

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 9 August 2026. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

Who Is the Holy Spirit?

A couple months ago, one of my sons told me about an interesting conversation that he had had in town with a young guy whom I shall call “Joe.” My son tried to share the Gospel with Joe; and as they talked, Joe told him that he had grown up in a Christian home, and that he knows the Gospel. However, there is a big problem: somewhere along the line, Joe stopped believing that God is a personal God, as he had been taught. Instead, he now believes that God is merely a “force.” And, of course, now that He believes that God is merely a “force,” he is also now questioning whether there is a Heaven or Hell. And why not? If God be merely a “force”—an “it,” like electricity—how could this “it” have a moral nature? With no Lawgiver, how could there *be* “good” or “evil”—or a *punishment* for evil?

Brethren, we live in a day in which the *Person* of God—the truth of who He is—is under major attack. The Bible’s teaching of the *Trinity* is being attacked as never before, too. The **Holy Spirit**, especially, has been reduced to a “force,” and not a Person. It’s not merely the usual cults who believe such things: loads of young people who grew up in *Independent, Fundamental, Bible-preaching Baptist churches* are walking away from the faith. Many are creating a “god” of their own liking—a “god” who is “kind and loving” (according to *their* definition of “kind and loving”), “non-judgmental,” “non-toxic,” and who doesn’t laid us down with “rules.” In other words, they want a God who will approve of their sin, and *never* judge them. Years ago, a man who grew up as an MK wrote a novel that mocks the Trinity; and after reading the book, his daughter asked him, “Is it all right if I divorce the old God, and marry the new one?”¹ *That* says it all! You see, her dad, despite growing up in a Christian home, somehow walked away from the truth of *who God is*.

Now, are people who depart from biblical truth saved to begin with? In the overwhelming majority of cases (I’m guessing 99.9%), no! But are they *all* unsaved? I don’t believe so. You see, it *is* possible for a believer to wander into some level of apostasy, ever so slowly, and to spend years in a no-man’s land of unbelief and doubt, and chastisement from God, before returning to the Lord (just as Solomon did). That’s why Peter warned believers, “***Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.***”

Christian, God wants to use your life for His glory. He wants you to be steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. He wants you to be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth spiritual fruit that *prosper*s for Him. However, if you are going to be that kind of steadfast believer, you must be rooted and grounded in the truth of *who God is*. That is why, this morning, we will be talking about a particular member of the Trinity (and, I believe, the *least understood* member of the

Trinity)—the Holy Spirit. We'll be talking about the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and about how you can live a fruitful life for God, through the Spirit. But first, you need to know *who* He is. The title of this message is, ***“Who Is the Holy Spirit?”***

I. The Spirit's Person

Read 1 John 5:7.

Before you can understand how the Holy Spirit can empower you to live for the Lord, you need to understand *who He is*—and *who He is not*. John says that the Holy Spirit is the third *Person* of the Triune God. He is not an impersonal “force” or “energy.” He is a *personal* Being, who is distinct from the Father and the Son, yet who is *equal* to the Father the Son in every way. **Yet, He never speaks of Himself.** He *seems silent*; but this doesn't mean that He is an impersonal “force.” It simply means that His role is to point people to *Christ, the Son*. The Holy Spirit is the one who *spoke* the words of Scripture to holy men of old, in union with Christ, the Living Word; yet, the Spirit is *not* the one who took on human flesh, came down into our world, put a “face” on the invisible God, and died on the cross. *Christ* is the one who took on human flesh; and because He became one of us, it's easy for us to picture Him in our mind! (All those Sunday School pictures of Jesus that you saw as a kid help solidify that picture!) But the fact that the *Spirit* isn't so easy to picture doesn't make Him impersonal. The Holy Spirit is like a spotlight operator behind the stage, who makes sure that the spotlight is on the Master of Ceremonies. Nobody sees the spotlight operator; but that doesn't mean he's just a “force.” It just means that *his* job isn't to appear on stage: his job is to direct everyone's eyes to the Master of Ceremonies. And so it is with the Spirit. God the Holy Spirit constantly speaks to men's hearts about the Son of God, and points people to *Him*.

Now, how many of you have studied a foreign language? If you've ever studied a language, you know that most languages have at least two genders (masculine and feminine); and some languages have a third gender—neuter. You also know that the pronoun's gender must be the same as the gender of the noun. Well, in Greek, the word for “spirit” is *pneuma*; and the word *pneuma* is not masculine or feminine: it is neuter. Therefore, cults such as the J.W.'s say, “See? The Holy Spirit isn't a Person: it's just a “life force.” The Holy Spirit is an ‘it,’ not a ‘he.’” And to prove their point, they go to verses such as **Romans 8:16**. In that verse, Paul says that ***“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”***

Now, what are we to make of that? Are the J.W.'s right? Is the Spirit just a “thing,” and not a Personal Being? Not on your life! You see, the gender of a noun doesn't necessarily tell you whether the thing is *personal*, or *impersonal*. For example, in Latin, the word for “sword” is *gladius*. A *gladius* is a lifeless object; yet, the *gender* of the word *gladius* is masculine. (In

Latin, then, you would call a sword “him” instead of “it.”) In German, the words *Fräulein* and *Mädchen* mean “young lady” and “girl”; yet, these nouns aren’t feminine; they are neuter! Does this mean that a young lady is a “thing,” and not a person? No! It simply means that in German, the nouns *Fräulein* and *Mädchen* are neuter.

Well, that’s the way it is with the word “spirit.” In Greek, the *word* for “Spirit” is neuter. That’s why in our Bible, the pronoun “it” is often used when talking about the Holy Spirit. The translators simply followed the neuter gender of the Greek pronouns, and carried it over into English. But this does ***not*** mean that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal “force.”

Now, usually, Jesus used the pronoun “it” when He was talking about the Holy Spirit, because that is correct Greek. **However**, on the night of the Last Supper, Jesus broke the grammar rule. Three times He used the pronoun *ekeinos* (which means “he”) to refer to the Holy Spirit.

Read John 14:26 / John 15:26 / John 16:13-14.

Three times, Jesus called the Holy Spirit “He” instead of “it”—even though this is incorrect grammar. It seems that Jesus was trying to make a point! The point is that the Holy Spirit is a Person, just as the Father and the Son are. The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit **speaks**, **teaches**, and **testifies**. He **intercedes** for believers in their prayers; He **guides** us; and He **calls us** to service. The Holy Spirit **grieves** when we sin; He **groans** with us when we are so sad, that don’t even know how to pray. In **Acts 5**, we are told that the Holy Spirit **can be lied to**. (By the way, in **Acts 5:4**, we are told that the Holy Spirit is **God**!) The Holy Spirit **comforts** believers; and He is **angry** with sinners. We are told that the Holy Spirit **created** the world along with the Father and the Son. It should be no surprise, then, that we are also told that the Spirit has a **will**, a **mind**, and unspeakable, infinite **knowledge** and **wisdom**. The Holy Spirit can be **resisted** by sinners. He can be **blasphemed**, and **insulted**. We are told that the Spirit **commands**; He **restrains** evil; He **convicts** and **reproves** men of sin, and **convinces** men of truth. We also are told that the Spirit **loves**, and *develops* God’s love in believers. That’s why **love** is the number-one spiritual quality of “*the fruit of the Spirit*.” **Romans 5:5** says that “*the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost*.” Guys, a force such as electricity doesn’t love, or grieve, or speak, or teach, or have a will and mind. Only *a personal being* does these things! The Spirit of God *is* a Personal being; and He *is* God!

Now, why am I spending so much time to make this point? Because until you fully grasp the *personality* of the Holy Spirit, you can’t fully grasp how much He *loves* you, and how tirelessly He is *working* behind the scenes for you. And this leads us to the next point.

II. The Spirit's work

Brethren, there are many workings of the Holy Spirit. (In fact, if we were to cover all of them thoroughly, it would take at least a six-month series of messages to cover them all!) However, the most foundational work of the Holy Spirit is **His salvation work**; and it all begins with **conviction**.

Read John 16:7-11.

Folks, salvation wouldn't be possible without the Holy Spirit! **The Father** sent the Son; **the Son** purchased your salvation; but if you are to be saved, **the Holy Spirit** *must convict* you of your sin, and of your *need* of salvation. The Holy Spirit must illumine the meaning of Scripture to you. He must convict you of "**sin**," and of the fact that your sin has separated you from God. He must convict you of "**righteousness**"—the fact that you must have *Christ's* righteousness applied to your account to be saved. He must convince you of "**judgment**"—the fact that Christ took your judgment on Himself on the cross, so that Satan might be judged and defeated. If the Holy Spirit *didn't* convict us of these things, and open our eyes so that we can understand them, *none of us* would be able to understand what Christ did for us on the cross: nor would we even *seek* to know. The Holy Spirit works through the written Word of God to open our eyes to the light. The Spirit of God and the Word of God *always* go together.

Now, if you are saved, this truth should make you all the more grateful for what Christ has done for you. On the other hand, if you've *not* been saved, this truth should make you *run* to Christ without delay! Jesus said that no man can come to Him unless the Father "**draw**" that person to Him. That means that you can't push the Spirit aside, and believe on Christ whenever you feel that it is finally a "convenient" time for you. The Bible tells us that God's Spirit will not always "**strive with man**." When you reject Christ's offer of salvation, and resist the Holy Spirit, and resist Him, and resist Him, there may come a day when He will not illumine your eyes to the truth anymore. When that time comes, you will *not be able* to respond to Him. Your eyes will remain blinded, and your heart will remain as cold and hard as stone, until the day you depart this life, and split the gates of hell open. *That's scary!* If you aren't saved, don't keep brushing off the Holy Spirit. Respond to His call today!

Now, conviction isn't the only work that the Holy Spirit does in salvation. Another part of the salvation work that the Holy Spirit does is **indwelling**.

Read Ephesians 1:12-14.

In these verses, Paul says that faith in Christ begins when a person responds to the Gospel of salvation that he has heard; and it is the *Holy Spirit* who convicts you of the truth of God's Word, so that you *can* be saved. But what does the Spirit do next? **He indwells you.** If you are saved, there was a time in your life, immediately after you believed on Christ, when the Holy Spirit literally came to live inside you; and at that very instant, **He sealed you.**

Now, when we think of a "seal" today, we usually think of a stamp on a document, which shows that it is legitimate. However, a "seal," in the ancient world, was more than just a mark of legitimacy. In the Roman world, the word "**seal**" strongly conveyed the idea of **ownership**. The seal that the Roman government put on Jesus' tomb door is a perfect example. That seal said to everyone, "This man's body belongs to Rome. Do not touch!"

Folks, do you realise that believers are the only part of the physical universe that God *indwells*? Yes, it is true that **God is omnipresent**. There is nowhere in the universe where God is not present. Yet, at the same time, **God is not in creation**. He is *outside* His creation, and *above* it. The *universe* has a limit; but *God* has no limit. He is infinite, and cannot be contained within His creation. Now, this is just the opposite of what a huge portion of humanity believes. The **Hindu** religion, and many other pagan religions, teach **pantheism**—the belief that nature is "god." Panentheism is very similar, too. It teaches that God is *in* the rocks, *in* the trees, *in* every person, and so on. Sad to say, these pagan beliefs have permeated the Western world. When our church was still meeting in a school building years ago, there was a banner in the gymnasium that read, "God is *in* the rocks, *in* the air, and in everything everywhere." Guys, don't be drawn in by this idea! God is *apart from, and separate from*, His creation. God inhabits "eternity." He does not belong to our dimension of space and time.

Yet, God, when He so chooses, *enters* into space and time. For example, when the children of Israel were in the wilderness, He stepped into time and space, and manifested His presence in a **pillar of fire and cloud**, and in the **Tabernacle**—and, years later, in the **Temple**. For centuries, the Holy Spirit entered His prophets, and empowered them to prophesy, and lead the nation, and even do miracles. But does God *still* step into space and time? Yes, He does. However, God doesn't merely move into the saints' bodies *for a time*, and then depart, as He did in Old Testament times: *He takes up permanent residence* inside us! Isn't that amazing? We who are saved are the only part of God's creation that *God indwells*. His presence within believers means that we *belong* to Him! His presence is the seal of His *ownership* of us.

Now, how does this truth affect your everyday life? In every way! You see, Christian, when you really understand that your body, soul, and spirit *belong* to Him, you will also realise that

you belong to Him. You are His property; therefore, you should submit to *God's* will every day.

Read 1 Corinthians 6:13-20.

If you are saved, your body is a “temple” of the Holy Ghost; and this truth has very practical implications for your life. First of all, Paul says that because our bodies belong to God, we therefore should not use our bodies for “**fornication**” (sexual relations before marriage). It may be considered “O.K.,” in our modern world, for men and women to move in and live with each other without being married: but God says its’ **not** O.K.! Young people, don’t *ever* give in to the pressures of the world. Keep your body pure until marriage! Save yourself for the husband or wife that God gives you. For those of us who are already married, this teaching has practical implications, too: Keep yourself *only* for your wife, or for your husband.

Hebrews 13:4 says, “***Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.***” This truth also implies that you shouldn’t defile your body and mind with **alcohol or drugs**, which control you, and pervert your judgment. We shouldn’t **use our tongues** to tell lies, gossip, slander, or speak malicious words. We shouldn’t **use our hands** to heap up worldly treasure for ourselves: we should use our hands to bless other, and to lay up treasures in Heaven. Your body is not your own. It belongs to God.

Now, there is another **salvation work** that the Holy Spirit does; and it is part and parcel of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. That work is **regeneration**. This means “the new birth.”

Read John 3:1-8.

Jesus says that in order to see the Kingdom of God, you must be “**born again.**” This means that the Holy Spirit comes to live inside your body. However, the Spirit doesn’t merely *indwell* you; He *changes* you. Look again at **verse 8. (Read John 3:8.)** When the Holy Spirit comes inside a sinner, He gives that person a **new nature**. You still have your *old, sinful* nature; but you also have a *new nature*, which is obedient to the Law of God; and as long as you are submitting to the Spirit, that new nature will be in charge of your thoughts, attitudes, words, and actions. That is why Jesus compared the Holy Spirit to wind. You can’t *see* the wind; but you can hear the sound of it. In other words, you can see and hear the *effect* of the wind. I can relate to this. Before I was saved, I was one cheeky kid. I did what *I* wanted to do, and wasn’t afraid to mouth off at my parents, or anyone else. But when I was *born again*, I began to change from the inside out. If you know the Lord, this is the way it was when *you* were saved. There is a notable *change*. It isn’t you trying to do good things to *get* saved; it is the Spirit of God changing you from the inside out, because *He has saved you*.

Back in the late 1800's, a pastor named **A.J. Gordon** was visiting the World Fair in Chicago, and checking out all the latest inventions; and from a distance, he saw something fascinating. He saw a man wearing bright, Oriental clothes, and working very diligently to turn the crank of a pump. The amount of water that was coming out of the pump was almost incredible. Gordon began to wonder how a man could be that physically fit, to pump out that much water continuously. But then, as he drew closer, he realised that the "man" was simply a very life-like mannequin made of wood; and it was actually the flow of the water that was turning the crank, and making the "man" move!² And so it is with the Holy Spirit. Just as the Holy Spirit "moved" men of old to write the exact words of Scripture, so the Holy Spirit "moves" *every* believer to do Christ's will, and to live the way He wants us to live. It's all part of the work of regeneration! Christian, are you letting Christ move *you*, and work through *you*?

Now, what else does the Holy Spirit do? **He teaches believers** the truth of God's Word.

Read John 14:25-26 / 1 John 2:20, 27.

In Old Testament times, anointing oil was poured up the heads of Old Testament priests at their ordination, as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Oil was also poured on kings and prophets at the time of their ordination to service, for the same reason. Oil was a symbol of the Holy Spirit. But the "anointing" that John is talking about here isn't *literal* oil, to be poured on the body; it is an *internal, spiritual* anointing. It is the Holy Spirit Himself! In **verse 27**, John says that this "**anointing**" is *in* the believer. Every believer is *internally* anointed to be a priest before God, by the Holy Spirit who lives inside him.

Now, look again at **verse 20**. In this verse, John says that *because* the Holy Spirit lives inside believers, they therefore "**know all things**." Now, what does *that* mean? Is John saying that Christians are omniscient, like God? No! He's saying that through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, we are *able* to understand all the truth that God has revealed in His Word. God didn't give us His Word to *confuse* us with things that are too lofty to understand: He gave us His Word so that we can *understand* who He is, who we are, how to be saved, and how to serve Him. You know what, though? If you're not *reading* His Word, the Holy Spirit won't be able to teach you, will He? The Holy Spirit isn't going to "download" His Word, and the correct understanding of His Word, into your brain, against your will. You must *read* it! That's why the Bible is called "**the sword of the Spirit**." The Spirit always speaks through the *Word*. That's why Paul says, "**Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth**." "**Rightly dividing**" is a tentmaker term. It means to cut the pieces of a tent correctly, so that the pieces will all *fit together* correctly. What Paul is saying is that God wants every believer to know His Word, and

understand it, so that he can correctly apply it to his life. You must *study* His Word diligently, and ask the Lord for understanding, so that the Spirit can teach you its meaning.

You know, if you treated your Bible the way that you treat your phone, what would your day be like? I'll *tell* you what it would be like, starting from midnight. You'd be picking up your Bible **in the middle of the night** and reading it, and reading it **several more times** during the night, as the Spirit of God keeps sending more "texts" to your mind and heart. You'd be picking up your Bible as soon **as you wake up** in the morning, and reading it. You'd be reading it while you're **brushing your teeth**. You'd be reading it while you're **sitting at the breakfast table** (and at the **dinner table** later in the day). You'd be reading it **on the bus**, or **in the car**, on the way to work or school. You'd be reading it at least **50 times** during the **work day**, or **school day**. You'd be reading it while you're walking around **in the shops**, or walking **down the street**. You'd be reading it while you're on the **treadmill**, or riding your **scooter**. You'd be reading it *continuously* throughout your waking hours. Here's the question, then: why *don't* you read your Bible for anywhere near the number of hours that you check your phone? Is your phone an *idol* in your life, that is more important to you than God?

Brethren, the Holy Spirit wants to teach you the things of God, so that you can have the wisdom you need to live a godly, fruitful, and joyful life. He wants to give you the "**wisdom that is from above**." But if you aren't reading the "**sword of the Spirit**," and asking God to teach you His truth through His Spirit, and applying it to your life, you will, by default, operate your life according to "**earthly, sensual, devilish**" wisdom. You'll operate according to the "wisdom" of filthy Hollywood movies, and social media, and your unsaved friends, and your own sinful flesh; and you will make foolish and destructive decisions, and drift farther from the Lord.

Now, there is one more thing the Spirit does: **He comforts believers.**

Read John 14:16-23.

What did Christ mean when He says, "**I will send you another Comforter.**" First of all, Christ is saying that *He* is our Comforter. The Greek word for "**Comforter**" is *Parakletos*, which means "one who comes alongside" to help. It's the exact same word that is translated as "**Advocate**" in **1 John 2:2**, where *Jesus* is called our "**Advocate**." Jesus is our Comforter, Advocate, and Defender. However, He isn't our *only* Comforter, Advocate, and Defender. So is the Holy Spirit! Jesus is telling the disciples, "Look, guys, I'm leaving you: but I will be sending the Holy Spirit to do *everything* for you that *I* did." This means that the Holy Spirit **comforts** you, just as the Lord Jesus does! The Holy Spirit is your **Advocate**—the one who comes alongside you, to strengthen you by His companionship. He imparts to you "**the fruit of the Spirit**" (love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and

temperance). He changes you into Christ's image. He reminds you of the things that Christ has taught you in His Word; and He illumines your mind, so that you can understand the Word.

For three years, Christ was with His disciples in the flesh here on earth, and was a constant Comfort to them. Likewise, the Holy Spirit has been sent to comfort Christians. We have *not* been left alone in this world. By the way, that word “*comfortless*” in **verse 18** literally means “*orphans*”! Jesus is saying that believers have not been left alone in this wicked world like helpless infants, with no parents. The Holy Spirit is with you at all times, Christian. In fact, the *entire Godhead* (Father, Son, and Spirit) lives inside you. You can take comfort in that! And the best part is that *He never leaves you*. Through all your problems, and all your sin and failure, He abides with you. **And He gives you joy as you serve the Lord.** As you allow Him to control you, He fills your heart with songs, hymns, and spiritual songs all day long.

This reminds me of a true story of a man, decades ago, who went to a psychiatrist, because he was hearing radio broadcasts in his head. He thought he was losing his mind! The shrink was having a hard time believing him at first; but as he asked the patient questions, he began to realise that this was no joke. The man told him that at that very moment, “he was hearing Rudy Vallee broadcasting from...Atlantic City.”³ As it turned out, the man was a worker in a glass bottle factory; and “he had gotten some silica crystals in [his] dental cavities.”⁴ The crystals had turned him “into a walking...radio receiver!”⁵ Well, guess what, Christian? In the spiritual realm, this is what the Spirit does. As long as you stay submitted to Him, He keeps you tuned into the “heavenly frequency,” and fills your soul with singing. *This* is how God has ordained you to live your life—in constant service, praise, and worship of Him!

Conclusion: Now, perhaps some of you don't have a clue about anything you've heard this morning, because you've never been saved. These things don't make sense to you, because you don't have God's Holy Spirit in you. But it doesn't have to stay that way. The Holy Spirit is speaking to your heart at this very moment. He is convicting you of the fact that you need to repent of your sin, and place your trust in Christ to save you. Won't you come to Christ, and be saved?

Christian, perhaps the Lord is speaking to *your* heart. Maybe you are resisting the Spirit's conviction to turn from a sin in your life. Maybe you aren't hearing His voice, because you aren't reading His Word very much. Maybe you are vulnerable to false teaching, because you don't know much about the doctrine of God. Maybe you need to be grounded in the teaching of who the Holy Spirit is, and how He moves, and what He wants to do in your life. Whatever the Lord is speaking to you about today, respond to Him!

¹ “The Shack's Cool God,” David Cloud, Way of Life Literature, April 18, 2019, <https://www.wayoflife.org/database/shackscoolgod.html>

² Robert Morgan, *Preacher's Sourcebook of Creative Sermon Illustrations* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2007), pp. 441-442.

³ Robert Morgan, *Preacher's Sourcebook of Creative Sermon Illustrations* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2007), pp. 439-440.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*