



Holy Spirit – Who is the Holy Spirit?

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Speakers: Andy Smith, Aaron Smith

Key Verses: Luke 4:16-21, John 7:37-39

Summary

The church has sometimes been confused by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes we fall victim to hype or forget about the Spirit entirely. The Spirit is not a mysterious force or power but actual a person, a member of the Trinity. And as a person, the Spirit meets people in different ways. John Wimber (founder of the Vineyard) encouraged us to believe that 'There is in Scripture no discernible pattern or formula for how the Spirit falls on us'. Throughout the scriptures we see that the mission of the Holy Spirit is to communicate God's love to us, initiate God's purposes for us, and to make His presence known in our lives.

The Spirit has been present since the beginning of time. In Genesis 1:2, it's recorded that at the point of Creation the "Spirit of God was hovering over the waters". The Spirit continues to be present in particular people or for particular purposes in the Old Testament.

John Piper, a theologian and pastor, gives 10 ways that the Old Testament Saints experienced the Holy Spirit:

- 1) The Spirit as Creator and Sustainer of Life (Job 33:4, Psalm 104:29-30)
- 2) New Birth and Indwelling of the Spirit (Numbers 14:24, Numbers 27:18)
- 3) The Constant Presence of the Spirit (Psalm 139:7-10)
- 4) The Spirit as Counsellor and Teacher (Nehemiah 9:20)
- 5) The Gifts of Craftsmanship and Artistic Ability (Exodus 31:1-5)
- 6) Power to Denounce Evil and Declare Righteousness (Micah 3:8)
- 7) Victory over Fear (Haggai 2:5, Zechariah 4:6)
- 8) Extraordinary Feats of Power to help God's people (Judges 14:6,15:14)
- 9) The ability to interpret God's Revelation in Dreams (Genesis 41)
- 10) The Gift of Prophecy (Numbers 11:25)

The Holy Spirit was also on Jesus throughout his life and in his ministry. The Spirit empowered Jesus to not just preach the gospel but to also demonstrate the gospel, through signs and wonders. Following his ascension to heaven, the Holy Spirit was sent at Pentecost (Acts 2). John Wimber used to say “His [God’s] presence is His power” and Jesus’ followers clearly experienced that at Pentecost. They too went out and performed signs and wonders, as Jesus did.

But the story doesn’t end there – the empowerment of the Holy Spirit is as much for us as it was for them. We too are to be filled with the Holy Spirit and invited to do what Jesus did. This includes functioning under the gifts of the Spirit, which will be explored in future sermons.

Jesus offers us an invitation - if we follow him, rivers of living water will flow from within us (John 7:38). We should regularly return to Him who pours out the water of life because we’re leaky vessels! The problems of life can get in the way and we need to be filled with the Spirit so that we don’t just survive but thrive.

We should be yearning for more of his presence and more of his power. Not just for our sake but for the sake of our friends and our family.

Small Group Questions to help us start off this Holy Spirit Series

- At South site, Andy offered some reflection questions at the start of the sermon. These can be discussed in group or for the ponder/pray section below:
 - Where are you at?
 - How are you with the Holy Spirit?
 - What does the Holy Spirit want to do in you and say to you today?
- What are your experiences of the Holy Spirit? Is this a new thing for you or do you have some prior stories?
- John Piper gives 10 ways the Old Testament Saints experienced the Holy Spirit. If you have time you could look at a couple of the stories told there. Have you experienced any of those in your life? Are there ways you long to experience the Spirit?
- Why did Jesus choose to not just proclaim the gospel but also demonstrate it with signs and wonders (miracles, healings, casting out demons etc.)
- If we too can be empowered by the Holy Spirit, how might we live our lives? Are there habits or structures that might help us?
- Are there other people who inspire you with how they live their lives empowered by the Holy Spirit?
- What might it look like in your life for ‘rivers of living water to flow’?

We encourage you to spend time thinking and praying further about these questions this week.

- Where are you at?
- How are you with the Holy Spirit?
- What does the Holy Spirit want to do in you and say to you?
- What habits or structures can you put in place to facilitate the work of the Spirit in your life? Does something need to change?