

Holy Spirit

Week 2: The Role of the Holy Spirit in My Life

If you would, please pray for me on Tuesday. I'm having surgery to straighten out my deviated septum and clean out my sinus cavities. It's something I've needed for a while and just couldn't put off anymore, so I'm finally getting it done. And, while you're at it, pray for Amber because I don't think I'll be a very good patient. I don't do well sitting still. I always want to be up doing something, so pray that I don't drive her crazy while I'm recovering!

I was telling the girls a few weeks ago that I was having surgery on my nose and sinuses and everything they were going to do and Norah said, "Oh good! Is it going to make your nose look better?" I was like, "No, sweetie. It's only going to change things on the inside."

And I thought, you know, that's kind of like the Holy Spirit. When we give our lives to Christ, and are baptized into him, the Holy Spirit makes His dwelling in us. Our bodies become the temple of the Holy Spirit. He lives and moves and dwells in us. And, if we allow Him to, the Spirit changes us on the inside. Transforms us into a new creation. And so, while we may look the same on the outside...for good or for bad...on the inside, we are being renewed and put back to the way God intended.

We're in week 2 of our series on the Holy Spirit, and if you missed last week, I encourage you to go back and give it a listen. We kinda laid down a Theological foundation for the Holy Spirit and talked a little bit about how He fits into the Trinity. And, we saw that the Holy Spirit is the point at which the Trinity becomes personal to the believer. Jesus says the Holy Spirit is our Advocate. He's the Paraclete that comes alongside of us to be our encourager, comforter, and counselor.

And today, I want to pick up on that theme of the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The Holy Spirit is mentioned at least 350 times in Scripture and is given more than 50 different descriptions, but He's never given a name. God the Father has the name Yahweh. God the Son is Jesus. But God the Holy Spirit is never given a name, per se, only descriptions of who He is and what He does.

And so, He's described as a powerful wind or life-giving breath or as an all-consuming fire. His peace comes and rests on us like a dove. And all of these descriptions give us insight into the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

This morning, I want to hone in on just a handful of these descriptions. So, like last week, we're going to be jumping around to a variety of passages, but we'll probably land most often in Romans 8 if you want to turn there with me.

There are so many different directions I could have taken this sermon. We could do an entire series just on the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives. In fact, I got an email from someone last week saying their Connect Group has been studying the Holy Spirit for the past 6 weeks. There's just so much to explore.

And, if you want to do some study on your own, my favorite book on the Holy Spirit is *Forgotten God* by Francis Chan. Some of our staff are actually going through it right now for our monthly book club. I think it's a great resource about the third part of the Trinity that is often neglected and forgotten.

But, I think to a degree, that's the way the Holy Spirit would like it. Throughout Scripture, we see the Holy Spirit operating kind of behind the scenes. He doesn't draw attention to Himself. Instead, His role is to always point to the Father and the Son. To glorify and make much of them. And, one of the ways the Spirit points to the other parts of the Trinity is in the way he brings about conviction in our lives.

In John 16:8, Jesus says, "And when he (the Holy Spirit) comes, he will convict the world of its sin." One of the Holy Spirit's roles in our life is to convict us of our sin. To turn our hearts back to the Father and show us our need for Jesus, our Savior. And, he does it in such a loving way that Paul says in Romans 2:4 that it's God's kindness that leads us to repentance. It's the kind conviction of the Spirit that makes us want to turn from our path of sin and pursue the Father.

And, even though the Spirit is kind in the way He brings about conviction, He's not always gentle. I remember the first time I was convicted by the Holy Spirit for my sin. It literally took me to my knees. It broke me. But, just as quickly as His conviction made me drop like a sack of potatoes, He pointed me to a loving Father whose arms were open wide for me. And I went running into them. Everything I had been looking for in my life was fully found in Him and I started following Jesus.

And, in that kindness, the Spirit continues to convict me of my sin. He continues to turn my heart back to the Father and remind me of my need for a Savior. That is one of the roles the Holy Spirit plays in our lives. But, just as the Spirit is our Advocate, we also have an accuser. And so, while the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin and leads us back to the Father, Satan, our enemy, wants to condemn us for our sin.

What's the difference? I've said it before, but the difference between conviction and condemnation is where it makes you want to run. At least that's how I've sorted it out in my own life. Both conviction and condemnation point out our sin and the ways we're not walking with God. They shine a light on our brokenness and the pain it's caused us and others.

And, the voice of Satan, that voice of condemnation makes us want to run and hide. It's exactly what Adam and Eve did in the Garden when they sinned. Condemnation makes us hide in fear and shame. We hide from God, from others, even from ourselves in the way we deny our sin and the pain it causes.

But, the voice of the Spirit, the voice of conviction, makes us run to the Father and find the grace of God through Jesus. God's love casts out all fear that we will be rejected or that we can't be loved. The voice of conviction reminds us of these beautiful words in **Romans 8:1**,

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Conviction points to the love of the Father and the grace available to us through Jesus.

And, as the Spirit does His work of conviction inside of us, He's also transforming us into a new creation. Day by day, our old self and its ways are being crucified with Christ and the Spirit is bringing about new, resurrected life within us. And so, where we once lived to satisfy the desires of our flesh and our sinful nature, we now live by the Spirit. Where we once lived in anger and selfishness and sexual immorality, Paul says in Galatians 5 that the Spirit is now bearing fruit of love, joy, peace...

It's why he also says in **Romans 8:9, "You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you."** If the Spirit is in us, those works of the flesh that push us away from God are dying. Sometimes it's a slow and painful death, but they're dying. And as the old is passing away, new life, God's way of life, is being formed in us by the Holy Spirit. He sets us on the path of holiness.

And, as we walk down that path of holiness and new life, then we begin to walk in the Spirit each day. And, to me, this is one of my favorite roles of the Holy Spirit. It's also the one that's most mysterious. What does it mean to walk in the Spirit? I kind of define it as these little nudges that He gives us. It's these little moments where Heaven and earth collide and we get to be used by God or see Him move.

And I'll tell you where I experience this the most. Every now and then, the Spirit will put someone on my mind and I think, *I ought to give that person a call*. I'm telling you, almost without fail, I reach out and they're like, "Oh man, I'm so glad you called. You won't believe the day I'm having..." And I'm like, oh, the Spirit knew that person needed some encouragement or someone to pray with.

There are also times when I *don't* make that call after the "nudge" and I'll run into that person later and realize why the Spirit put them on my heart that day. Walking in the Spirit means being in tune for those moments and willing to follow through on them.

But, how do we know if they're from the Spirit or not? Often times we don't until afterwards, but I think there are some filters we can run it through like, "Does this align with Scripture, or the character of God, or the person the Spirit is forming me into?"

Last week, I was driving and popped up over a hill at the same time as another vehicle. And I could see the dude was totally looking down at his phone while he was driving and was drifting into my lane. He looked up just in time to jerk the wheel back over, but only after I had to maneuver to keep from getting hit head on.

It probably *wasn't* the nudge of the Holy Spirit that made me want to pull a U-Turn and chase him down to tell him where he could put that phone. That's full-on flesh coming out in that moment. The Spirit will never nudge us to live in the old way of life that God has saved us from.

Instead, it's the nudge of the Spirit that tells us to pay for the meal of that family sitting across from us. It's the nudge of the Spirit that tells us to pray for that friend we haven't talked to in a while or make that difficult call and ask for someone's forgiveness. It's the nudge of the Spirit to forgive that person we keep having the imaginary conversation with in our head, telling them all the things we'd say if we had the chance. It's the nudge of the Spirit that tells us to show kindness to someone who might be struggling. It's the nudge of the Spirit that says it's time to have a faith conversation with that friend who's living far from God.

How do we know for sure that it's the Spirit nudging us in these directions? I don't know that we can. The best we can do is echo the words of the Apostles in Acts 15 that it just seemed right to us and the Holy Spirit that we do this. It seemed right and it aligned with God's Word and character and who He's shaping us to be.

We can get so caught up with wanting to know God's will for our life...something that feels way out there...and yet totally miss the mystery and the power of those day by day, moment by moment nudges of the Spirit. I think it's those nudges that lead us to walk in God's will for our life and through them, He uses us to bring His Kingdom just a little bit closer to earth. He uses us to bring His presence into the lives of people.

And, as we walk in the Spirit, look at this promise we have in **Romans 8:14-16...(READ)**

Those who are led by the Spirit are children of God. We're no longer bound and controlled by fear of God or others. The Holy Spirit living and moving in us has brought about our adoption. The Holy Spirit now testifies that we are God's children. Wholly and fully belonging to Him, and nothing is able to change that.

...Before we were able to officially adopt our daughter, Adalyn, the name on her birth certificate was Baby Girl...and then her birth mom's last name. Legally, our daughter didn't have a name. In fact, legally, she wasn't even our daughter. She belonged to the state. A month after her adoption, we received a new birth certificate, this time with her actual name, Adalyn Olivia Green. To this day, that birth certificate testifies that she is our daughter. She is part of our family.

That is who the Holy Spirit is for us. He brought about our adoption into God's family. He gives us a new name and testifies that we are His. Because of that, the Apostle Paul says in **Ephesians 1:13...(READ)**

We are marked by God with the Holy Spirit as a sign that we are His children. The Spirit living in us is the down payment on a promise that what God has started, He will finish and that one day, we will receive our eternal inheritance into Heaven.

That's just a taste of who the Spirit is and the role He plays in our lives. There's so much more that could be said about it. But, as we close out today, I want to invite us into a time of

reflection. We've spent the last 25 minutes or so looking at the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives, but I want us to close today by reflecting on the role of the Holy Spirit that **you** need in **your** life today.

Is the voice of condemnation wearing you out? Making you hide in guilt and shame? Maybe today, you need to hear the kind voice of conviction that makes you run into the arms of the Father and find grace through Jesus.

Do you continue to walk in the flesh and your old way of life? Maybe today, you need to open yourself up once again to the transformation that the Holy Spirit wants to do in you. The new life He wants to grow in you.

Are you seeking God's will for your life? Maybe today, you just need to dive into the mystery and take that next step the Spirit is nudging you towards.

Are you wandering through life feeling alone? Maybe today is the day you embrace God's love for you and are adopted into His family. Peter says in Acts 2 that when we turn from our old way of life and are baptized into Christ, we are forgiven of our past and we are filled with the Holy Spirit. Maybe today is the day you need to take that step.

I'm going to be quiet now and let the voice of the Holy Spirit take over. Let's spend some time listening to Him.