

When I grew up phones were big and black with a dial on the front. On them you could make phone calls! Now I have a smart phone. It is slim and light and fits in my pocket. On it I can look up the weather, check train timetables, research almost anything on Google, take photos, listen to music, check emails, keep my diary and it has lots of other apps. I can make facetime calls and see the other person: my grandchildren near Tamworth or my brother in England. And it's free! It also makes phone calls!

I do all these things with it but I really don't know how it all works. I think this is a bit like the work of the Holy Spirit. We may not understand how the Holy Spirit works but the Holy Spirit does amazing things in our lives.

The Apostles Creed says,  
*I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
 the holy catholic Church,  
 the communion of the saints,  
 the forgiveness of sins,  
 the resurrection of the body,  
 and the life everlasting. Amen.*

These lines tell us the areas of life in which the Spirit is at work.

### 1. Who is the Holy Spirit?

On the night before Jesus death, when Jesus is about to leave the disciples he says to them, *"<sup>16</sup> I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— <sup>17</sup> 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."* (John 14:16-17)

The Holy Spirit is called "another advocate", sometimes translated, Counsellor, Comforter or Helper. So he is another one like Jesus who will be with us.

Jesus goes on to say, *I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.* (14:18)

An Anglicare report told of a small girl they were caring for. The girl had come home from school one day and found no one at home. The house was deserted. The girl's mother had a new boyfriend and the mum and boyfriend had shot through and left her alone, an orphan. It was a tragic story! Jesus will never leave us as orphans.

He goes on to say, *My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.* (14:23) So through the Holy Spirit Jesus and the Father are with us.

We may not feel God's presence at times. Circumstances may suggest God has deserted us but Jesus promises that he will never do this. Hold on to his promise! The Spirit is God's presence and power at work in us.

The Holy Spirit is constantly put on the same level as the Father and the Son as truly God. Jesus says, *"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."* (Matthew 28:19)

Pauls prays, <sup>14</sup> *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.* (2 Corinthians 13:14)

There are many other passages where the Spirit is put with the Father and Son as all equally God. There are three persons, one God. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the trinity. But the Spirit's work is to glorify Jesus not himself. Jesus says, <sup>14</sup> *He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.* (John 16:14) The Spirit's work is behind the scenes pointing us to Jesus.

## **2. The work of the Holy Spirit**

### **a) He brings people to new birth**

Nicodemus, a Pharisee, came to Jesus at night. Jesus told him, *"Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. <sup>7</sup> You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'"* (John 3:5-7) To enter God's kingdom we must be reborn by the Spirit.

Titus 3:5 says, *[God] saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*

You know the old song? "Why was he born so beautiful? Why was he born at all? Because he had no say in it, no say in it at all!"

We had no say in our physical birth. In the same way we depend on the Spirit to open our hearts to believe in Jesus to bring us to spiritual birth. We need to give thanks to God for opening our hearts to believe and we need to pray for friends and family. The Spirit can open their hearts also. Keep praying.

### **b) He teaches the truth**

The Spirit inspired the writing of the Scriptures. Peter writes, <sup>20</sup> *Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. <sup>21</sup> For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.* (2 Peter 1:20-21) The Old Testament Scriptures were inspired by the Spirit.

Jesus promised that the Spirit would lead the apostles into all the truth. <sup>13</sup> *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. <sup>14</sup> He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.* (John 16:13) The Spirit led the apostles into all truth as they wrote the New Testament and then reveals the truth to us as we read the Scriptures.

When Hebrews quotes from Psalm 95 the writer begins, "As the Holy Spirit says..." (present tense). God speaks to us today through the pages of the Bible.

Before we were engaged Joy spent 6 months in New Zealand. There were no cheap phone calls then, no skype or facetime so we regularly wrote letters to each other. Joy spoke to me through her written words and our relationship grew. God speaks to us through the Bible - read it.

### **c) He transforms us to be more like Jesus**

*<sup>18</sup> And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18)*

God wants our lives to be transformed. More like Jesus.

A few weeks ago we went out to look at our garden. We saw that our cliveas had been decimated by grubs. Lily grubs had eaten the leaves down to the ground. We picked hundreds of grubs off the cliveas and sprayed the rest. But Like all grubs they are transformed into beautiful moths. It is an amazing process of change from an ugly grub to colourful moth.

God intends a radical transformation in our lives also. This change *"comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."*

Galatians 5:22-23 says, *<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control.* These Christ like qualities are produced in us by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in us.

We may feel we can't change, that temper, that moodiness, that lack of concern for other people, or our attraction to porn, whatever it may be can't be controlled. We may think, "That's just the way I am." But the Spirit can change us. He can produce these fruit in our lives. He is God's power at work in us.

Paul prays, *<sup>18</sup> I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know ... [God's] incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength <sup>20</sup> he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 1:18-20)*

Do you believe that God's power is at work in you?

Do you pray that God will change you to be more like Jesus?

#### **d) He gives each of God's people gifts for serving**

Paul uses the illustration of a human body. Think of a musician playing. Her hands and arms work the bow and play the strings. Her ears listen to other the musicians and her own playing. Her eyes watch the music and the conductor. Her feet, legs and the rest of her body all doing their bit. Each part of her body is playing a role to create the music. Each part of her body is different but each is needed.

*<sup>12</sup> Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)*

Each of us who believe in Jesus are part of the body of Christ. You don't go to church - you are the church. And like a human body each of us has our part to play. We each have a gift, a Spirit given ability to contribute.

*<sup>4</sup> There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. <sup>5</sup> There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup> There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. <sup>7</sup> Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)*

We see that these gifts are given to each one of us. The Spirit enables to do things. They are given so we can serve each other. They are for the common good - not just to promote ourselves

What is your gift? How are you using it?

If we say we believe in the Holy Spirit  
We are saying we believe he is God's presence with us always  
That he gave us new birth. That we are children of God.

That he speaks to us through the Scriptures  
That he is God's power within us to transform us, like Jesus.  
That he has given us each gifts to use in serving each other.

I may not know the technical electronics that make my phone work. But I can and do use the apps on it ... and I make phone calls with it.

We may not understand the inner working of the Spirit. But he can be powerfully at work in our lives as we seek to live for Jesus.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?