

Home Group Notes week of 10/09 Who is the Holy Spirit and what does He do?

New season for our mission - focussed on BELIEVING - as a church being more evangelistic, each member more courageous in mission to see people in our lives who are not yet followers of Jesus, come to believe & trust in him. Therefore we are spending our prayer and our teaching time exploring the Holy Spirit. The mission of God is his, he goes into the world himself to draw people, and by His Spirit he gives us the call and the privilege of being involved in what he is doing. If we are going to see more people come to Jesus -- we must learn to be Spirit led, Spirit empowered people and pray-ers. So this week we are going to do the big picture overview of who is the Holy Spirit and what does he do.

- Try 'rating' yourself out of ten for how much you see yourself currently as being a **Spirit-led, Spirit-empowered person**. What's your understanding of these terms?

1. Who is the Holy Spirit?

At the Councils of Nicea in 325 & Constantinople in 381 the church agreed the creed:

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord the Giver of life. The Spirit is fully God, he is the Lord. He is worthy of worship, and he is the giver of life.

He was there in perfect community with the Father and the Son before the beginning of time Gen 1.1 - in the beginning. The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And then comes this explosion of creative energy- breaking into barrenness and chaos and the world becomes a place bursting with every form of life imaginable. Genesis 2 - - the Lord breathed into the man's nostrils the breath of life. Hebrew word there is Ruach. This is the Spirit-breath of God.

And everything in **creation** is good - until that catastrophic moment of **de-creation**, the choice of humankind towards selfishness mistrust and pride, created order begins to fracture and decay, sin and violence and disorder infect the whole earth. And God begins his plan of **re-creation**, to restore all that has been lost and to make everything new.

The Father, the Son, and the Spirit, on a mission now until the end of time to bring about re-creation. That's the story that we get to be part of .

Out of Abraham he grows his people Israel to be his light to all nations. But they turn away in idolatry, in pride and mistrust. Psalm 135 - they worship idols that have no breath in them - the idols of the world are breathless, they spiritually suffocate you. There is no Ruach to be found.

The Holy Spirit is active through the Old Testament, but his activity is limited. He comes upon particular people particular time particular place for particular purpose - But these examples are individual and temporary. Better still, God has a recreation plan that is going to offer spiritual life for everyone and forever. . We read about it in the prophets : **the**

Promised presence of God

Eg. read Ezekiel.36.26-7 & Joel 2.28-9 . Then, He becomes **the Poured out presence of God**.

At his baptism Jesus is standing in the river, and the Spirit comes down and is hovering over the water. The sign of new creation breaking into the world. John 7.37 - the Spirit will flow from Jesus himself. But no Pentecost until after the cross. On the cross Jesus takes in himself the penalty for all human sin, he pays for it in his body, and defeats it in his death and resurrection.

And so the risen Jesus says - see John 20.21-22

And then from Pentecost onwards, the promise of the Spirit is fulfilled. We are given the Lord, the giver of life, SO THAT we can help bring life to others.

- Do you associate 'the giver of life' with the Holy Spirit? In what ways have you experienced Him giving you life?

2. What does the Holy Spirit do?

A: The Spirit reveals to us the truth that brings life. He reveals Jesus, the love of the Father, our family identity. So whatever your story of coming to faith- whether you had a dramatic moment of conversion, or a slow and steady one, if you have turned to Christ in repentance and faith = that is the miraculous work of the Spirit in you.

- Can you testify to the work of the Spirit in initially bringing you to faith in Jesus?

Jesus describes the Spirit as being our paraclete: someone called to be alongside you - a **comforter, a counsellor, an (legal) advocate.**

- Which of these three senses of the Holy Spirit most resounds for you? Has there been an experience or a time in your life when He was especially real to you as comforter, counsellor or advocate?

B: the Holy Spirit Purifies.: He works to restore you to the likeness of the image of God (like an expert painting restorer)(2 Cor.3.18). He cleanses, breaks with patterns of sin, addictions, wounds from our past, or destructive lifestyle choices.

- Can you give an example of how the Holy Spirit has worked in you to purify you?

C: The Spirit empowers. The Spirit equips and empowers us for ministry - to be used by God as agents of his master plan of re-creation. He equips us with his gifts, and he empowers us to be the ministers of Jesus.

- Do you feel empowered by the Spirit to serve God? Do you feel you know what your ministry is for this season of your life? How might more of the Spirit make a difference to your every day life in Christ?
- Spend time as a group praying for the in-filling of the Spirit. Share a particular way you are eager for more of His work in you, and ask others to pray for you.