



Theme: The Power of the Holy Spirit

"Who is the Holy Spirit?"

Sermon preached by Jeff Huber on...

May 22-23, 2021

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)

VIDEO Sermon Bumper

VIDEO Jeff with Lawnmower 1

SLIDE "Who is the Holy Spirit?"

Today we do start this new series of sermons on how we live in the power of the Holy Spirit. I use that example of my lawnmower because it is a great machine, as are all the other tools that can be used with that battery, if the battery has juice. Many of us are like that lawnmower and that we have lots of potential and yet our connection with the Holy Spirit is such that we can't get things moving and live into that full potential. We are missing out on the power because we have not paid attention to the Holy Spirit and what it can do in our lives.

We just finished a series of sermons on the great teachings of Jesus

in the Sermon on the Mount in which Jesus is concerned about what is going on inside and if it matches the outside, and the Holy Spirit is the one that can help us live into what it means to be the presence of Jesus Christ in the world and live into the hard teachings we find in Matthew's gospel. We are not meant to try and do it on our own and so we are going to take some time and ask how we can tap into that gift of the Holy Spirit and allow it to mold us and shape us into the people God wants us to be. Here is a truth we will focus on throughout these sermons.

SLIDE The Key to Experiencing God's Presence, Peace and Power in our Lives is the Holy Spirit.

I want us to begin by asking the Holy Spirit to be with us as we begin this journey through this prayer that we say together whether we are here in person or at home online. Would you say these words together with me?

SLIDE Come Holy Spirit, fill us anew. Teach us, guide us, mold us, and make us into the people you want us to be. Reveal yourself to us today. Open our ears to hear, and our hearts to receive all that you have for us today. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SLIDE Who is the Holy Spirit?

Let's start by talking about who the Holy Spirit is, because we have to understand that to do the rest of this series. As followers of Jesus, we talk about God as Trinitarian, or three in one. We have this in our creeds, including the Apostle's Creed that our students learned as part of their confirmation experience. We say there is one essential stuff of which God is made, but we experience God in three unique persons: God the Father, Creator or Heavenly Parent; Jesus, the Son, and the Redeemer; and the Holy Spirit or Sustainer. We call these three unique persons the Trinity and it can be mysterious and sometimes confusing to think about God in this way. I am convinced that when we get to heaven, we will stand before

God and things will be much clearer than we experience them today. I imagine I'll be saying this often, "Ohhh, that's what you meant! That's what you had in mind. Now I get it!"

I will be honest and tell you that I don't think the 3 pounds of gray matter in my head can fully comprehend all the mysteries of God, or the full depth of the Trinity. Let me share with you one way of thinking about this. We refer to God the Father, the Creator of all things. We also refer to Jesus, God incarnate who Redeems and who is God in the flesh. We believe that God became human in Jesus and walked among us to show us who God is and what God is like; supper on the cross and die for us; and ultimately to be raised from the dead to restore us and all of creation. Then, we find that Jesus tells us he will send the Holy Spirit who will act as our Counselor and Sustainer. The Holy Spirit comes on the day of Pentecost which we remember this weekend, when those followers of Jesus were filled and changed and moved to start the church. Read in acts chapter 2.

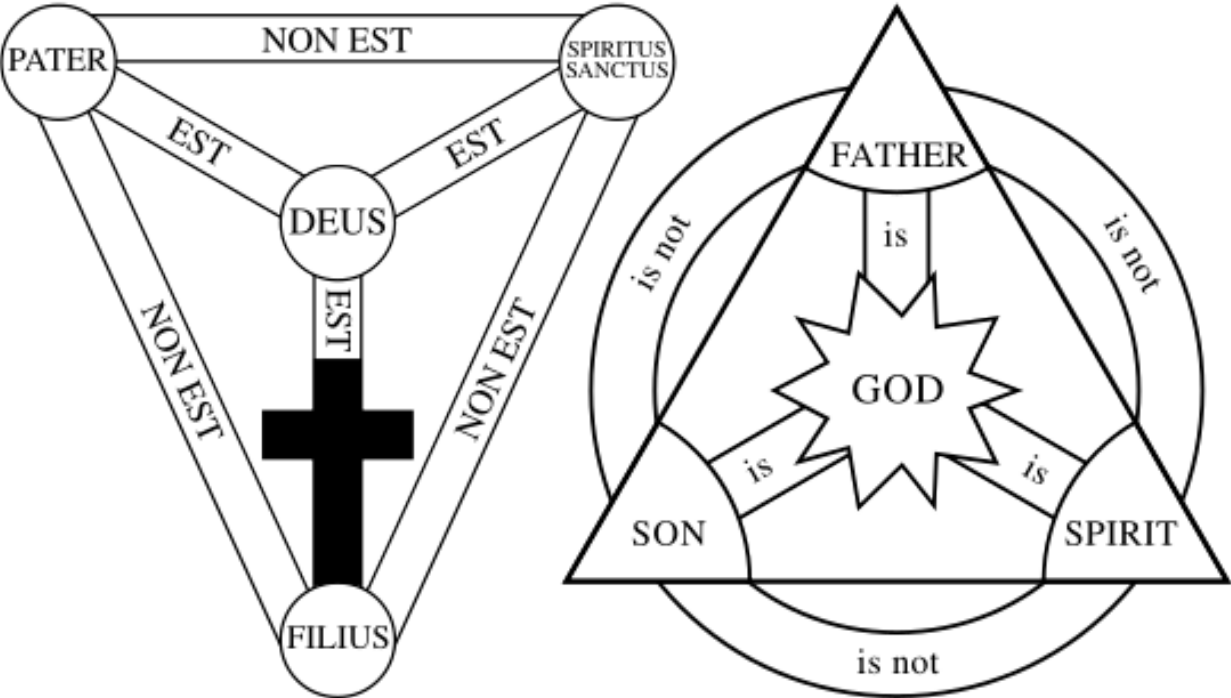
BIBLE

2 On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. ² Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. ³ Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. ⁴ And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit...

The idea is that we have God the Creator; Jesus, God in the flesh; and the Holy Spirit, which is God's imminent presence, working in us and through us in the world. There are multiple ways we have pictured this. Some talk about H₂O which can be liquid water, ice, or steam. Sometimes I have talked with you about how my wife views me as a husband, my daughter views me as a father, and you see me as pastor. I am still one

person but you each see me and experience me differently. Each of these metaphors eventually breaks down, but you might appreciate this diagram which was developed in the 1100s and called the “Shield of Faith.”

GRAPHIC Shield of Faith in Latin and English



It is in Latin on the left and English on the right. This diagram was meant to show us in some ways how the Trinity works. The Father is God. The Spirit is God. The Son is God. The Spirit is not the Son. The Father is not the Son. The Spirit is not the Father. They are each distinct and yet the same. They are one God in three distinct persons.

This idea may be confusing, but it does explain how we see things happening in the Scriptures. In the baptism of Jesus, he hears the voice of the Father saying, “This is my Son who brings me great joy,” and the Holy Spirit descends upon him like a dove. The dove is a sign of peace, shalom, or wholeness which symbolizes the coming together of all the different aspects of God that we experience. We believe the Holy Spirit is one of the

ways that God is shared with us so we experience God's character, God's heart, God's will, coming into us and giving us power.

SLIDE Spirit = Rûah

In the Hebrew Bible, or your Old Testament, we find the Hebrew word for Spirit which is rûah. The word means not just Spirit, but also wind and breath. It is a neutral term so it can be a human spirit or an evil spirit or simply natural wind that blows or exhaling. More than 100 places it also refers to the Spirit of God. Creation begins in Genesis with the Spirit of God hovering over the face of the deep. We also read Genesis about the Spirit of God breathing into humanity the breath of life. For Jews and Christians, the Holy Spirit animates life and brings creation into being. We find this image in the book of Job and our Scripture memory verse for today so let's say together out loud.

BIBLE

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

This Hebrew word rûah is a feminine word. People often wonder if we call the Holy Spirit "It" or "He", but in the Hebrew the word Spirit is feminine "She." I think we all have to wait until we stand before God before all these nuances are sorted out in our tiny brains. Christians also understand that the Trinity can be understood as a divine community, as we see reflected in the book of Genesis where, when God speaks, we read this in chapter 1, verse 26.

BIBLE

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us..."

We also find in the Hebrew Bible that the Holy Spirit comes upon people and when that happens, they receive power. The great warriors,

which were called judges, were said to have received the Spirit of God. They would be able to fight and destroy the enemies of Israel in a way they could never do all by themselves. David could take on Goliath and Elijah and Elisha could take on forces of evil when the Spirit came upon them. The Spirit came upon David when he would worship and he would have ecstatic experiences, even dancing naked openly in a way that embarrassed his family. He couldn't help himself because he was overwhelmed with the presence of God is life in that moment.

When the Hebrew prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the rest would speak on God's behalf, they would talk about being filled with the Spirit of God. Jesus quotes Isaiah 61 in his very first sermon in Nazareth with these words in Luke 4.

BIBLE

**“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released,
that the blind will see,
that the oppressed will be set free,
¹⁹ and that the time of the Lord's favor has come.”**

God speaks through the prophet Joel these words in chapter 2. Up until this point, the Spirit came upon only special people like prophets and religious leaders and warriors and kings. But, Joel declares this from the Lord.

BIBLE

**²⁸ “Then, after doing all those things,
I will pour out my Spirit upon all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy.
Your old men will dream dreams,**

and your young men will see visions.
²⁹ In those days I will pour out my Spirit
even on servants—men and women alike.

There is a picture of the Holy Spirit coming upon everyone and not just those who are special. If we are a follower of Jesus, we recognize that it is a Holy Spirit which draws us to Christ and that Holy Spirit lives within us. The spirit takes up residence within us as it works from the inside out.

SLIDE “pneuma”

In the New Testament, we find the Greek word for spirit, “pneuma.” Pneuma also means spirit, wind, breath, and air. If we have ever worked with pneumatic tools, we use air to power the equipment. The power of the wind pushes those elements and gives us more power than we would have on our own. Pneumatic lifts use compressed air to raise up heavy objects. We find in the New Testament that the Holy Spirit has power to fill us with God’s holy breath.

The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus during his baptism, led him during the wilderness and anointed him to preach the good news. The apostle Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead. If it is the spirit which animates us and brings us to life, it was the Holy Spirit which brought about the resurrection. Jesus promised his disciples that this same spirit would dwell in them, work through them, empower them, console them, comfort them, and come alongside of them.

SLIDE The Holy Spirit consoles, comforts and empowers.

Jesus promises all of these things but we often fail to see them or recognize them for take hold of the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives. When Jesus talked about the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, he uses the word that the gospel of John translates as Paraclete.

SLIDE Paraklete

In the first century, a Paraclete was someone who came alongside of an accused during legal proceedings to support them and be their advocate. In the judicial system, the Paraclete was someone who came alongside when no one else would because of the accusations. Paraclete also meant in the first century a helper during times of danger, adversity or difficulty. Paraclete also was a counselor who would offer guidance, finding our way forward. Paraclete was a comforter for someone who would console. Even meant companion and someone who would suffer with you and walk with you during challenging times.

Jesus tells us the Holy Spirit is all of these things and more. It is God spirit at work in all of us in all these ways, changing us and shaping us from the inside out. The reason we're talking about this over the next month is because of how much difference the Holy Spirit to make in our lives. It's especially appropriate that we talk about today on confirmation and baptism weekend for many of our students, because we want them to know they are not doing life alone.

I think one of the reasons we don't recognize how the Holy Spirit might be at work in our lives is because we haven't been taught about the Holy Spirit. I think it also has to do with, "Out of sight, out of mind." We see Jesus and we read about the creation story and God the creator, but we don't see the Holy Spirit, much like we don't see gravity or the air that we breathe. Well, hopefully we don't see the air that we breathe!

We also allow things to come in the way of what the Holy Spirit wants to do in our lives. I think about the battery that I use in my lawnmower. If it is not plugged into the power source, then it won't ever charge and the lawnmower and battery remain lifeless. One time, I didn't notice that the battery didn't sit all the way in the charger and there was a gap between the battery and where it gets power. Sometimes there can be a gap between us and God and us and other people and we call this sin, brokenness which causes a disconnect and pain and hurt.

One time, dirt and dust that were in my garage got in between the connectors so the battery couldn't charge. How's that for an image? Do everything the dirt and dust of the world get in the way of us experiencing God's presence and power through the Holy Spirit? We allow the dirt and dust of the world, things we know we shouldn't be thinking or doing, to interfere with that connection to God. We focus on those things and we push the Holy Spirit aside which keeps it from working in our lives.

I was visiting recently with a young couple whose wedding I'm doing this summer and we were talking about something I tell every single couple I work with. The only person you have any control over in a relationship is yourself and it becomes easy to focus on the dust or dirt in someone else's life and forget our own issues and not take care of our own spiritual lives, thinking that it's someone else's job to take care of us and our relationship with God. We all can allow things in which tear ourselves away from God. Sometimes it's an addiction, sometimes it's a toxic relationship, sometimes it's a focus on money or possessions, sometimes it is anger or bitterness, sometimes it's jealousy or envy or any one of a number of things which can become that thing which keeps us from connecting to God. Each one of these things can push the Holy Spirit down and away from our souls and keep it from having access to our hearts which gives us power and shapes us.

Most often I think we find we are not tightly connected to the Holy Spirit, with the battery seated directly on the charger. That power of the Holy Spirit no longer flows through us because of disconnection. Francis Chan is a pastor and author who wrote a book about the forgotten God. He says the one element we often forget in the Trinity is the Holy Spirit. We forget about how much power there is, and next week will talk of it more about how to make that connection tighter and stronger.

If we try to do life as a follower of Jesus without the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, we can look like this woman who is trying to go

up the escalator the wrong way.

VIDEO Woman walking wrong way on Escalator

When we go in the opposite direction in life in which the Holy Spirit longs for us to go, we find life is harder and more challenging to get to where God wants us to go. When we go against the grain of the spirit what I discovered is that it often is because we are not listening. Instead, we are doing our own thing and life becomes more difficult. When we are willing to listen to the Holy Spirit and follow that lead, we find the spirit takes over and begins to do the work for us. When we cooperate with the spirit, we find power and we find life and meaning and purpose. I love Paul's prayer for the Christians in Rome when he says this in chapter 15 of Romans.

BIBLE

¹³ I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Wouldn't we all want joy and peace that helps hope overflow? Paul encourages us that we discover this by the power of the Holy Spirit. If we are feeling hopeless, afraid, weak, or aimless in our lives, we are in need of tapping into the power of the Holy Spirit.

How do we experience the power of the Holy Spirit? I know that in some traditions there is this idea that if you are filled with the Holy Spirit then you can speak in tongues. Some can feel left out or like they are not doing the faithful thing if they cannot speak in tongues, but I remind you that Paul did not look at the Holy Spirit in this way. It is actually not that complicated. The evidence of the Holy Spirit working in our lives is not about speaking in tongues. That is a very powerful way of praying and we can talk about some other time, but there is something else that is evidence that we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

We will talk about this in more detail in a couple weeks, but evidence of the Holy Spirit at work is the fruits of the spirit which Paul mentions in Galatians. The evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit are things like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and self-control. These things point to the Holy Spirit having control of our lives. We don't need to beg and plead for something God already wants us to do because we already have the Holy Spirit within us if we have given our hearts to Jesus and asked to follow. The key is opening ourselves up to the Holy Spirit and not being afraid to listen and make ourselves available.

Sometimes people will come to me and asked me to pray for them because they have a short fuse, and they want more patience. I always remind them to be careful what we pray for because God will then give us an opportunity to practice it! If we want patience, we may discover things which test our patience because this is the way we learn to live by the power of the Holy Spirit instead of by our own power. We must learn to give that over to God and take a deep breath and realize that we are not in control but all of life belongs to God.

I had a couple come to me once and asked me to pray for them because they were always fighting about money. I told him I would try but that they would do better if they prayed for each other and for themselves as a couple. They asked what the pray for and I encourage them to invite the Holy Spirit in prayer to remind them that everything belongs to God and not to them. We are simply stewarding all that God has given to us and the Holy Spirit is the one that can carry us and sustain us and remind us of truth that we sometimes forget. One of the main roles of the Holy Spirit is convicting and if we are truly open to the Holy Spirit, we will find ourselves convicted in the quietness of prayer to live differently, developing those fruits of the Holy Spirit. The problem is that we want to be in charge, but...

SLIDE It is God who brings the charge and is in charge!

I know that sounds corny, but it's true. The first thing we must do if we are going to allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives is give up our illusion of control and that we can do it all by ourselves. The first thing we must do is ask and pray for the Holy Spirit to fill us, every day as we get out of bed. If you forget to do that when you get out of bed, we are providing more of these shower tags that we gave out several years ago when we did a sermon series on baptism. This prayer is one that you can pray in the shower and reminds us to allow the Holy Spirit to be at work daily. Here's what each one of them says.

GRAPHIC Shower Tag

There is no better way to clean off the dust and the dirt in the way of our connection with God than a good shower and a good prayer! Hundreds of you have this tag and this prayer in their shower and I have one to. Hopefully we memorize this, and it is a great prayer to carry with us. Let's say it together out loud.

**SLIDE Lord, as I enter the water to bathe, I remember my baptism...
Wash me by your grace. Fill me with your spirit. And renew
my soul. I pray that I might live as your child today and honor
you and all that I do.**

SLIDE Maly@summitdurango.org

If you are not here in person, we will put some in a pickup box out in front of the church if you live here locally. If you do not live here locally, send an email to our office staff with your mailing address and we will mail you one.

Jesus said the spirit is like living water washing over and as we pray this prayer, it changes us. I encourage you to stop every time you pray the prayer and really let these words sink in, "Fill me with your spirit." Fill me again Holy Spirit. Fill me so I might walk by your power and not my own. Fill me that I might be led by your strength and your wisdom. Fill me that I

might know your grace and be used by you.

When we walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, we find we have more strength. When we walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, we find our fear is dispelled. I want to be clear that we still may feel weak at times and we still made feel fear, but we trust we will be less afraid as we remind ourselves, we did not go through life alone. We will find greater direction and be right in the middle of what God is doing in the world around us.

GRAPHIC Wave

I think of the Holy Spirit like a wave. I grew up surfing and when you are out in the ocean waiting for a wave, you realize quickly that you can't create it, but you can ride it. The only way to ride a wave is to pay attention to the movement of the ocean, otherwise you may miss the wave, or you may be pummeled if you're not careful!

One of our members sent me an email several months ago that I thought was a great example of allowing the Holy Spirit the work. They told me they were doing the morning devotional on Facebook with us, which we now do on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 9 AM, and they were reading Scripture. Notice that this whole journey begins by someone who every morning reads the Scripture and is listening to God to speak. He told me as he left his house, he noticed that his neighbor had not shoveled their sidewalk after the snow he had received which was unusual because they always kept their sidewalk clean. He decided to shovel the walk and then something inside of him told him to go knock on the door.

What told them to go knock on the door? I think it was the Holy Spirit. He put on his mask and knocked on the door and soon it opened, and his neighbor was standing there still wearing his bathrobe at three in the afternoon. He asked his neighbor if he was okay and the neighbor explained that his wife had been taken to the hospital but he no longer

could drive and was not able to visit. Our church member called into work and let them know he would be late and then helped the gentleman get cleaned up and he took him to the hospital. Since it was during COVID, he was not able to enter the hospital but the husband was so he waited in the car in the cold for two hours and then took the gentleman home.

I would never have heard about the story but the gentleman who is been given a ride is the one who sent me an email telling me what a great church member we had and how maybe you should check out church even though he had stopped going 50 years earlier. I do think that good Samaritan felt after that experience? Do think he felt like he wasted an afternoon? You think he was afraid of the coronavirus or the future or the unknown behind his neighbor's door?

After visiting with him I can tell you that he felt afterwards that he was in the middle of God's work and doing what the Holy Spirit prompted him to do. He might have missed it had he not invited the Holy Spirit into his heart and not been paying attention to what the Holy Spirit was doing right next door. He didn't feel sad or anxious but felt joy and a sense of peace. He felt overflowing joy because he was part of something the Holy Spirit invited him to do, and he was paying attention. He opened himself up to the work of the Holy Spirit and that is what I am praying for each of us; that we might be open to the Holy Spirit; be connected to the Holy Spirit; be led by the Holy Spirit; and walk in the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we do so, I pray we discover strength, guidance, peace, and joy in our lives. That returns us to my garage and backyard with my trusty lawnmower. Here's what happened.

VIDEO Jeff and lawnmower 2

When my lawnmower was connected to a charged-up battery which was the power source, a came alive. It even was hard for me to keep up at the very beginning. The lawnmower became useful and did all the things it

was made to do. It cut down grasses and knocked down those weeds to keep my yard fire wise in a dry year. When it had access to the power source, it made all the difference in the world. My hope and prayer for my life and yours is that we might be more tightly connected to the power of the Holy Spirit and we might feel the joy of being led by God, used by God, walking with God every single day.

Attend by having you raise your hands, like you're a cup. We can do this even at home. Repeat this prayer after me quietly under your breath or in your hearts.

PRAYER

God, thank you for loving me. Jesus, thank you for coming and walking among us... to show us the way, the truth, and the life... for suffering and dying and rising again... to save and redeem us... I trust in you Jesus as my Savior... I choose to follow you as my Lord... Come, Holy Spirit fill me... from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet... Fill me with your power... Form and shape me into the person you want me to be... Guide and lead me... Help me to listen for your voice... to always remember you made me to love me. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

May 22-23 Order

1. Ely Welcomes people
2. First Song and Prayer
3. Welcome by Jeff and invite people to wave and be seated.
4. Connect bag.
5. Announcements by Jeff (Check News Section on Website)
 - Co-Ed Softball.
 - Seniors.
6. Invite congregation to prepare their hearts for the message.
7. Video bumper plays.
8. Sermon
9. Prayer after sermon
10. 2 Songs of Worship
11. Lord's Prayer
12. Confirmation Video
13. Celebration of Students
14. Confirmation words from Congregation
15. Closing Prayer