

God the Spirit
Series: The Holy Trinity
John 16:5-15
January 31, 2021

I have to tell you something I saw yesterday. It was a video posted on Facebook. The video was about stunts, tricks, that went wrong. Like trying to do skateboard or bike tricks. Anyway, it's this video about stunts that went wrong, and of course, so many videos have an ad in the middle of it. And the ad in this video was an ad for physical therapy. I just found that funny – appropriate, yes, but also funny.

Today, we conclude our series on the Holy Trinity, one of the fundamental tenants of the Christian faith.

Christians believe there is one God, and He reveals Himself in three different persons: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. All three are God and all are one. God is a Trinity, or tri-unity, three persons in one.

We spent four weeks talking about the Holy Trinity. We talked about God the Father and God the Son. Today, we will talk about God the Spirit, so, I invite you to turn to page 5 in your bulletin.

There you will see a portion of the Trinity Wheel that I've talked during this series. Let me remind you what this diagram means.

“The Spirit is God, but not the Father or the Son. The Spirit glorifies the Father and glorifies the Son.”

We confessed in the Apostle's Creed, “I believe in the Holy Spirit...”

What is the symbol, the logo for, the United Methodist Church? What do you suppose it is to signify?

Listen what Paul says in Galatians 6:14

*“As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world has been crucified, and the world's interest in me has also died.”*¹

Then from Acts 2 and the birth of the Church:

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

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is foundational to our faith, and yet, it is mysterious and difficult to comprehend in all its fullness.

Dorothy Sayers tells of a Japanese convert struggling to grasp Christian theology. “Honorable Father, very good,” he said to his missionary teacher. “Honorable Son, very good. But Honorable Bird, I do not understand at all.”³

Do you recall hearing a sermon on the Holy Spirit? (By the way, you have from me.) If you were to calculate a percentage of Who of the Godhead you know, Who you consider, Who you think about, in your faith journey, what would it be? Ideally, we would

¹ Galatians 6:14, NLT

² Acts 2:1-4, NLT

³ Philip Yancey in the foreword of Robertson McQuilkin's “Life in the Spirit”

focus approximately 33% of our attention to the Father, 33% to the Son, and 33% to the Holy Spirit. But life is not ideal.

Is there a reason for this?

Gordon D. Fee, Christian theologian and minister, wrote, “The practicing creed for many Christians goes something like, ‘I believe in God the Father, I believe in Jesus Christ, but I wonder about the Holy Ghost.’ The Spirit has become God’s specter, if you will, an unseen, less than vibrant influence, hardly ‘God very God.’”⁴

But when you look in the book of Acts, The Holy Spirit is the chief actor in the life of the Early Church:

- The very first two verses of Acts: “In my first book I told you, Theophilus, about everything Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions through the Holy Spirit.”⁵
- Acts 2:4 has that the 120 followers of Jesus in the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost “were all filled with the Holy Spirit.”
- Acts 4:8 says that Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit.”
- In Acts 6 and 7, it says Stephen was “filled with the Holy Spirit.”
- Paul: “filled with the Holy Spirit” (9:17; 13:9)
- Barnabas: “full of the Holy Spirit and faith” (11:24)

It is clear that the Holy Spirit was present in the Early Church. In fact, it is still the Holy Spirit who is the active member of the Godhead here on earth. Jesus was the active member of the Godhead when He walked the byways of Palestine; now it is the Holy Spirit.

Let me read to you from the Upper Room on the last night before Jesus was crucified. From John 16:5-15. This is Jesus speaking:

“But now I am going away to the One who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going. Instead, you grieve because of what I’ve told you. But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate won’t come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment. The world’s sin is that it refuses to believe in me. Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more. Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged. There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can’t bear it now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, ‘The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.’”⁶

It is through the Holy Spirit, and only through the Holy Spirit, that we can live the Christian life. Yet some are hesitant of the Spirit, in part because the Spirit does only what God tells Him to do, and that’s not always what we want or anticipate.

There is also some hesitancy about the Spirit in mainline churches because charismatic churches, those that speak in tongues and fall out, focus on the infilling of the Holy Spirit in an experiential way. I once had someone try to tell me that I wasn’t a

⁴ Gordon D. Fee, Christian theologian, minister, professor emeritus, and author of “Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God” (Hendrickson Publishing, Peabody, Massachusetts, 1996, page 37).

⁵ Acts 1:1-2 (NLT2)

⁶ John 16:5-15 (NLT2)

Christian if I did not speak in tongues, right there.

So, there is some misconceptions about the Holy Spirit, so I want to quickly spend the remainder of our time talking about the work of the Holy Spirit. There are twelve things.

First, the Holy Spirit Testifies about Jesus.

Remember back to the Trinity Wheel. The Holy Spirit is always focusing us back on Jesus. He glorifies both God the Father and God the Son.

Jesus told the disciples in John 15:26:

“But I will send you the Advocate – the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me.”⁷

The Spirit testifies about Jesus.

Second, the Holy Spirit Tells us what to say.

Have you ever experienced a time when a Christian told you something, and you realized that was God speaking to you? People say that to me, and I always tell them, “It’s the Holy Spirit.”

Jesus warned the disciples in Mark 13:11:

“But when you are arrested and stand trial, don’t worry in advance about what to say. Just say what God tells you at that time, for it is not you who will be speaking, but the Holy Spirit.”⁸

WE LIVE IN TROUBLED TIMES.

It is the Spirit that speaks through us the things of God.

Third, the Holy Spirit Convicts of sin.

Earlier, I read Jesus’ words from John 16:

“And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment.”⁹

The NIV translation says:

When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt [or expose the guilt of the world] in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.¹⁰

It is the Holy Spirit that convicts you, me, and the world of sin. When I know I have done something wrong, it is not a little voice of conscious in my head; it is the Holy Spirit.

Fourth, the Holy Spirit comforts.

This is one that means so much to us when our worlds have turned upside down, when we feel sad or we think we’ve lost hope. Listen to Jesus’ words from John 14:16:

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.”¹¹

God Himself is comforting you when you’ve lost someone or something. God Himself is there, always.

Fifth, the Holy Spirit helps our weaknesses.

Paul wrote:

“And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don’t know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be

⁷ John 15:26 (NLT)

⁸ Mark 13:11 (NLT)

⁹ John 16:8 (NLT)

¹⁰ John 16:8 (NIV)

¹¹ John 14:16 (KJV)

expressed in words.”¹²

If you are feeling weak, turn to the Holy Spirit.

Sixth, the Holy Spirit teaches.

I love this one. John 14:26 reads:

“But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit – he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.”¹³

Any time you remember a passage of Scripture or a story of Jesus or the Bible and it helps you or someone else, it is the Holy Spirit bringing those things to mind.

MY DCOM MEETING.

Seventh, the Holy Spirit guides.

You see, it’s not enough to know Scripture or the words of Jesus. We need to live them out. And when we find ourselves at a crossroads and don’t know which way to turn, we can rely on the Holy Spirit. Jesus said:

“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.”¹⁴

I believe that if our denomination splits, the Holy Spirit will guide us through the process. Therefore, I will not worry!

Eighth, the Holy Spirit sanctifies.

What does “sanctifies” mean? In the Old Testament, when something was sanctified, it meant it was prayed over and dedicated to the Lord for holy work. So, the piano, the organ, the altar table, were all prayed over for God to sanctify for holy work.

Listen to what Paul said of himself:

“I am a special messenger from Christ Jesus to you Gentiles. I bring you the Good News so that I might present you as an acceptable offering to God, made holy by the Holy Spirit.”¹⁵

The Holy Spirit wants to work in your life – why? To make you holy! To sanctify you as an acceptable offering to God, for the holy work of God.

Ninth, the Holy Spirit Gives us spiritual gifts.

The New Testament tells us that we are given spiritual gifts. 1 Corinthians 12 says:

“It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.”¹⁶

These spiritual gifts – Administration, Apostleship, Craftsmanship, Creative Communication, Discernment, Encouragement, Evangelism, Faith, Giving, Healing, Helps, Hospitality, Intercession, Leadership, Mercy, Miracles, Prophecy, Shepherding, Teaching, Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues, Word of Knowledge, and Word of Wisdom – are given to glorify God and edify others. These are spiritual gifts, not natural talents. You could be a schoolteacher and not have the spiritual gift of teaching. That doesn’t make you less of a schoolteacher; it just means you do not have the spiritual gift of teaching spiritual matters. These gifts all come from the Holy Spirit. You cannot earn them or develop them. You do not have all the spiritual gifts; in fact, you may only have one or two or three. They are gifts that the Holy Spirit gives us to glorify God and edify

¹² Romans 8:26 (NLT)

¹³ John 14:26 (NLT)

¹⁴ John 16:13 (NLT)

¹⁵ Romans 15:16 (NLT)

¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 12:11 (NLT)

others.

Tenth, the Holy Spirit Produces fruit in us.

This is spiritual fruit, and we are all to have these:

“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!”¹⁷

The presence of these fruits in your life is the evidence of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Eleventh, the Holy Spirit Gives us truth.

For the last several years, there has been a lot of question about what is the truth. Our own denomination is being split because of a disagreement as to whether the Bible is true, whether our historic Christian faith is true.

Folks, I am here to tell you that it is the Holy Spirit that gives us truth. Jesus said:
He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth...¹⁸

The truth comes from the Holy Spirit.

Finally, the Holy Spirit dwells with saints.

Listen to this promise from Jesus:

“He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.”¹⁹

Recently I quoted the lyrics to a Christian song:

*Holy Spirit You are welcome here,
Come flood this place and fill the atmosphere.
Your glory God is what our hearts long for,
To be overcome by Your presence, Lord.*

¹⁷ Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT)

¹⁸ John 14:17a (NLT2)

¹⁹ John 14:17 (NLT)