

The Holy Spirit ~ Lord's Day 20

We have heard of Christ's suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, and reign. Now, from heaven, He pours out gifts upon His church through the Holy Spirit. So who is this Spirit? What does He do, and what does His work mean for us?

1. The person of the Holy Spirit

He is no vague energy "force" or religious atmosphere. He teaches (John 14:26), speaks (Acts 13:2), distributes gifts as He wills (1 Corinthians 12:11), can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30), and intercedes for us (Romans 8:26). A force does not teach, grieve, or pray for you. The Spirit is a person.

And He is eternal God. Peter says that Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit, then says he lied to God (Acts 5:3–4). Jesus names Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together in baptism. At Jesus' own baptism, the Son stands in the Jordan, the Spirit descends, and the Father speaks. Three distinct persons, one God. We cannot control the Spirit with music, emotion, or technique.

2. The work of the Holy Spirit

The Spirit was present at creation, inspired Scripture, gives life and faith, sanctifies believers, equips the church, and helps us in weakness. One purpose runs through all His work. Jesus says, "He will glorify me" (John 16:14). The Spirit opens our eyes to Christ, creates faith in Him, and forms us in His likeness. His gifts build up Christ's body.

That is our test for what claims to be "Spirit-led": does it glorify Jesus Christ? A powerful feeling or a longer song proves little by itself. The Spirit works through the Word He inspired. He does not contradict Himself. He uses Scripture to expose sin, show us Christ, create faith, and make us holy. Worship led by the Spirit praises the Son to the glory of the Father.

3. The benefit of the Holy Spirit

The Catechism turns personal: the Spirit is given to me "so that, through true faith, he makes me share in Christ and all his benefits." He unites us to Christ. Forgiveness, righteousness, adoption, resurrection life, and holiness are in Jesus; the Spirit gives us Jesus. The Father plans redemption, the Son accomplishes it, and the Spirit applies it to us. He awakens dead sinners to believe, kills remaining sin, and gives gifts for service in Christ's church.

The Spirit also "comforts me." Jesus promised "another Helper" who would be with His people forever (John 14:16). He did not leave us orphans. His comfort is God's own presence, not a command to cheer up. By the Spirit we cry, "Abba! Father!" and know that we are God's children (Romans 8:15–16). Our assurance rests on Christ's grip upon us. The Spirit is the seal and guarantee that God will finish what He began (Ephesians 1:13–14).

And "he will remain with me forever." He regenerates and sanctifies us. His fruit may grow slowly, but He is at work. Do not grieve Him or treat His Word lightly. Look for His work as Christ becomes more precious, sin more hateful, prayer more natural, and patience and love more visible. When you are weak or do not know what to pray, He helps and intercedes for you.

God has not left His people alone. The Father chose us, Christ purchased us, and the Holy Spirit dwells in us. His great work is to turn our eyes toward Jesus. "He will glorify me." May He do exactly that among us!