

People God, the Holy Spirit has been reckoned by some as the Forgotten Person of the Trinity. As Reformed Christians we tend to focus more on the Sovereignty of God the Father, and on the redemption accomplished in person and work of Jesus Christ. And we certainly acknowledge that the Holy Spirit is important for our salvation, applying the work of redemption to us which Christ accomplished for us. But we do not tend to speak about the Spirit in a personal way too often. We do not say things like, the Holy Spirit said to me...or The Holy Spirit is teaching me, or The Holy Spirit has revealed to Me, or the Holy Spirit gave me a prophetic word of utterance. Or I was filled with the Holy Spirit. And if we ever do say anything like this we talk about being slain in the spirit, but we do it mockingly. We tend to leave that kind of language to the charismatics.

But we must not slight the Holy Spirit of God just because we might feel uncomfortable with the way some of our charismatic brothers and sisters speak of The Holy Spirit and His gifts. We do confess in the Nicene Creed, that we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord. The Holy Spirit is just as much the Lord, as is Jesus Christ, as is God the Father. For these three are One God. And because the Holy Spirit is Lord, we should be careful to study the ways in which the Spirit, the Lord works in the Scriptures.

However, once we do that, we need to be equally careful to not leave Him there. The Holy Spirit has been poured out onto all flesh, for all the rest of time, in order to prepare a Bride for the Son, and to make the dwelling place of God among men. And he lives in you and among you and in the whole Church. And His power and influence and grace and wisdom and comfort and anointing is to be known by us today, just as much, if not more so, than in the days of the Bible.

Let us recall some of the amazing work of the Spirit as recorded for us in the Bible.

In the beginning the Spirit of God hovered over the water at the creation of the world, forming it and filling it. The Spirit of God was breathed in the nostrils of man, giving man the breath of life and making him a living soul. The Spirit of God gave Joseph wisdom to rule over all Egypt. Bazel, the son of Uri, was filled with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all *manner of* workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all *manner of* workmanship, for the sake of building the tabernacle and its furniture.

The Spirit of God rested upon certain men in the Israelite camp in the wilderness and made them prophesy. Balaam prophesied blessings upon Israel by the Spirit of God coming upon him.

The Spirit of the Lord rushed upon many of the judges to empower them for great acts of deliverance. The Spirit of God came upon Israel's first king, Saul. He prophesied by the Spirit of God when he was anointed king. But the Spirit later left him because of his grievous sins. The Spirit then anointed David to be king.

It was by the Spirit of the Lord that the prophets spoke about the one to come who would be filled with the Spirit of the Lord. And the Spirit of God inspired and moved holy men to write the Sacred Scriptures.

And all of this thus far is only the beginning of the Spirit's work. Once we get to the NT, especially in Luke and Acts, the Spirit is everywhere, doing everything.

The Spirit is the one by whom the Son of God becomes flesh. The Spirit overshadows the Virgin Mary and conceives in her the Son of God.

Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit when she saw Mary, pregnant with the Lord. And the baby John leapt in her womb for joy.

At the birth of John the Baptist, Zechariah his father was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied the Benedictus.

When Mary and Joseph go to the Temple for purification after the birth of Jesus, the Holy Spirit preceded them there, being upon an old man named Simeon. And the Holy Spirit revealed to him that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

Jesus entire ministry is ministry in the power of the Spirit. He receives the Spirit in the form of a dove at his baptism. And the Spirit then drives him into the wilderness to do combat with the Devil.

And the Spirit then drives him back out of the desert, and he returns in the power of the Spirit to Galilee. And when he preaches in the synagogue in Nazareth he preaches in the Spirit about the Spirit, announcing that he is the servant that Isaiah prophesied about, saying,

“The Spirit of the LORD *is* upon Me,  
Because He has anointed Me  
To preach the gospel to *the* poor;  
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to *the* captives  
And recovery of sight to *the* blind,  
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;  
<sup>19</sup>To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”

Jesus' ministry of preaching and heralding the kingdom of God, of healing, and casting out demons, and raising the dead, is all performed in the power of the Spirit.

Jesus also shuts the mouths of his opponents because he is filled with the Spirit.

In contrast his opponents are said to be filled with wrath, and rage against Jesus.

The Spirit drives Jesus to the cross, to die for sinners. The Spirit raises Jesus from the dead, and the Spirit takes Jesus into Heaven.

And on Pentecost the Spirit comes to imprint the spiritual power of Jesus Christ onto the Disciples, so that by the Spirit they can continue the work of Jesus in Jerusalem, Samaria, Judea, and to the uttermost parts of the Earth.

The Holy Spirit fills the upper room with a mighty rushing wind, and cloven tongues of fire rested upon the disciples. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit so that they each began to speak in another tongue, as the Spirit gave utterance.

The disciples are mocked by some saying, they are full of new wine. But Peter assures them they are full of the Holy Spirit. And Jesus, who has ascended into Heaven, has gone into the presence of God to be full joy. He is the one who poured out the Holy Spirit upon them from Heaven.

Peter preaches that if the people of Jerusalem repent and be baptized, they too can receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of sins. The Spirit then adds more and more people to the Church daily.

The disciples are empowered by the Spirit to preach the word of God to the people and the leaders of the City of Jerusalem, and to heal the sick and the lame, to raise the dead, to cast out demons, and to confound their enemies. All the things Jesus did by the Spirit, the Apostles also do, by the Spirit.

Peter and John, were filled with the Holy Spirit to preach the word of God with boldness.

Ananias and Sapphira were not full of the Holy Spirit, but rather, Satan filled their heart to lie to the Holy Spirit. And the High Priest was also filled, with zealotry, and he persecuted the Apostles and threw them into prison. The Apostles rejoiced in the Spirit that they had been counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ.

Deacons were selected in the early church, men who were full of faith and of the Holy Spirit. When Stephen preached to the people, he was full of faith and power, and did great signs and wonders among the people. He was also full of the Holy Spirit, especially while he was being stoned to death. And as he gazed into Heaven, he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

The Spirit then uses the persecution of the early church to bring about Jesus' plan to have the gospel preached beyond the walls of Jerusalem.

The Spirit told Philip to join the Chariot of an Ethiopian Eunuch, where he explained the Scriptures to him and told him about the good news of Jesus Christ. And then after baptizing the Ethiopian, the Spirit carries Philip away to preach the Gospel to another town.

Ananias was told in a vision to find Saul of Tarsus and lay hands on him so that he would regain his sight. And when Ananias approached Saul he

said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he arose and was baptized, and taking food, was strengthened.

The Spirit told Peter in a vision to go with the men to Cornelius’s house in Joppa, and there the Gentiles heard the word of God and believed in Jesus. And the Holy Spirit fell upon them just like He did at the beginning on Pentecost. And having received the Holy Spirit, they were baptized with water in the name of Jesus Christ.

Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith. He encouraged the newly persecuted church in Antioch to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose.

The Holy Spirit set apart Paul and Barnabas for the work he had called them to. And being sent out by the Holy Spirit they went to Cyprus and proclaimed the word of God in the Synagogues. Paul, who was filled with the Holy Spirit, accused his opponents of being full, not of the Spirit, but of all deceit and villainy.

And again, in Pisidia, when the Jews saw the multitudes coming to the apostles and coming to faith in Jesus, they also were filled, with envy, contradicting and blaspheming, and opposed the things spoken by Paul. And after they stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and drove them from the city, the disciples shook the dust from their feet, and went to Iconium, being filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit guided the decision of the Apostles at the Jerusalem Council to understand that God was indeed bringing the Gentiles to faith in Jesus, and they did not need to become Jews in order to be saved. But

this work of the Spirit was not anticipated by the Apostles. The Spirit of God is the wind of God. And he blows where He wishes. The Apostles are constantly playing catch-up to the work of the Spirit. The Spirit is the Lord, and what the Spirit desires to do, the Church must follow and accept.

The Spirit does not only open doors of opportunity for the Gospel to be preached, he also closes doors and prevents his people from going certain places and doing certain things. The Holy Spirit prevented Paul and Silas from speaking the word in Asia, and instead revealed to them a vision of man from Macedonia who was calling to them to preach the Gospel to the Macedonians. And there the Spirit opened the heart of a woman named Lydia, a seller of Purple, to believe the words spoken by Paul. And she and her household were baptized.

And the Holy Spirit continued to empower the Apostles to preach the word of God with all boldness, and to receive joy in all their sufferings for Christ.

These are things that Spirit of God did in the Bible. These things happened a long time ago, in a land far, far away. The Lord Jesus was filled with the Spirit and the early Church and the Apostles were filled with the Spirit to do great mighty things. But what of us ordinary folk who live 2000 years later? What does the Holy Spirit do in us, and to us, and through us today?

It is important to remember that when the Holy Spirit was first poured out on the Church it was on Pentecost. Which is the day when the Law of God was given on Mt. Sinai to Moses after Moses ascended into the glory cloud on top of the Mountain. There was fire and thunder, and wind on that mountain, when God wrote the His Law on tablets of Stone. But on

this Pentecost, in the upper room, where there is another phenomena of fire and thunder and wind, the Spirit of God writes the Law of God on the tablets of human hearts, which the Holy Spirit spoke about before hand in the Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

And during that time that Moses was on Mt Sinai receiving the Law, he also received the Pattern of the Heavenly Dwelling Place, and he brought it down to make the tabernacle. In the Tabernacle the Spirit of God dwelt in the Shekinah Glory, bringing Heaven to Earth.

And now Jesus Christ, the New and Greater Moses, when he ascended up to Heavenly Mt Zion in the glory cloud, sent down the True Pattern of the Heavenly Dwelling place in the person of Holy Spirit to make us the Heavenly Temple of God here on earth. This is why tongues of fire rested upon the disciples, because, just as the fire from Heaven fell upon the Tabernacle and the Solomon's Temple, so too has God now has the fire of the Holy Spirit fallen upon the Church to make us His Temple, and His dwelling place of Rest, and His throne.

The Holy Spirit is poured out in the hearts of all those who receive the Gospel, to apply the salvation that Christ accomplished for us, and to conform us to that perfect image of Christ, who is the True Temple of God in Heaven.

Christ taught that he was sending the Spirit to be our Comforter who would lead us into the ways of peace.

And how much more can the Spirit comfort us except to confirm in us the love of God for us? And so Paul teaches that the love of God has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Rom. 5:5

Romans 8, which deserves its own series of sermons, mentions the Spirit 20 times. There we are taught that the Spirit has set us free from sin, by raising us from the dead with Jesus, and therefore he empowers us to put to death the sin of the flesh. The flesh wages war against the Spirit and the Spirit wages war against the Flesh. The Spirit bears witness with our own spirits that we are children of God, crying Abba, Father. The Spirit intercedes on our behalf during prayer.

In 1 Cor. Paul teaches that the Spirit gives us insight into the spiritual things of God. The Spirit of God has washed, sanctified, and justified us in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The church collective is the Temple of the Holy Spirit, and our individual bodies are also Temples of the Holy Spirit. And nobody can say Jesus Christ is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit has been apportioned to each person in the church individually to manifest one spiritual gift or another for the common good and edification of the Church. In the Church there are gifts of Apostles, Prophets, teachers, miracles, gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and carious kinds of tongues. But then there are higher gifts than these, which are available to all. Now I will talk about all this another time, but today when people think of great spiritual gifts in the church, the ones that the charismatics tend to focus on in tongues, and interpreting tongues and miracles, and gifts of healing and deliverance, and even spiritual deliverance from demonic oppression.

But when the Apostle Paul continues this discussion, he tells the Corinthians that they should desire the higher gifts. Now what are these higher and greater gifts? The greatest gifts are faith, hope, and love, with love being the greatest of these, and which has been given to all without measure. And if you do desire any other gift, pursue the gift of prophecy. Because this gift is the one that has been given chiefly for the sake of

building up the church. For the gift of prophecy is the gift of speaking to others for their upbuilding, encouragement, and comfort.

Continuing on, Paul tells us that the Spirit of the Lord grants liberty. The Spirit transforms us into the image of Jesus from one degree of glory to another. The Spirit has been given to us to believe in the resurrection of the dead, and therefore to be bold to preach the Gospel. And the Spirit has been given to us as a guarantee that we have a resurrection body awaiting us in Heaven.

In Galatians the Spirit is said to work miracles among the people by faith. God has poured forth his Spirit into our hearts so that we cry, Abba, Father. Through the Spirit we eagerly await the hope of righteousness by faith. We are called to walk in the Spirit and not walk in the lusts of the flesh.

The lusts of the flesh are evident and are contrary to the fruit of the Spirit. The Lust of the flesh are: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. Those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But we are to bear forth the fruit of the Spirit, against such things as these, there is no law: which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. We are to live by the Spirit, and keep in step with the Spirit, and not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

In other words, when one sows to the flesh, that person will reap corruption. But when one sows to the Spirit, they will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

In Ephesians, we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the Heavenly Places in Christ. We have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise, who is the guarantee of the inheritance of our resurrection body, until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Through Christ all believers, Jews and Gentiles, have access in the One Spirit to the Father. In Christ we are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Therefore, because there is one body and one Spirit, we are to be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, by walking in in a manner worthy of the calling to which to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love. That means, if you are a person who says they love the truth, but you are divisive, then you are not full of the Holy Spirit, because the Spirit does not seek to tear down members of his own temple. He builds up. Being zealous for the things of God at the expense of the temple of Holy Spirit is not of the Holy Spirit, but is of another spirit altogether.

The Spirit is given to us to make us imitators of God. And so we are not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom we have been sealed for the day of redemption. Since the Spirit guides us into all truth, we ought to put away falsehood, and speak the truth. You are not to let the sun go down on your anger, you are to give no opportunity for the devil, do not steal, rather use your hands to do honest labor so that you have something to share with those in need. This is the working of the Spirit in your life.

Do not let corrupting talk come out of our mouth, but only those things as build up others and as fits the occasion. We are to let go of all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander and all malice.

Instead, we are to be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another and God has forgiven you.

We are to be careful how we walk, not as unwise, but as wise. Which means we do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but we are to be filled with the Spirit. And you are to give thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And, lest we forget that we are in a spiritual war, we have been given the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, to fight against the principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. And we are also to pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

In other words, we have been anointed by the Holy Spirit, and we all have knowledge of God unto salvation, so that we might be imitators of Christ.

This is what the Holy Spirit works in us today. It would seem that when you talk to your average charismatic Christian, that when they speak of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of believer, they do not talk about all those things I just mentioned.. People want big powerful spiritual gifts. They want showy gifts. They want to speak in tongues, and perform healings and miracles. Or they want the gift of prophecy, or the gift of being able to distinguish between spirits, or even cast them out of people.

But the Apostle Paul says, Prophecies will pass away, tongues will cease, and special knowledge will also pass away. But love, the greatest gift of the Spirit above all, will never end. So this Pentecost, praise the Lord for working in you the spiritual gifts of faith, hope, and love. For these three abide. But the greatest of these is love. For the love of God has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us, for our upbuilding, and encouragement, and comfort. Amen.