

The Holy Spirit
("The Spirit is a Person")

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. We saw what the Spirit did during the Great Awakening.
2. We don't want to forget what we saw.
 - a. Of His work – to turn people to Jesus.
 - b. Of His power – to transform society.
 - c. Especially in light of recent events.

B. Preview.

1. And so, for the next few weeks, we're going to study
 - a. The person of the Spirit
 - b. And His work.
2. We'll look at three things:
 - a. First, that He is a person.
 - b. Second, that He is a divine person.
 - c. Third, what He does to promote the kingdom of God.
 - (i) In our hearts.
 - (ii) In this world.

II. Sermon.

A. Let's begin with the fact that the Spirit is a person (John 16:1-15).

1. Why would we even need to ask this question?
 - a. Because of anti-Trinitarian unbelievers.
 - b. Because of how we might think of Him.
 - (i) We speak of being filled with the Spirit,
 - (ii) And the outpouring of the Spirit so much,
 - (iii) We might tend not to think of Him as a person.
 - (a) And so let's not just seek to *prove* that He is a person.
 - (b) Let's seek to prove that He is a *person*.
2. What is a person?
 - a. "A living, self-conscious being, as distinct from an animal or a thing; a moral agent" (Webster).
 - b. "Consider what *person* stands for; which, I think, is a thinking, intelligent being, that has reason and reflection" (Locke).
 - c. A person is someone who is alive, aware of his own existence, moral, and has the ability to reflect and reason.
 - d. Anything else? The ability to will or purpose.
 - e. He is rational, moral, and purposeful.
 - (i) Rational: He can reason and reflect.

- (ii) Moral: He has a moral inclination.
- (iii) Will/Purpose: He makes choices based on reason and moral inclination.

3. On this definition, does the Spirit qualify as a person?

- a. Consider our text:
 - (i) V. 7: Helper/Comforter/One who comes alongside.
 - (ii) V. 8: Convicts – on moral issues.
 - (iii) V. 13:
 - (a) Guide into the truth – teaches.
 - (b) Speaks.
 - (c) Hears (ability to gather information to reason).
 - (d) Is called “He”.
 - (1) In Greek, pronouns reflect the gender of their antecedents.
 - (2) “Spirit” in Greek is neuter, and so the pronouns referring to Him are often neuter.
 - (3) Here, even though it refers to a neuter noun (Spirit), it is masculine, emphasizing the fact that the Spirit is a person.
 - (iv) V. 14:
 - (a) Glorifies Jesus – by taking Jesus’ truth and telling/teaching them.
 - (b) Takes and gives.
- b. “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30).
 - (i) He can be grieved.
 - (ii) Grieve: make sad, sorrowful, distressed.
- c. “You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did” (Acts 7:51).
 - (i) How is their resisting different than resisting the wind or the waves?
 - (ii) His guidance is instructional and moral.
- d. “But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and kept back *some* of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles’ feet. But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back *some* of the price of the land? While it remained *unsold*, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God” (Acts 5:1-5).
 - (i) He can be lied to.
 - (ii) You can’t lie to an impersonal force.
- e. “Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. Whoever speaks a word

against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the *age* to come” (Matt. 12:31-32).

(i) He can be blasphemed.

(ii) What is blasphemy? A slander or insult against God.

f. “Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there*, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus” (Acts 13:1-4).

(i) He speaks.

(ii) He commands/sends.

(iii) He has a purpose – *for the work* to which I have called them.

g. “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you” (John 14:26).

(i) He teaches.

(ii) He reminds.

h. “So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase” (Acts 9:31). He *comforts*.

i. “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

(i) He inspired the Word.

(ii) He moved men to speak God's Word.

j. “As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven – things into which angels long to look” (1 Pet. 1:10-12).

(i) The Spirit worked through the prophets to predict the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.

(ii) He moved and empowered the apostles to preach.

- k. “In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*” (Rom. 8:26-27).
 - (i) Helps.
 - (ii) Prays – according to God’s will.

- l. He exhibits other characteristics of personality, but this should be enough.
 - (i) Is He alive?
 - (ii) Is He aware of His own existence?
 - (iii) Does He have the ability to reflect and reason?
 - (iv) Is He moral?
 - (v) Does He have purpose?

- m. This One who fills our hearts is a person.
 - (i) He is also Divine, as we’ll see next time.
 - (ii) As One who is Divine, we can pray to Him.
 - (iii) Do you ever pray to the Holy Spirit?
 - (iv) You do whenever you pray to God, because He is God the Spirit.

- n. When we study His work, we’ll apply the things He does more specifically.

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