaven.

And often the Son seems far removed in history. (After all He had to come at some point in time.) But the Holy Spirit is active in the lives of believers today.

He (is) resides in us right now! John 14:16-17, *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever -- the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, **for he lives with you and will be in you.**”*

The Holy Spirit is the particular member of the Trinity through whom the entire Godhead works in us.

In general we could think of God the Father interacting with mankind in the OT, And the Son interacting with mankind 2,000 years ago, and the Holy Spirit is interacting with us now and until the Son comes again.

We live in the period in which the Holy Spirit's work is more prominent. It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to approach or communicate with the Father and the Son. If we are to be in touch with God today we do so with the Spirit's help.

Which brings us to an important truth -- **It is primarily through the Holy Spirit that we experience God!**

While study of the Holy Spirit is especially important, it is **also quite difficult**. Understanding is often incomplete and confused. We have **less explicit revelation** in the Bible regarding the Holy Spirit than we have about either the Father or the Son. **This may be due in part** because a large share of the Holy Spirit's ministry may be to glorify the Son and to help us understand Christ and His teachings.

John 16:12-15, *"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; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. **He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.**"*

On most occasions when the Holy Spirit is mentioned, it is in connection with another issue.

Another problem might be a **lack of a concrete image**. God the Father is fairly well understood because the figure of a father is a familiar one. We know what a son is.

But the Spirit is intangible and difficult to visualize. (The KJV called Him the "Holy Ghost" so many people grew up thinking of Him as something in a white sheet.)

During this present time, the Spirit seems to perform the ministry of serving the Father and the Son, carrying out their (and His) will.

Remember that during the Son's earthly ministry, He was subordinate in function to the Father. **A temporary subordination of function** -- the Son's during His earthly ministry and the Spirit's during the present era -- must not lead us to draw the conclusion that he is inferior to the Father and the Son.

In practice many of us have an unofficial theology which looks upon the Spirit as being lower than the Father and the Son.

Many see the Trinity as: Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit.

Very little was said about the Holy Spirit in religious circles until about the last 200 years. And then there were segments of Christianity which gave great attention to the Holy Spirit.

This led to the Pentecostal movement and the Charismatic movement.

The Pentecostal movement spread throughout the US, through Scandinavia and now outnumbers Catholics in Latin America.

The **Charismatic Christians** differ from the **Pentecostal Christians** in the way they practice their charismatic gifts. In Pentecostal groups many members might speak or pray aloud at once. Not so with most charismatic Christians.

Many use their “gift” only in their private prayer time. Public use of the “gift” is usually in special groups instead of the regular service.

There are significant differences between this movement, which is generally called CHARISMATIC, and the old-line Pentecostalism which had sprung up at the beginning of the twentieth century and continues to this day.

In the early 1950’s it began to spread to some unlikely places. The charismatic movement was launched with the experience of Dennis Bennett, rector at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California.

The new movement cut across all socio-economic classes drawing many from the middle and upper-middle classes. Instead of being in a definite denominational group, it cuts across many denominations.

Speaking in tongues began to be practiced in Episcopal, Lutheran and even Catholic churches. There was an emphasis on special manifestations of the Holy Spirit’s work.

One possibility is that God caused it to happen to unite Christians. Many of the groups that practiced the speaking in tongues had nothing in common with other groups other than the speaking in tongues, but they came together and started opening up to each other because of it.

CHARISMA -- Comes from a Greek word meaning “gift.”

What about speaking in tongues? This is called GLOSSOLALIA. In America there was some speaking in tongues or glossolalia in North Carolina as early as **1896**.

There has been a lot of controversy over the speaking in tongues. Some argue that in the Bible they were **speaking actual languages**. Which appears to be true, but 1 Corinthians 13:1 says, *“If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.”*

While I have never spoken in tongues myself I know that 1 Corinthians 14:39 says, *“Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and **do not forbid speaking in tongues.**”*

I would be very reluctant to say anything against speaking in tongues or any of the other charismatic gifts because of Matthew 12:31-32, *“And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.”*

What if I condemned or made fun of something that turned out to be real? I do not want to **blaspheme** the Holy Spirit.

Right now let's talk about **The Deity of the Holy Spirit**: The deity of the Holy Spirit is not as easy to establish as is the deity of the Father and Son. But from Scripture we can see that He is referred to as being at the same level as God the Father.

Acts 5:1-4, *“Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property. With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God.”*

Evidently **“lying”** to the Holy Spirit and **“lying”** to God is the same thing.

The Deity of the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit possesses the attributes of God:

1. **The Holy Spirit is omniscience.** (Knows all.) 1 Cor 2:10-11, *“But God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”*

2. **The Holy Spirit has the power to touch people's hearts.** John 16:8, *“When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:”*

3. The Holy Spirit is eternal. Heb 9:14, *“How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!”* **Only God, however, is eternal, so the Holy Spirit must be God.**

4. The Holy Spirit was involved with creation. Gen 1:2, *“Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”*

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

5. The Holy Spirit works on and within humans. Titus 3:5, *“He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.”*

The same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead lives in us! Rom 8:11, *“And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.”*

6. The Scriptures were another divine work of the Holy Spirit. 1 Peter 1:20-21, *“Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”* (2 Tim 3:16)

7. He is listed with the Father and the Son has an apparent equal. Matt 28:19, *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”*

2 Cor 13:14, *“May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”*

Personality of the Holy Spirit. (We are not dealing with an impersonal force!)

The Greek word for Spirit is **πνευμα (pneuma)**. In the Greek this word is neither masculine nor feminine, it is neuter.

In Greek (and most other languages) pronouns must agree in person, number, and gender with the subject. You would not use the pronoun “him” when talking about a girl.

But in John 16:13-14 Jesus uses a masculine pronoun with the Holy Spirit. Either it was a mistake (Which is not made with any other neuter nouns in the gospels), or Jesus was DELIBERATELY letting us know that He was referring to a Person not a thing. Happens again in Eph 1:14.

Personality of the Holy Spirit.

1. A number of passages refer to the **Holy Spirit doing the work of a person.** The term Counselor is applied to the Holy Spirit. John 14:26, *“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”* (Also John 15:26, 16:7)

In John 14:16 Jesus says *“He will pray to the Father, who will give the disciples another counselor.”* The word for **“another”** is **ἄλλος** which carries the meaning of **“another of the same kind.”** The same kind as Jesus!

This would seem to show **that the Holy Spirit like Jesus is a person.**

Another function the **Holy Spirit performs is that of glorifying Jesus.** John 16:14, *“He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.”*

The baptism of Jesus. Matthew 3:16, *“As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the **Spirit** of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.*

He is also grouped with humans. Acts 15:28, *“It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements*

The Holy Spirit also possess' the **three** fundamental elements of personhood. (Intelligence - will - emotions)

INTELLIGENCE. John 14:26. Where Jesus promises that the Spirit *“will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said.”*

WILL. 1 Cor 12:11. Which says that recipients of the various spiritual gifts are *“inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as He wills.”* KJV

EMOTIONS.

1. Can lie to the Holy Spirit. (Acts 5:3-4, Ananias & Sapphira)
2. Can grieve the Holy Spirit. (Eph 4:30)
3. Can quench the Holy Spirit. (1 Thess 5:19 Put out the Spirit's fire.)
4. Can resist the Holy Spirit. (Acts 7:51)

A correct understanding of who and what the Holy Spirit is carries certain implications.

- 1. The Holy Spirit is a person**, not a vague force.
- 2. The Holy Spirit is to be given the same honor and respect that we give the Father and the Son.** He should not be thought of as in any sense inferior to them, although His role may sometimes be subordinate to theirs.
- 3. The Holy Spirit is one with the Father and the Son.** His work is the expression and execution of what the Trinity has planned.
- 4. God is not far off.** In the Holy Spirit, the Triune God is close, so close as to actually enter into each believer. Through the operation of the Spirit He has truly become Immanuel, "God with us."