

Friday Bible Study: Week Six

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Date: 08 May 2020

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[0 : 00] Hi, everybody. My name is Jesse. I am one of the pastors here at One Harbor Church. So glad you could join us. And we are continuing our Friday Bible study. And today we're going to be looking at the Holy Spirit. And my hope for us today is that we all walk away with a solid understanding of who the Holy Spirit is, what he does, and then what that means for us today. So let's jump right into it and talk about who the Holy Spirit is. And the Holy Spirit, he's God. The Holy Spirit is God.

So when we talk about God, we're talking about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. That's been covered very well in a previous study on the Trinity. So when we say the Holy Spirit is God, what we mean is what is true of the Father and what is true of the Son is true also of the Holy Spirit. Just as they are eternal, so is he. Just as the Father and Son are all-knowing and all-wise and all-powerful, so is the Holy Spirit. And the characteristics of God, that he's gracious and merciful and loving and just and righteous and true and holy, those things are also true of the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit, we need to realize, is he is a person. He's not an energy. He's not like the force in Star Wars, right? You don't get the Holy Spirit and wield him around and master him like a Jedi, but he is a person. He's a person to know. He's a person to fellowship. And it actually says in the Bible, 2 Corinthians 13, 14, it says that we can fellowship with the Holy Spirit, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, right? You can't fellowship with the force. You can't fellowship with gravity. And the Holy Spirit, he also has emotions just like a person has, right? He grieves and he rejoices. In Ephesians 4, 30, it says, do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. And then Luke 20, verse 21, the first part says this, in that same hour, he, Jesus, rejoiced in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit rejoices. As a part of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is like God in every single way, but he also has a distinct role as it relates to the world in creation and redemption. Wayne Gruden puts it this way, the Holy Spirit is the member of the Trinity whom the scripture most often represents as being present to do God's work in the world. And so what we're going to look at next is the work that the Holy Spirit does. So what does the Holy Spirit do? What I want to do is follow the storyline of the Bible as it relates to the Holy Spirit's work. Because what we see is a consistency and pattern set at creation. We want to start there. It's set at creation and it continues through the rest of the Bible. But as the Bible grows and increases, especially in the New Testament and the life of Jesus. And then in the church age, it becomes more significant in scope and measure.

[3 : 03] So let's start at the very beginning in creation, Genesis 1, verses 1 to 3. It says, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit was hovering over the face of the waters.

And God said, let there be light. And there was light. And then we know the rest of the story. God makes all things that there is in the universe and in the earth. And he makes man as well. So God speaks the words of creation. But notice, notice that he's sending his word into the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit. That's what he's doing. And it's interesting to note that the word hovering here, it's a Hebrew word that gives us a picture of a mother bird brooding over her young. It denotes this really tender care and deep love. So some rabbis, actually, funny enough, translate it for the Targums in this way. And the earth was without form and empty and darkness was on the face of the deep and the Spirit of God fluttered above the face of the waters like a dove. Now, this is the way that the Bible introduces the Holy Spirit to us, right? Right from the very beginning, we see that God, the Father, had a plan. And he reveals that plan at creation by sending out his word, right? It says,

God said, let there be light. He sends out his word. Literally, we learn from John 1 that that word in the beginning was Jesus. So we see the Father and the Son in creation. The Father has a plan. The Son reveals that plan. God sends out his word. But notice the relationship here. What happens next? The word goes into the place where the Holy Spirit is at work. And what we learn from this, we learn this amazing dynamic that happens throughout the Bible. The word and the Spirit working together bring about creation. They bring about life. And so the creation story goes on. And God speaks. His word does not come back to him void in any situation. And the Holy Spirit, he's there to always make sure God's word doesn't come back void. He always makes sure it accomplishes its purpose. So let's ask, what is God's purpose?

What was his purpose in creation? What he's literally doing, he's making a place for man to go and fill the earth and subdue it. And as man does that, it says he's going to reflect God's glory. He's going to be an image bearer so that wherever he goes and whatever he subdues, people are going to look at man and glorify God. He's going to reflect God's glory to wherever he goes. And this is important for us to understand the rest of our study about the Holy Spirit. See, what is happening here is God is setting his kingdom pattern and kingdom ethos in Genesis. And this is one of the central motifs of the Bible. It runs throughout the whole Bible. God's kingdom is always at center stage. And the most basic understanding of God's kingdom, to like reduce it down and make it not sound weird and mystical, it's this. God's kingdom is this. God's people in God's place under God's rule. So from the very beginning, the Holy Spirit is present and he is at work in God's kingdom. Wayne Grudem puts it this way. From the very beginning of creation, we have an indication that the Holy Spirit's work is to complete and sustain what God the Father has planned and what God the Son has begun. So the kingdom of God from creation starts small in the Garden of Eden. But the intent was for man to reproduce and take it to the ends of the earth.

They were to expand that kingdom and the glory of God to the ends of the earth. But we know the rest of the story, Adam and Eve failed. They sinned against God. And so what happened? They were ejected. They were banned from the Edenic kingdom, which is to say that they were removed from God's immediate presence and blessing. They were removed from his kingdom place.

Thankfully, though, the story doesn't end there, right? Though there was judgment for sin, God also shows immediately grace and mercy as well.

[7:12] He doesn't destroy Adam and Eve for their sin and their rebellion against him. And he doesn't destroy the world that he created. Instead, he gives a promise of future hope and redemption. And we begin to see more of that happening, more of that plan and those promises being fulfilled in his covenant with Abraham.

In Genesis 17, 1 to 8, we're not going to cover that whole passage, but here's kind of the key takeaways from it. God promises to Abraham, one, to turn Abraham's offspring into a great nation. Two, that he would give them a land of their own. And that three, in that land, he would be their God and they would be his people. Kingdom dynamics there. God's people in God's place under God's rule.

And the remaining storyline of the Old Testament is God fulfilling that promise to Abraham in the kingdom of Israel. And despite the continued sin and rebellion of his people, God shows grace and mercy and patience again and again and again. And what he does, he raises up men. He puts his spirit on them to lead his people, to save them out of the hands of their enemies. He raises up prophets who are filled with the Holy Spirit to warn his people of their sin and call them back to repentance and to turn back from idol worship and their wickedness to serve God once again. The activity of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament was always, though, limited to specific people. The Holy Spirit would come on specific people to fulfill a specific purpose, to bring about salvation, fidelity, or renewal to the kingdom of Israel. But despite all this, despite all of God's attempts, despite his continued faithfulness and patience towards them, Israel just continued to spiral in moral and spiritual decline. And ultimately what happened, this ended with them being ejected from their land too. Just like Adam and Eve were rejected from Eden for their sin, Israel was finally ejected and removed from the kingdom of Israel, the land of Canaan. God had promised and given to them because of their continued sin. And so they were removed from the kingdom, taken into captivity and exile in foreign lands. Only the poorest of the poor remained as a remnant there. And this is the time where we get into the time of the prophets and when the Holy Spirit began to speaking through them of how God was going to restore the kingdom to Israel, but it was going to be a new and better and different kind of kingdom. And this renewed kingdom would come through a messianic king, a

savior king who would conquer Israel's enemies. He would be a king anointed with the Holy Spirit. We learn about this in Isaiah 60, I think 61, sorry, with the, he would be anointed with the Holy Spirit to bring salvation, joy and blessing to God's people. He would obey and fulfill the Mosaic law. He would lead God's people like a shepherd into the same obedience. And in this future kingdom, the Holy Spirit would bring about a renewed people by giving them a new heart in which the law is written and fulfilled. We see that promise over and over again in the prophet Ezekiel. And then this future kingdom would have a new temple that would be established through a work of the Holy Spirit according to Zechariah 4 verses 6 to 9. And then finally, we see that this renewed kingdom was likened to Eden in Ezekiel 36 verse 33. Read this with me.

Check this out. It's really cool. Thus says the Lord God, on the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited and the waste places shall be rebuilt and the land that was desolate shall be tilled instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by. And they will say this land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden.

[11:12] And the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited. Then the nations that are left all around you shall know that I am the Lord. I have rebuilt the ruined places and replanted that which was desolate. I am the Lord. I have spoken. I will do it. And so the Old Testament closes with all these amazing prophetic promises and hopes of this restored kingdom. And then the New Testament, it opens with this flurry of activity of the Holy Spirit working to bring about the fulfillment of God's prophetic promises, although it wasn't in the way that Israel was expecting. First, we see God comes to the Virgin Mary and says, she will bear a son. Luke 135 says, it says it says it this way. An angel tells Mary, it's like the Holy Spirit's going to come upon you, all right? And the power of the Most High will overshadow you, talking about the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. I love that picture. Let's go back to that creation account in Genesis. The Holy Spirit's hovering, right? He's overshadowing a lifeless womb called earth. And here we see the promise that the Holy Spirit is going to come upon Mary. He's going to overshadow the lifeless womb of Mary. And there's going to be a new thing happening that hasn't happened before. And the Word of God is going to unite with the Spirit in that womb, and life is going to germinate.

And that life is going to be Jesus, the very Son of God, who's putting on flesh. The eternal Word is sent by God. This is the dawn of the beginning of a new kingdom. But before Jesus launched into his ministry, he was first baptized with the Holy Spirit, right? It wasn't that he was born of the Spirit, and then he immediately went out into it. He grew up, and then at a certain time, he came to be baptized by John. And at his baptism, it says in Luke 3, verse 21, now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened. And the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. Really cool. I'm so glad that the rabbis that were writing those targums, like, they realized that the closest word to hovering there was the picture of a fluttering dove at creation. And so we see this again. We see the Holy Spirit coming on Jesus, fluttering over him like a dove. And God says, from heaven, you're my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. So here we see the living Word, Jesus himself, filled with the presence, and power of the Spirit. And Luke confirms this. In chapter 4, verses 1, right after his baptism, it says, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. There he was tempted, and he overcame the temptations of Satan. And then after that, it says this in verse 14, Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee. Just like in Genesis, the Word and the Spirit unite to bring about a new thing, to bring about a new kingdom, Jesus is inaugurating in his life, death, and resurrection here in his ministry, he's inaugurating a new kingdom of God.

And Jesus was absolutely necessary to bring this kingdom and reveal the kingdom to us. But it doesn't happen. We can't just say it was just Jesus by himself. We have to realize it didn't happen apart from the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. That's what Luke is teaching us in his gospel. Just like at creation, Jesus, the Word comes. He reveals God's purpose and plan, but it's in the Spirit's presence, and it's in the Spirit's work and activity. And Jesus accomplished all that was needed for our salvation. And through his life, death, and resurrection, he made the way for the new kingdom. He's the cornerstone. He's the pattern of this new kingdom. He was a Spirit-filled man who proclaimed and demonstrated the good news of the kingdom of God. And then he left earth. He ascended to heaven. But that's not the end of the story, nor is it the end of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Now, I've quoted a lot from Luke's gospel so far about how the Holy Spirit worked during Jesus, in Jesus's life and during his ministry. And I use Luke's gospel because he does have more of an emphasis on the Holy Spirit and the life and ministry of Jesus. But Luke also wrote a second book. He kind of wrote a part two. And it's called the book of Acts. And let's look what it says. He kind of picks up where the end of the gospel of Luke leaves off. So Acts 1 verse 1, it says this, in the first book, Gospel of Luke, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day when he was taken up after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during 40 days and speaking about the kingdom of God. So we see in this passage that Luke, the apostle Luke, he understands the redemptive role of Jesus. Jesus began and brought the new kingdom.

[16:27] He began the work of the kingdom, but now he's handed it off. He's handed that work off to his disciples and apostles to complete. And before he goes, he spends 40 days downloading the word, the kingdom message. He downloads it into his apostles. But then look at what comes next.

It says in verse 4, and while staying with them, he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which he said, you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. So when they had come together, they asked him, Lord, will you at this same time restore the kingdom to Israel? And he said to them, it is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority, 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 ends of the earth. What Jesus is telling his apostles, what he's telling his disciples then and today, you and me, he's telling us this, is that I am sending you out to the ends of the earth as my witnesses, a people that reflect me, reflect my glory. In essence, you're my image bearers.

I've given you my word. I've downloaded into you. You have my truth. You have the gospel. I've put it into your minds and into your hearts. You have the message, but you don't yet have the power. But once you have the Holy Spirit, you will have all you need to finish the work that I began. Amen. And then when we see what we see in Acts 2 during Pentecost, that God fulfills this promise and baptizes the disciples with the Holy Spirit. And then what we see is the church start to immediately fulfill Jesus's command to be his witnesses, his image bearers to the ends of the earth. But going back to that Acts passage, you know, when Jesus says, hey, I'm going to, you have to wait, I'm going to send my promised Holy Spirit. The disciples asked that question, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? Once Pentecost happened, the apostles and the disciples never wondered about that. They never asked that question again. They never wondered, well, Lord, when are you going to restore this kingdom? When is that going to happen? See, when the Holy Spirit came to them, when he came to the church and the disciples, they finally understood the kingdom that Jesus brought was very different to the old way, the old kingdom. See, the old kingdom was limited to a place on earth. It was limited to Canaan, little small real estate. The new kingdom is over the whole earth. In the old kingdom, God's manifest presence was limited to the temple that men built. In the new kingdom, people are the temple that God dwells in. In the old people, in the old kingdom, God put his spirit on just a few people. In the new kingdom, the Holy Spirit fills all of God's people. In the old kingdom, God's law was external, demanding our obedience. In the new kingdom, God's law is written on our hearts so that we delight in it. In the old kingdom, you had to be born a descendant of Abraham and circumcise your flesh to be included. In the new kingdom, inclusion comes by being born of the Holy Spirit who circumcises our hearts.

Gordon Fee, in his book, God's Empowering

Presence, points out how Paul draws out this dynamic change between the old and the new kingdom, what the differences are. And he points out how Paul uses these terms against each other, according to the flesh and according to the spirit, or putting on the old self and putting on the new self, or the old, of being a new creation versus an old creation, the old man, the former way of doing things.

[20:19] When what he's getting at here is that when Jesus inaugurated the new and better kingdom, it was a rejection. It was a doing away. It was a completion of the old pattern, a replacement of the old pattern in the Old Testament, and it was being replaced with the new and better one.

This new kingdom is now received through the spirit. It's brought to bear in us and in the church by the spirit, and it is being completed in the presence and the power of the spirit.

So what does that mean for us today? How do you and I live according to the spirit? Well, first and foremost, we can't without the word. Remember the pattern set at creation, the spirit and the word together bring about and accomplish the purposes and plans of God the father. You cannot limit yourself to one or the other. We must be people of the word and people of the spirit. And that means we read our Bibles. If you are a Christian, then the Holy Spirit's presence is there when you are reading your word. And God will always bring life and fruitfulness where his word and his spirit are. Another way we live according to the spirit is through prayer.

Ephesians 6, 18 talks about praying at all times in the spirit. And Jude, verse 20 says, we should be building ourselves up in our faith and praying in the spirit.

And the final way that we live according to the spirit is being part of a church body. Notice the reflex for Christians after Pentecost. It wasn't to scatter and be isolated. Man, it was coming together into community. Man, they gathered. They were like so committed to one another. They had so much joy in their fellowship. They had so much devotion in that they were building each other up in the faith. It says that they were devoted to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship and the breaking of bread and prayer in Acts 2, 42. And we must not forget also that Jesus exemplified this. He was the spirit-filled man who did ministry on earth, but he didn't do it by himself. He did life and ministry in community. Another helpful way to understand the spirit's work in our lives is by knowing the other names he's called by. So the Holy Spirit is called our counselor.

[22 : 44] He's referred to as the paraclete, which means that it's a Greek word that means the one who walks alongside and calls to us. So the idea that we get is the Holy Spirit being a counselor and a guide, he instructs us and he guides us. Jesus even said that to his disciples in John. He says, man, when I go, I'm going to send another one, the comforter, who's going to guide you into all truth. So the Holy Spirit comes and he speaks to our hearts and he speaks to our minds. He speaks to us through his word and through prayers and through other Christians that we are in community with. And the more time that we spend in the word and in prayer and in fellowship, the more attuned we become to the language and the voice of the Spirit. And the more we become Spirit-filled and Spirit-led people.

Now, this doesn't mean your life will only be filled with blessings of health, wealth, and prosperity. You know, being a Spirit-filled person isn't a guarantee of that at all. It's important that we don't fall into an over-realized eschatology, right? We don't possess the fullness of the kingdom now. Now we, the kingdom, yes, we are in it, but it's the already but not yet kingdom. Yes, we have it, but it's not fully, fully realized just yet. We still live in the midst of a fallen world, awaiting the fulfillment of the kingdom when Jesus returns. So we must not think that there is a connection between following the Spirit and a trouble-free life. The spiritual man, funny enough, probably even counterintuitive, the spiritual man isn't marked by riches, health, and other signs of blessing. Rather, the spiritual man is marked by a gentle heart of surrender. See, God calls us to yield and surrender in our sanctification by the Spirit. The Spirit's changing us in ever degrees of glory and making us more like Christ, but we have to yield to that. We have to surrender to that work.

And sometimes that looks like humbling ourselves, repenting, owning up when we're wrong, confessing our sin. At other times, it means showing grace and mercy regardless of how we may feel. And it means living a life of sacrificial serving and giving. Now, having said that, I also don't want us to overswing the pendulum in the other way and have an under-realized eschatology either where, man, we kind of have this, we live in this like Christian defeatism, right? That we're just always just victims of sin and we have no power and we can't overcome anything. We have to remember that the Holy Spirit is God's presence and power. He is God with us. And we shouldn't limit what he can and can't do through us and through his church. And the Holy Spirit, what he does, he fills us with hope regardless of our circumstances. That God is able to do more than we can ask or imagine. We must not consider ourselves slaves to sin because, man, the Holy Spirit, he leads and guides us and empowers us to fight sin.

We must not think too lowly of ourselves that we're unworthy to be part of the body of Christ because it's the Holy Spirit who gives the members of the body, he gives Christians gifts to be used in the building up of the body. And that's not just some people, that's everybody. And we must not consider any obstacle to gospel advancement too great because the Holy Spirit is powerful to remove every obstacle. We live both confident in the Spirit's power and humbly surrendered to his

guidance.

[26 : 24] And this is how we live according to the new way of the Spirit in the kingdom of God.
Thank you for watching.