



Theme: The Power of the Holy Spirit

“Who is the Holy Spirit?”

Weekly Memory Verse: ⁴ *For the Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.* – Job 33:4 (NLT)

Family Activity for the Week: Think of the many times you contact water each day (such as washing your hands, brushing your teeth, bathing, cooking, drinking, cleaning dishes, etc.) Choose one day when each family member keeps track of how he or she uses water. Share lists with one another. Invite everyone to remember his or her baptism each time he or she uses water. (If someone has not been baptized, ask him or her to remember the baptism of Jesus or of someone else in your family.) Each time you use water, imagine it as God’s grace cleansing you, pouring over you, and warming you. Thank God for the divine love poured out for each of you in Jesus Christ.

Monday, May 24 – Read Genesis 1:2, 26-27 and Psalm 33:6-9. In Biblical Hebrew, the word *rûah* meant spirit, wind, and/or breath. In the Hebrew Bible, the Spirit (*rûah*) of Yahweh is God’s power in action. Yahweh’s spirit is God present and at work, as are God’s “hands” and “arms.” *Rûah* is a term for both breath blown out and wind blowing, like God’s breath pictured in Isaiah 40:7 and Ezekiel 37:9. *Rûah* has vivid and awesome associations when used as God’s energy let loose. It is used this way in close to 100 of its 400 appearances in the Old Testament. Yahweh’s spirit is said to shape creation, animate animals and humanity, and direct nature and history (see Genesis 1:2, 2:7; Job 33:4; Psalm 33:6 and 104:29–30; Isaiah 34:16 as examples).

🏔️ Long before anyone had thought about the word “Trinity,” Genesis 1’s poetic creation liturgy said the one God created humans in “our” image, made to be like “us” in character. It described God’s *rûah* moving over the waters of primordial chaos. Psalm 33 was a later passage that also portrayed God’s spirit as fully involved in the work of creation. Like Jesus in John 1:1-3, the Holy Spirit already was, at the very beginning of the Bible’s big story. We sometimes think the Holy Spirit didn’t show up (or maybe even exist) until the day of Pentecost after Jesus’ resurrection in Acts 2:2-4. However, the Bible described God’s Spirit existing before, and at work during the creation of the world. Open your heart and ask God to guide your reading this week, expanding and deepening your understanding of the Holy Spirit.

🏔️ We live in a culture in which many would say our very existence, as individuals and as a world, is just a gigantic cosmic accident, free of any divine direction or purpose. The biblical assertions about the meaning of creation point us in significantly different direction. How does it change your sense of why you exist to believe that the fulness of God brought this world, and the life processes that created you, into being?

Prayer: *Holy Spirit, you are the spiritual air I breathe. Help me to grow more aware of the inner strength and vitality you offer me as I make you the “oxygen” of my life with God. Amen.*

(Message Notes and Meditation Moments for March May 22-23, 2021 – For more, go to www.summitdurango.org)

Tuesday, May 25 – Read Ezekiel 37:1-14 and Zechariah 4:6. Ezekiel’s “dry bones” vision wasn’t as much about bones as about God’s power to bring life to hopeless exiled Israel through the divine “spirit” or “breath.” Scholar N. T. Wright noted, “The words for ‘wind’, ‘breath’ and ‘spirit’ are the same (this is true in both Hebrew and Greek). This wind is the healing breath of God’s spirit, come to undo the long effects of primal rebellion.” Today’s readings (and other prophetic verses like Joel 2:27-29) showed how Israel’s prophets honored God’s life-giving Spirit.

🏔️ Ezekiel, speaking to Israelites in exile with their nation destroyed and helpless, reported a vision showing that God offers hope even in situations that look hopeless to our human eyes. When have you seen God bring life to a situation or person that seemed beyond hope? Who do you know who needs hope? How can you carry the news of God’s life-giving hope to them?

🏔️ The priest Zerubbabel helped lead Israel’s effort to rebuild the Jerusalem Temple Babylon’s army had destroyed (cf. Ezra 3:2, 5:2). It was a tough task, with extremely limited resources. God sent the prophet Zechariah with a key message: “Neither by power, nor by strength, but by my Spirit.” When have you faced (or are now facing) issues where you don’t seem to have enough power or strength? How might Zechariah’s message suggest a different approach? Are you listening?

Prayer: Lord God, through your Spirit give me the courage and responsiveness to make the world better in whatever ways, large or small, you call me to. Amen.

Wednesday, May 26 – Read John 7:37-39 and Matthew 28:18-20. At the yearly Festival of Tabernacles, priests drew water daily at the Pool of Siloam, and poured it out in the Temple, reciting Isaiah 12:3: “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” It was against that backdrop that Jesus dramatically invited all who believe in him to drink “living water.” Lest anyone miss the point, John directly pointed out that Jesus’ words showed the Spirit’s life-giving power, not only for the spiritually barren places in Jesus’ day but for all time.

🏔️ Israel was observing an annual public ritual, which could become just “going through the motions.” But Jesus’ call was personal. “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me ...” Are you personally drinking the water of eternal life Jesus offers by keeping your life open to the Spirit’s presence? If not, what is blocking you from accepting Jesus’ offer?

🏔️ Some popular sources try to say a church council invented the Christian belief in the Trinity in some dark corner of the 4th or 5th century. But in Matthew 28:19, Jesus the victor, risen from the dead, made the Trinity central to his Great Commission: “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” He didn’t explain the Trinity (and a full grasp of it is always elusive); he simply stated it as reality. Do you find the mystery of the Trinity an obstacle to faith, or can you value it as a way of expressing God’s constant guiding presence with you?

Prayer: God in three persons, blessed Trinity, I am grateful for all the ways you reveal yourself. You save and forgive me, quench my inner thirst, and guide me in all my steps. Amen.

Thursday, May 27 – Read 2 Corinthians 3:3-6. The apostle Paul wrote 2 Corinthians to a group of Christians almost all of whom had come to faith through his preaching of Jesus. Yet he made it clear that something far beyond his power had been at work. As scholar William Barclay put it, “the work of the Spirit changes a [person’s] very heart... only the Spirit can change human nature.” Paul said the Holy Spirit is the divine being who makes real the new covenant promise found in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

🏔️ Paul said Christians are a letter from Christ, written not with ink, “but with the Spirit of the living God.” How have you learned to trust God’s grace when you realize that in some situation you failed to represent God well? In what ways do you open your heart to the influence of “the Spirit of the living God” so that others can see God’s imprint in you?

🏔️ In Roman times, you couldn’t Google a stranger, or call someone in a distant city who knew the person. So, people would carry written letters of introduction with them. Paul made the remarkable, (Message Notes and Meditation Moments for May 22-23, 2021 – For more, go to www.summitdurango.org)

challenging claim that the Spirit made Christ-followers like living letters of introduction for Jesus. In what ways do those who know you learn an accurate, appealing image of Jesus from you? Are there any ways in which you want the Spirit to shape you to better represent your Lord?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, it's a new day, and again today I bear your name into a world that urgently needs to know you. Fill me with your Spirit, that I may show others your goodness and glory. Amen.*

Friday, May 28 – Read John 14:16-18, 26-27. In Biblical Greek, the word *paraklētōs* (like the Hebrew *rûah*) had multiple English equivalents. There is no single English equivalent to the Greek word *paraklētōs*. A variety of English words are used to translate John's use of "Paraclete" when referring to the Holy Spirit, which reflects the elasticity of the Greek term. English translators most commonly use the words Helper, Advocate, Comforter and Counselor. It is rendered as "Companion" in the Common English Bible, with "Advocate" a footnoted alternative. The disciples had been with Jesus for three years. It must have been impossible to imagine Jesus' ministry going on without him present. But Jesus stressed that he was not abandoning the disciples. He promised them the Holy Spirit as the "paraclete", a Companion who would fill the role Jesus had filled, different yet the same. The Spirit's presence would bring Jesus' peace to their hearts.

🏔️ Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. I give to you not as the world gives. Don't be troubled or afraid" (verse 27). Have you ever found the kind of "peace" the world offers leaving you feeling empty and purposeless? How can opening your life to the gift of the Holy Spirit give you the greater, deeper peace Jesus promised?

🏔️ Jesus did not forget or desert his first disciples or us. He promised to be with us constantly through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not replace Jesus, but rather, in a way beyond our full understanding, is Jesus' presence with us, now and until the end of time and space as we know it ("forever" in verse 16). What word or phrase in today's verses about the Holy Spirit speaks most to your heart? When have you most sensed Jesus' presence with you?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, you promised, "I won't leave you as orphans, I will come to you." Thank you for always being my Companion and Comforter, even when my circumstances seem the hardest. Amen.*

Saturday, May 29 – Read John 16:12-15. John recorded Jesus' teaching about "the Father," himself and "the Spirit," not as three separate beings, but one God in three persons. The greatest theologians can't articulate this concept in ways that the human imagination can process. The three persons of the Trinity are close in a manner that goes beyond the closest human relationships we know. The Holy Spirit is the third person (which in no way means inferior or subordinate to the first and second person) of the Trinity, who functions as God's continual presence on Earth, especially after Jesus' ascension to heaven. The Holy Spirit resides in us, sustaining, nudging, rebuking, and reshaping our humanity.

🏔️ N.T. Wright states, "Those in whom the Spirit comes to live are God's new Temple. They are, individually and corporately, places where heaven and earth meet." The Spirit offers humans a chance to work on behalf of and with the divine. How often do you recognize God's spirit leading you? How do you experience the Spirit doing God's work in you? Jesus was direct with the disciples: "I have much more to say to you, but you can't handle it now." However, the Holy Spirit would continue his work of teaching them (John 16:13). Have you faced times when you weren't ready to handle the full truth of a medical, relational or spiritual situation? Are you grateful that God doesn't insist on "cramming" the whole truth down our throat when we're not ready, but that the Spirit works patiently with us as we learn and grow?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, guide me by your Spirit each day. I ask for a teachable spirit to know more about you and your will for me. Thank you for being patient with me. Amen.*