

REAL QUESTIONS BIBLICAL ANSWERS: What is the Role of the Holy Spirit? Various Passagesⁱ

INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, Trinity! It is good to see each of you this morning. I want to say a special welcome to those of you that are guests. My name is Chris Wigley and I serve as one of the pastors here at Trinity. On behalf of our staff team, we say thanks for joining us for worship today and welcome to you.

We would love the opportunity to connect with you. You can help us do that in one of two ways. You can text the keyword, "TBCMP," to the number 94-000. When you do that, a link will be sent to you that you can click on and fill out a short form. Or you can stop by our information table in the Fellowship Area as we have a gift there for you that we would love to put in your hands.

I want you to know that it is the highlight of my week to follow up with our guests, so I look forward to connecting with you.

SERIES OVERVIEW:

Today is the final message in our teaching series, "Real Questions, Biblical Answers." We fielded questions from our church family, and I attempted to answer those questions from a biblical perspective and worldview. We covered subjects ranging from knowing God's will for our lives to ways to overcome fear of failure, and everything in between. And while I wanted to answer the questions, my main reason for doing this series is for us to know and understand that there are biblical answers to the questions we have. There are biblical answers to the issues of our culture. The Bible is relevant. And if we are to going to be followers of Jesus Christ, we have to be driven by the authority of God's Word.

If you happened to miss a week in this series, I want to invite you to go back and listen. We post sermons on our website at trinitytx.org/sermons or you can subscribe to our Podcast, "Hope for the Broken." I certainly hope that you have enjoyed the teaching series as much as I have.

In case you are wondering where we are going next, I am excited about a new teaching series we are calling, "What's in a Breath." The word, "breath," is mentioned in 13 different books of the Bible and occurs 42 times.ⁱⁱ There is a lot in a breath. So, we will kick that off next Sunday. The first message is about the

breath of God, when God breathed life into humanity. I am going to teach a timely message of the Imago Dei. I hope you invite a friend to join in with you.

But today we are landing the plane of our current series by answering the question, "What is the role of The Holy Spirit." Perhaps you have wondered what The Bible teaches about what The Holy Spirit does and what the gifts of the Spirit are and how does all that work. Well, it is my goal to answer those questions here today.

Grab your bibles and turn with me in a couple of places to the Gospel of John, chapters 14 and 16. We will look at other Scriptures, but that will be our main place of study.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Niagara Fallsⁱⁱⁱ

I'm just curious, how many of you have been to Niagara Falls? That is on my bucket list. I really want to go visit there sometime.

I read a story this week about two people that were standing at the foot of Niagara Falls. One person was a local while the other a tourist. The local guy pointed to the water coming down and he said, "That is the greatest unused power in the universe." The person standing next to him said, "No, it's not. The Holy Spirit of God is the greatest unused power in the universe."

You know, when it comes to the subject of The Holy Spirit, it is a subject that is very important to address, but it is also one that has a variety of opinions. Depending on the church background we come from, we have a tendency to either downplay and forget the Holy Spirit or we try to manufacture the Spirit.

I grew up as a "good little Baptist boy" and at my church, back in the day, it was said, "You can tap one foot to the music, but if you tap both, well then, you're dancing!" Can anyone relate to that upbringing?

But my good friend, Jeremy Larson, he and his family attended a different kind of church. When I would go to church with them, they not only moved both feet, but they shouted out during the sermon! Like a whole new world.

Francis Chan, Pastor and Author, wrote a book in 2009 entitled, "The Forgotten God: Reversing Our Tragic Neglect of The Holy Spirit." With my background and church experience, I have a tendency to neglect The Holy Spirit.

Many believers have heard of the Holy Spirit but only have a vague idea of who He is. And then, there are a variety of viewpoints concerning the role of the Holy Spirit. Who is The Holy Spirit? What exactly does He do? And how does He affect our living as believers? Those are the questions that I want to answer for us this morning. So, let's examine the Gospel of John and see what it is that Jesus teaches in answering these questions about the Holy Spirit.

MESSAGE

First question Jesus answers is...

1) Who is the Holy Spirit?

A few things Jesus says in particular. First, we are going to see that **The Holy Spirit is a Divine Person**.

Let's look at the references in John 14 and 16. Beginning in verse 17. *for **he dwells with you and will be in you** (John 14:17); **he will teach you** (John 14:26).* Flip over to John 16, verse 7. *I will send **him** to you. And when **he** comes, **he will convict the world** (John 16:8); **he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you** (John 16:13); and **He will glorify me** (John 16:14).*

We see how Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit much the same way He refers to God the Father; He refers to The Holy Spirit as a He. And this personification of The Holy Spirit leads us to understand that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person. Now, when I say that The Holy Spirit is a Divine Person, I am referring to the fact that He is not an impersonal force. It is important to understand that. The Holy Spirit is not a force that the Christian wields like in the movie, "Star Wars."

ILLUSTRATION: Star Wars

How many Star Wars fans do we have with us today? Now, in the movie Star Wars, you hear the phrase, "May the force be with you," a lot. What it is that the force does in the movie? Well, it enables people, both the jedis and those on the dark side, to do and accomplish superhuman things. This is NOT what the Holy Spirit is like. The Holy Spirit is a divine person, not a force.

The second thing that we learn is that **The Holy Spirit is God**. Now, while the Bible never uses the term "Trinity," we see strong evidence in the Scriptures of God being distinct in persons yet one in substance. In other words, trinitarian. Let me give you a couple examples.

In Genesis 1, when God creates man, we see God speak of Himself in trinitarian form. Verse 26 of Genesis 1. ***26**Then God said, "Let **us** make man in **our** image, after **our** likeness.* You see God's referral to the Trinity.

John 14:23 is another example. *Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and **we** will come to him and make **our** home with him.* Plurality in singularity again, like in Genesis 1.

The Trinity is one God existing in three persons; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Each aspect of the Trinity being God; co-equal and co-eternal. We have a tendency to view the Trinity as God The Father being varsity, Jesus being JV, and The Holy Spirit being the Freshman Team. But they are all co-equal in being God because they are God.

So, in answering the question, who is the Holy Spirit, we see that He is a divine person and that He is God. The third thing that Jesus says about the Holy Spirit is that **He is a Helper**.

Jesus says in multiple places in our passage that the Holy Spirit is a Helper; an Advocate. Look again at the passage. John 14:16, *"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another **Helper**."* Skip to John 14:26, *"But the **Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send.**"* Then John 16:7, *"it is to your **advantage** that I go away, for if I do not go away, **the Helper will not come.**"*

Now, what does it mean that the Holy Spirit is a Helper? The word translated as "helper" is the Greek word, "parakletos." This word is often translated as "comforter," or "helper." But it means, "one who is called alongside to help." If you are a believer in Jesus, then you have a helper at all times. You can call for help. One way to look at this is to know that the Holy Spirit is a very presence help to us just like Jesus was a present help to the Apostles.

ILLUSTRATION: CASA Worker

One of the things that is near and dear to our heart as church is Foster care. We have several in our church that are Foster Families. In foster care, you become very much so aware of the role the organization CASA plays.

CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocate. And these advocates speak on behalf of and work to the benefit of children in the care of CPS. They are an **advocate** for someone that needs a voice. They represent what is best

for the child, they stand in the gap for the child, and they speak to the Judge on behalf of the child.

In much the same way, The Holy Spirit is an advocate for us. He is our Helper. So, who is The Holy Spirit? He is a divine person that is God and is a help.

The second question we want to answer in determining the role of the Holy Spirit is...

2) What does the Holy Spirit Do?

Jesus teaches that The Holy Spirit does a few specific things in chapter 16 of John's Gospel. Let's look at them.

First, **The Holy Spirit Convicts of Sin**. Verse 8 says, ***“⁸And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin.*** In other words, it is the job of the Holy Spirit to convince people that they are sinners and in need of a Savior. Notice who it is that Jesus says the Holy Spirit will convict; the world.

So, those apart from a relationship with Jesus, the Holy Spirit convinces them that they are sinners and that leads them to the realization that they need a Savior. That's where the work of the Holy Spirit begins. In verse 9, Jesus goes on to say that The Holy Spirit points people to Him. He says, ***“⁹concerning sin, because they do not believe in me.*** So, The Holy Spirit's job is to convict people of their sin and point them to Jesus as Lord and Savior.

The second thing the Holy Spirit does is, **The Holy Spirit Indwells the Believer**. That is that The Holy Spirit takes up residence in, He indwells, the Believer. Notice what Jesus says in John 14:17 and then again in verse 23.

You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. The “you” in this passage is referring to disciples; those who believe Jesus as Lord. Then in verse 23, ***“Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”*** Jesus is saying that the indwelling of the Spirit is for those that love Him and live according to His word.

But then the question comes, “When does the Holy Spirit indwell the believer?” This is a good question because there is some confusion in Christendom as to when this takes place. Some might argue that, quote, the “baptism of the Holy

Spirit,” is when the indwelling of the Holy Spirit occurs. That it comes as a separate event from Salvation.

However, the Bible doesn't seem to support that belief. Ephesians 1:13 says, ***“In him [meaning Jesus] you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and [when you] believed in him, [that's when you...] were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.”***

And then again, later, in Ephesians chapter 4, verse 5, Paul continues this idea when he says there is, ***“one Lord, one faith, one baptism.***” In other words, there is not a separate baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit indwells the believer at the moment of faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Now, at Pentecost, I would say that there was a baptism of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that when He left, The Spirit would come. And that He did in Acts 2. But from that point on, the Holy Spirit was received at the moment of salvation.

So, The Holy Spirit convicts people of sin and He indwells the believer. Thirdly, **The Holy Spirit Guides the Believer**.

John 16:13 says, ***“¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.”*** One way that He guides believers is that He illuminates the Scriptures. As you spend time in the Word of God, it is The Holy Spirit that works in your heart to reveal truths about God in and through His word. Have you ever been reading the Scriptures and then get an insight into a passage that you haven't seen before? That's The Holy Spirit. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit guides believers into all the truth. Rarely do we take advantage of this aspect of the Holy Spirit because of our tendency to forego time with The Lord.

Another way the Holy Spirit guides believers is by prompting us in an area of ministry.

ILLUSTRATION: Come to mind

Have you ever had a sudden prompting about something or someone? I get that often. I take that as a prompting of God through the Holy Spirit. And when I get that prompting about a person, I try to call that person immediately. The vast majority of the time they will say something like, “I know why The Lord laid me on your heart.” And they tell me about a prayer need in their life.

Now, there are times that I think people confuse a prompting of the Holy Spirit with something that is not from the Holy Spirit. How do you know the difference between a prompting of the Holy Spirit and the effects of a bad burrito?

Well, what does Jesus say? The Holy Spirit guides us into all the truth. In other words, the Holy Spirit will never prompt you to do something that is contrary to the truth contained in Scripture. If you have a prompting to speak ill of someone on social media, I can assure you that is not from the Holy Spirit. Why? Ephesians 4:29 says, *“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”* The Holy Spirit will lead you to speak grace.

The Holy Spirit is active in the Believer in that He serves as a guide. There is so much more we can say here, but I have to land this plane. We are going to expound on this as a sermon in our next series, so I’ll leave it for that. But we’ve talked about who the Holy Spirit is. We’ve discussed what the Holy Spirit does. But I want to turn our attention, in the time we have left, to the question...

3) How does The Holy Spirit affect our lives?

Two quick things. The Holy Spirit give us the...

A) Power to live godly lives

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit gives the believer power to live a godly life. Galatians 5:16 and 17 says, *“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.”*

When we live according to the Spirit, we will live godly lives because we will not gratify the desires of our flesh. We have victory in the Spirit over the flesh. The Holy Spirit has given us everything we need for life and godliness.

The second thing that I want to talk about with regards to how the Holy Spirit affects our lives is that...

B) We are given spiritual gifts

One of the things that I love the tell people that become a Christian is, “Congratulations, you’re gifted.” The Bible teaches that when the Holy Spirit indwells a believer, He brings with Him spiritual gifts. Now, these gifts are not to

be confused with talents. Many times, our spiritual gifting corelates with our talents but they are not the same thing.

For example, you might be a talented singer, but that does not necessarily mean that you are called to be a minister of worship. Plus, I know many talented singers that are not even believers so it’s possible to have talent and it not be a spiritual gift. You see the difference.

There are a couple of things that I think are important to understand about spiritual gifts. First, **the Biblical list of gifts**. There are three kids of spiritual gifts mentioned in the bible. There are ministry gifts, manifestation gifts, and motivational gifts.^{iv}

1 Corinthians 12:7 says, *“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”* In 3 main places in the New Testament, Paul lists out these spiritual gifts, or manifestations. Those passages are Romans 12; 1 Cor 12 and Ephesians 4. Paul’s lists include hospitality, mercy, serving, generosity, exhortation, evangelism, leadership, vision, faith, prophecy, prayer as well as some of the sign gifts like healing and tongues.

Now, these passages contain the totality of spiritual gifts. In other words, there are no gifts of the Spirit other than what is listed in the Scripture. If anyone claims to have a gifting outside of what is listed in the Bible, it is not a spiritual gift of the Holy Spirit.

The second thing that I want to mention in regard to spiritual gifts are the often-debated **Charismatic Gifts**. The “charismata,” the sign gifts (healing, tongues, and interpreting tongues).

Now, when it comes to the application of these specific gifts, there are two very different views in Christianity. On one side is **Cessationism**.

Cessationism comes from the word, “cease.” It is a belief that the sign gifts ceased with the Apostolic Age. The argument is that it was only necessary to have those gifts in place because the New Testament was not compiled at that point and the gifts lent credibility to the Apostles as they were writing what would become Scripture. Cessationist would say that the charismata aren’t seen after the book of Acts so this is where they ceased to operate and are no longer needed.

The other view, the other end of the spectrum, is what is called **Sensationalism**. Sensationalists believe that the whole point of belief is to experience a miracle. I believe in order to receive the miraculous.

This camp is known to sensationalize the “sign gifts” to a point of only focusing on them. And if there isn’t any phenomenon happening then the Holy Spirit just isn’t working. And what tends to happen with sensationalists is that the gifts place the emphasis on the miraculous. But remember what Jesus said about the work of the Holy Spirit back in John 16:14. *“He [being the Holy Spirit] will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”*

What is Jesus saying here? He is saying that the work of the Holy Spirit will always glorify Him. I believe God still heals. That doesn’t mean that He will always heal. He is God and He get to make that determination according to His glory. But here’s the deal, beloved. If we come to more appreciate the miracle, the healing, than we do the Healer, we have missed the boat.

You might be asking, “Pastor Chris, where do you stand on this scale? Are you cessationist or a sensationalist?” Well, I do not like labels, but I would say that I am neither of those. I think those are extremes, and more than likely, and I could be wrong, but I believe that the truth is somewhere in the middle.

So, here is the rule of thumb I live by with regard to the spiritual gifts. **The application of spiritual gifts are solely for the edification of the church and pointing others to Jesus.** If we are not accomplishing those things, it is not a proper application of the gift. Spiritual gifts help the Church and they point people to Jesus. And certain gifts do not make one more spiritual than others.

One of the main reasons that Paul wrote the book of 1 Corinthians is because the Church in Corinth had become sensationalists. Paul is saying, “Look, it’s not about the gifts or the miracle or you. It’s all about Jesus!”

So, we see the biblical list of gifts and we have examined the charismatic gifts. The last thing that I want to challenge us with is in **Using your gifts**.

So, we know that we have been given spiritual gifts for the purpose of putting them to use. And Jesus gives a specific purpose for our spiritual gifting. In Acts chapter 1, verse 8, Jesus says, *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all*

Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Jesus is saying that when the indwelling of the Holy Spirit occurs, we are empowered. We are empowered by our Spiritual Gifts and the presence of the Spirit in our lives. And what are we empowered to do? To be witnesses. That’s the point.

ILLUSTRATION: Line Up Unserved People

I came across an illustration that really hit home with me regarding our need to be active in being a witness for Jesus. Did you know that if we were to line up all of the unsaved people in the world and put them shoulder-to-shoulder, it would form a line that would go all the way around the center of the earth 30 times. And here’s the deal, the line is growing 20 miles longer every single day.

Church Family, it is vitally important that we be witnesses everywhere we go. Not only has Jesus commanded that in the Great Commission, but what our world desperately needs is Jesus! And we have been empowered by the Holy Spirit for a reason. Let’s be a church that leverages our spiritual gifts for the purpose in which they are intended, Kingdom advancement!

God gives gifts to believers that are needed in the church. These gifts are what enable you to do ministry in and through the church. And if you call Trinity home, I’m telling you there is a reason God has brought you here and that reason is to glorify Jesus in and through the utilization of your spiritual giftings.

CONCLUSION

As we come to a close this morning, I have one more question that I’m going to ask you to answer. It’s a question that only you can answer. The question is, “Does the Holy Spirit of God dwell in you?” Has He convicted you of your sin and need for a Savior? Has the Holy Spirit of God taken up residence in your soul? Are you being led by the Spirit?

You might ask back to me, “Pastor Chris, how do I know if that is the case?” Well, there will be fruit in your life. Are you being convicted of areas that you need to submit to the Lord? Are you looking more and more like Jesus each and every day? Are you bearing spiritual fruit? If not, then there isn’t much evidence to suggest that the Spirit is within you.

Perhaps today The Lord is knocking on the door of your heart. Desiring to be your Lord and Savior.

ENDNOTES:

ⁱ Works consulted in preparation of this message: John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: John 12-21, Romans 9-16, 1 Corinthians*, Moody Press, Chicago, 2008, 1994, and 1984 respectively; John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans*, InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, 1994; Roger L. Fredrikson, *The Communicator's Commentary: John*, Word Books: Waco, 1985; Gary M. Burge, *The NIV Application Commentary: John*, Zondervan Publishing: Grand Rapids, 2000; Douglas J. Moo, *The NIV Application Commentary: Romans*, Zondervan Publishing: Grand Rapids, 2000; Craig Blomberg, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, Zondervan Publishing: Grand Rapids, 2000; James Leo Garrett, Jr., *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical, Volume 2*, BIBAL Press: North Richland Hills, 2001; Wane Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teaching of the Christian Faith*, Zondervan Publishing: Grand Rapids, 1999; Greg Heisler, *Spirit-led Preaching: The Holy Spirit's Role in Sermon preparation and Delivery*, B&H Publishing: Nashville, 2018; Mark Driscoll, *Doctrine #1: Trinity: God Is*, published by Real Faith, accessed online: <https://realfaith.com/sermons/doctrine-1-trinity-god-is>; Skip Heitzig, *Expound: The Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, message taught Wednesday, August 9, 2017, Calvary Church Albuquerque, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/series/143/sermon/1883>.

ⁱⁱ Bible Verses About Breath, accessed online: <https://sarata.com/bible/verses/about/breath.html>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Illustration taken from Skip Heitzig, *Expound: The Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, message taught Wednesday, August 9, 2017, Calvary Church Albuquerque, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/series/143/sermon/1883>.

^{iv} Danielle Bernock, "What Are The Spiritual Gifts? Understanding the Types and Discovering Yours," article published by Christianity.com, August 9, 2022, accessed online: <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/christian-life/what-are-spiritual-gifts-understanding-the-types-and-discovering-yours.html>.