

Sermon: "The Holy Spirit." John 15:26-16:15; Romans 8:1-17

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**WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

A few weeks ago, very early in the morning, someone knocked at our door. As I stumbled downstairs, I was surprised to find that our 5 year old had opened the door to this person. And to my further surprise, I had no idea who she was. As she walked into our house, apologising for being late, I asked whop she was and what she was doing coming into our house! She was in fact a nurse doing a home visit but had come to the wrong address!

I guess most of us would be uncomfortable if a stranger walked into our house. Yet, as Christians, we have invited the Holy Spirit to come into our lives and make his home with us. But to many of us, he's a stranger! That's a problem I think. So today, I want us to be able to walk away understanding more about the answers to there three questions:

**PPT** –

- **WHO is the Holy Spirit?**
- **WHAT does he do?**
- **And WHY does he do it?**

And we'll start with John 15:26, when Jesus says to his disciples:

**PPT** – *"When the Counsellor comes, (that's the Holy Spirit) whom I will send from the Father, the spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me."*

**PPT** – Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit a lot in this chapter. And the first thing you might notice is that the Holy Spirit is **sent by Jesus** and **comes from God**. The Holy Spirit PROCEEDS from the Father and the Son. We have God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. They are three persons in one and one person in three.

**PPT** – One example to help us think of that is a pretzel. Three parts, but one. Same substance. Distinct. But united.

So we have three persons in one. But there is an order between them. One ***proceeds*** from the other. But it's not an order of ***importance***. It's an order of ***revelation***. Throughout human history, God has revealed himself firstly as the Father, then the Son whop PROCEEDS from the Father, and now as the Spirit who PROCEEDS from the Son.

**PPT** – blank

So, WHO is the Holy Spirit?

***First***, the Holy Spirit is a HE, not an IT!

***Second***, the Holy Spirit, is God. He proceeds ***from*** the Father and the Son to be God with us.

***Now***, WHAT does he DO?

**WHAT DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT DO?**

**PPT – III** – Some say he's like a baby monitor! Baby Monitors are wonderful things. The idea of a monitor is to supervise your baby while you're out of the room. To keep an ear out for them. Some people think the Holy Spirit is a bit like that. God's baby monitor. Someone who can keep an ear out for us and alert God when there's a problem.

But the Holy Spirit doesn't *relay* messages to God. He *is* God. He is God WITH US today. Think about the different stages of the way God has revealed himself to us throughout history:

**PPT X 3** – In the **Old Testament**, God was present with his people Israel in **the temple**. And only the high priest could enter into the holy of holy places to speak with God. God's presence was localised in a particular place, and he spoke through priests and prophets.

In the **New Testament**, God came to us in **human form**, as **Jesus**. So Jesus' **body** was the temple of God. God's presence was localised, but mobile. Where Jesus was, there was God. And God met face to face with us through Jesus. He related to people as a person.

**NOW**, with Jesus ascended into heaven, God has come to us personally by the **Holy Spirit**, and is now **present in each one of us**. God was always there as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but at different stages in history, he revealed himself to us in these different ways.

**PPT** – Turn back one page to John 14:16-20 – Jesus says: *“And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. ... But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you... On that day you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.”*

God is now able to be not only WITH each of us, but now, He is IN us and we are IN Him.

**PPT** – **III** – Here's a good example of that:

Have a look at this **sponge** and this bucket of water. With the sponge out of the water there is no link between the two. But when the sponge is submerged into the water, (like so), what is the result? Is the water in the sponge or is the sponge in the water? Both!

The Holy Spirit lives in us and we live in him. Through the Spirit, we also have fellowship with God the Father and God the Son.

So, let's recap:

**PPT** – The Holy Spirit is God. He comes from the Father and the Son to live in us, and so we can live in him.

So now we can ask “**WHY?**” **Why** does he live in us?

### **WHY DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT LIVE IN US?**

**PPT** – **III** – Well, we've had pretzels and baby monitors. Now another example – **Spotlights!** All around our church are spotlights. Some work, some don't work. There's one shining on the front lawn, one shines out the front on the steps, one shines on the front wall of the building, one is around the side, one shines on the ramp, one in my backyard shines on the path, there's one above me that lights up this stage.

What is the point of a spotlight? To light something up. You don't look at the **spotlight** when it's on. You look at what it illuminates, or lights up – it might be a path, a stage, or a building.

The Holy Spirit is the **spotlight** for Jesus. Of course any analogy will fall down at some point, but stay with me... The work of the Holy Spirit is to **illuminate Jesus**.

**PPT** – John 15:26 – *“When the Counsellor comes whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, **he will testify about me.**”*

The Spirit's work is to **testify about Jesus and the work Jesus has done**.

**PPT** – John 16:8 – *“When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment*

**PPT** – John 16:13-14 – *“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. <sup>14</sup>He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.*

The Holy Spirit's work is to reveal the truth about Jesus. To **illuminate Jesus**. To shine a light on the work of the cross of Jesus – to reveal the truth that Jesus died for our **sin** to make us **righteous**, and to save us from the **judgement** of God. The Spirit's work is **to take the work of Jesus and make it known to us** and in doing that, He brings glory to Jesus.

Just like a spotlight on a beautiful building illuminates the work and glorifies the builder, the Holy Spirit illuminates the work of Jesus and brings him glory.

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**PPT** – Now, until this point, we've been talking about who the Spirit is (God), what he does (lives in us), and why he does it (to glorify Jesus). But what does it say about *us*? What can we DO with this information?

**PPT** – blank

Let me suggest two **unhelpful** ways we can respond to the Holy Spirit:  
First, we can **ignore** the Holy Spirit. We can focus is on the Father, the Son and the Holy Bible, rather than the Holy Spirit. We can have head knowledge, but not much else.

Or we could **talk about the Spirit all the time**. And our understanding can be driven by experiences – like healing or speaking in tongues. We could even say things like: if you can't speak in tongues, you must not have the Holy Spirit living in you.

Neither of these ways of thinking are healthy or Biblical. We can't **ignore** the Spirit, but we also can't **obsess** and add to what the Bible says about the Spirit.

So what does the Bible say?

**PPT** – *John 14:23: "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him."*

**God's Spirit lives in those who love and follow Jesus.** We can't ignore that. But we also shouldn't obsess about spiritual gifts, like tongues or prophecy. The most important gift of the Spirit is that he comes and lives in us! In fact, I want to say that there's a good reason why we **don't** need to talk a HUGE amount about the person of the Holy Spirit. A Biblical reason. Because everything the Spirit does points to Jesus. **Jesus** is the focus. In John 16:14 – Jesus says: **"He will bring glory to me."** The Holy Spirit illuminates Jesus.

In fact, the whole Bible points to Jesus. Every prophet, priest and King points to Jesus. And OUR LIVES should point to Jesus. Our lives should illuminate, or testify to, Jesus, rather than bring attention to ourselves.

It's important to know who The Holy Spirit is. That He is God. That He lives in us so we can live in community with the Father and the Son. But it's also important to know WHY He lives in us. To testify to Jesus. To illuminate the work of Jesus. Not to bring attention to himself. Just like 2 weeks ago when 4 of our Confirmees stood up and testified about Jesus in their life. THAT is the work of the Spirit.

Being spirit filled is about illuminating Jesus. Testifying to him. If we heal, it should point to Jesus, not our gift of healing. If we speak in tongues, it should point to Jesus. If we preach or minister to the sick or exercise hospitality, **it should point to Jesus!** Spiritual gifts are about Jesus, not about us.

**PPT** – So here's a question to finish with – are you Spirit filled? Is the Spirit working in your life? In other words – Do you love and follow Jesus? or: Is your life illuminating Jesus?