

Believe It:
Who Is The Holy Spirit?

We have an office in our basement where we do most of the layout and copy work for the church. We use an electric folding machine and last week Sandy asked me to check out why it wasn't working. It was plugged in to a power strip like it always had been but it wouldn't start up when you flipped the switch.

I looked and everything seemed to be plugged in so I finally decided the power strip must have gone bad. Then I noticed something very interesting. The copier was plugged into an outlet in the wall and worked fine. The electric stapler that is part of the copier was plugged into the outlet and worked fine.

But the stapler wasn't supposed to be plugged into the wall. It was supposed to be plugged into the power strip. There were 2 cords plugged into the strip. One was the folder that didn't work, but what was the other?

As it turns out somebody had plugged the cord from the power strip into the power strip itself instead of the wall. No wonder the folder wouldn't work. It was plugged into a power strip that was plugged into itself!

The folder didn't work because there was no power.

When I plugged the cord from the strip into the outlet instead of into itself, all of a sudden there was power and the folder was working again.

My wife was very impressed that I fixed her folder. Of course I'm probably the one that caused the problem in the first place.

Now when we read the Bible, it seems like there's one impossible challenge after another. You know, how are we supposed to get this stuff to work?

We're told *You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.* (Mark 12:30)

Here's a challenge: *Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.* (Matthew 18:21-22)

How about these words of Jesus: *This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.* (John 15:12)

The Bible's just filled with these seemingly impossible requirements. Where does the power come from to live life God's way? I'll give you a hint. If you're plugged into yourself you're never going to meet those requirements. If it's just you or it's just me trying it's not going to happen.

But here's a promise from Jesus Christ: *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.* (Acts 1:8) God said, *Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, ' Says the LORD of hosts.* (Zechariah 4:6)

Who is the Holy Spirit? And how do we get plugged into the power source?

This is week 5 of a series were calling *Believe It!* We're kind of heading back to the basics and asking, "What is it that we believe?" "Why do we believe it?" and "What is the challenge for our lives because of this truth?"

So far we've analyzed 4 foundational areas of historic Christianity. We've asked, Why do we believe the Bible?, What is the Trinity?, Who is God?, and Who is Jesus Christ?

Today we want to unpack the question, who is the Holy Spirit?

At Faith Community Church we have a statement of faith that we believe expresses the essentials of Christianity so we've been using our statement as the basis for this series. In the section under The Holy Spirit we say:

The Holy Spirit is a Person possessing all the divine attributes. He is God. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He regenerates, baptizes, eternally indwells, and seals all believers at salvation. He sovereignly gives every believer at least one spiritual gift for service to the Body of Christ.

We then go on beyond that to make a specific statement about what are called "the sign gifts." These are things like working miracles, speaking in tongues, the gift of healing, and direct revelation from God.

Those things are debated in Christianity and can be somewhat controversial so we'll tackle those separately. We'll get to those on August 19th.

Today we want to answer the more fundamental questions about the Holy Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit Is The Third Person Of The Trinity

Most cult groups have a very skewed concept of the Holy Spirit. Most would call Him a force or a power. The problem is, cult members don't develop their theology from reading the Bible. I've never met a person who was a cult member who became one by simply reading though the Bible.

You'll never meet a Jehovah's Witness who became a Jehovah's Witness by simply sitting down and reading the Bible on their own. Someone else always teaches them who leads them along through proof texts.

In other words, some book or person is pointing out a few verses that seem to prove their point.

The problem with having a proof text theology is you miss the context of verses and you miss the other verses on the subject.

That's why we always encourage you guys to read through the Bible on your own. This is absolutely vital.

I've never met anybody who's simply read through the Bible who's come to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is anything less than a person of the Godhead. Here's why...

Acts 5 page 1073

There's hundreds of passages we could turn to but here's one that really clarifies things. The church was born in the holy city of Jerusalem. There were thousands of Jewish people who responded when they heard the Good News that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Old Testament messianic prophecies.

The Jesus they had crucified a short time before had risen from the dead. Forgiveness and eternal life were in Him.

The believers set up a type of communal system in which they voluntarily shared their money and their goods. No one was forced to sell their possessions and donate them and no one was forced to give all they had if they did sell something.

Read verses 1-4

Here's a couple who sold some property and brought the money into the congregation. The

problem wasn't that they kept some of the money for themselves. That money was there's to do with as they wished.

The problem was they came in and told the church "We're giving it all. Aren't we super committed?"

And Peter makes 2 very significant comments to them. In verse 3 he says, "You lied to the Holy Spirit," and in verse 5 "You lied to God.

You can't lie to an inanimate power or a force. You can only lie to a person. And not only that but to lie to the person of the Holy Spirit is to lie to God because the Spirit is God. He's the third person of the trinity.

Read verse 9

The Holy Spirit can be tested. Listen to this one: *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.* (Ephesians 4:30)

You can't grieve a force. You can only grieve a person. The verb translated "grieved" there, is *lupeo*. In other passages it's translated "made sorry," "to be in heaviness."

In the Bible the Holy Spirit possesses intelligence, a will, knowledge, and love because the Holy Spirit is a divine person. He's co-equal, co-eternal, co-existent with the Father and the Son. But, He's not the Father, He's not the Son, He's the 3rd person of the trinity.

He's described as omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, everlasting, and perfectly holy.

A couple of weeks ago we said that the members of the Godhead are one in essence but they all have specific jobs to do.

John 16 gives us one of the main jobs the Holy Spirit has: *When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.* (John 16:13, 8)

Here's another job: the Holy Spirit even prays for us when we're at the end of our rope.

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. (Romans 8:26)

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. What's that mean to us? It means that We're not deists. Deists believe that God created the world and then stepped back to let it run on it's own. Deists aren't atheists. They believe God exists, but they don't see God as having any place in our world or in our individual lives.

To be a Desist you have to ignore most of the Bible because most of the Bible is an account of how God is active in our world and in our lives. And a whole lot of that activity is carried out by the Holy Spirit.

I. The Holy Spirit Is The Third Person Of The Trinity

II. The Holy Spirit Permanently Lives In Believers

To me this is where the excitement level really gets ramped up. Lewis Sperry Chaffer wrote 7 volumes on systematic theology. That's over 2600 pages. It's a great reference when you're studying any area of theology.

In it, Chaffer has an annotated list of 33 things that happen to a person the moment they put their trust in Christ as Savior.

The Bible says that even though we don't realize it on our own, we're all really far from God. We tend to think of ourselves far more highly than we should. Our problem is our standard of evaluation.

If we compare ourselves among ourselves we're foolish. How many times have you looked at someone you really respected and were discouraged because you saw some flaw in their life?

You know why you saw that flaw? Because we all have flaws in our life. We all have flaws but when we compare ourselves to other flawed people we can feel pretty good about who we are. Unfortunately because were using the wrong yardstick we don't see the truth.

The only way were going to see the truth is to use the right yardstick. The template God tells us to use isn't the people around us, even the best. He tells us to use Him for the standard. He says, *Be holy, for I am holy.* (I Peter 1:16) The Bible says, *As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless.* (Psalm 18:30)

Speaking of Jesus the Bible says, 1 Peter 2:22 says, *He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.* 1 John 3:5 says, . . . *And in him is no sin.*

That's the standard. God is flawless, we are flawed and our flaws keep us at arms length from

our Creator.

That's why Jesus came into the world. The Bible says, *For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.* (Colossians 1:19-20)

Our flaws are so serious that it took the death of Jesus on the cross to bring us back.

When we trust His finished work on the cross, that's when the 33 things come into play. The Holy Spirit regenerates, baptizes, eternally indwells, and seals all believers at salvation.

These aren't experiences that we necessarily feel. They're truths for us to claim on the authority of God the Holy Spirit.

Turn with me to a couple of verses. First Ephesians 1 page 1146

Ephesians 1 explains how we were accepted by God in Christ. Then it says this...

Read verses 13, 14

We live in a day and age of guarantees. Someone told me about paperwork that came with their dad's pacemaker. It offered a lifetime guarantee. We didn't know if that meant the lifetime of the pacemaker or the lifetime of his dad.

I bought a set of real nice Traco windows. They came with a lifetime guarantee so when a couple of them got cloudy between the glass I contacted Traco and they said, "Sorry, we no longer have retail division and we can't honor your warranty." So much for lifetime warranties.

Now catch this. This is compelling. This is huge. When we hear the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation, and we believe that Jesus Christ is Savior we're sealed.

Here's where confidence should come from. The third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, is the seal of God on our lives.

We're kept by His power. He's our guarantee.

Now how do we know? The Holy Spirit, doesn't put a seal on us, He is the seal.

When an ancient king sent off a letter or an important document he would melt wax on the edge of the rolled paper. Then he'd take his signet ring, which is a ring with a distinctive

design, and he's press it into the soft wax.

The wax with the imprint on it was the seal of the king.

Our seal, the seal of the king, is the Holy Spirit.

II Corinthians 1:21-22 says, *Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.*

The word translated "guarantee" here (*arrabon*) is a word that's used in modern Greek for an engagement ring.

What is that ring for? It's a pledge that the wedding's going to take place..

That's what the Holy Spirit is to us. He's a pledge from the Father that we will receive our inheritance.

But there's something more. In Koine Greek, which is the Greek the New Testament was written in, *arrabon* meant a down payment, a first installment.

If you think about it, that ratchets things up a notch or two. The Holy Spirit is even more than a pledge or promise. He's a down payment.

What that means is that believers have already been given part of their eternal inheritance because they have the Spirit in them.

Talk about an iron clad guarantee. The Holy Spirit's God's down payment in your salvation. And that partial payment guarantees the full delivery of the rest.

The Bible says, *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God.* (I Corinthians 6:19)

The moment a person puts their faith in Christ the Holy Spirit seals them, becomes the down payment, and comes to live in them.

When I first trusted Christ as Savior one of the big questions I had was, is my relationship with God permanent? Can I lose my salvation? As I continued to read the Bible those questions were answered for me. If it's salvation you can't lose it. This isn't a trial period.

And one of the many reasons I came to that conclusion was the multiple verses about the

work of the Holy Spirit.

I. The Holy Spirit Is The Third Person Of The Trinity

II. The Holy Spirit Permanently Lives In Believers

III. The Holy Spirit Is The Key To Living For God

Remember, if we're not plugged into the power source, we don't have the ability to meet the challenges that God gives us.

What's interesting is, regardless of some of the strange teachings you hear, the Bible never commands us to be indwelt by the Spirit, baptized by the Spirit, or sealed by the Spirit. Those things are all spiritual truths that happen the moment we believe.

But here's what the Bible does command us... **Turn to Ephesians 5 page 1149**

Remember, the Holy Spirit is a member of the Trinity. He's living inside you if you have received Christ as Savior. But we all know that it's still hard to live the Christian life the way God calls us to.

Loving as He loves, forgiving as He forgives, rejoicing in trials, saying to God, "Not my will but Yours be done." Not only are those things hard, they're down right impossible.

Read verse 18

The overall challenge of Ephesians is walk a worthy walk. God's tells us to walk in love, light, humility, unity and wisdom. We are to mimic God.

But if your like most of us I'm sure there are times you say I just can't do all that. I just don't have the energy to walk the worthy walk.

It's like when your dad told you he walked 5 miles to school in the blistering sun and 3 feet of snow, uphill both ways. That's what living for God can feel like.

It's always and uphill struggle to live in holiness.

And so here we're told how to tap into the power of God. This is our energy source. This is what will empower us to live as we should. *Be filled with the Spirit.*

For many years much of Christianity all but ignored the 3rd person of the trinity. Then what we call the charismatic movement swept across our land and today there are many churches that seem totally focused on the Holy Spirit.

Now there are some positive things that came out of the charismatic movement and one of them has been to generate a renewed awareness of the Holy Spirit. It's wrong to be wrapped up with the Holy Spirit and almost ignore the Father and the Son, but it's just as wrong to only focus on the Father and the Son to the exclusion of the Holy Spirit.

And so from a positive sense, Bible believing Christians have had to rethink and study out their views of the Holy Spirit.

But to be filled with the Spirit, is to be controlled by the Spirit. When we speak of someone who is filled with anger, or filled with fear, we mean someone who is controlled by an emotion.

God's pattern for Christian living is for every Christian to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Unfortunately, there's been a lot of confusion generated about what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We'll talk more about this in 2 weeks but some assume that you must have some ecstatic experience and speak in tongues to be filled with the Spirit.

The designation "Spirit filled church" has even come to mean a church where supposed tongues speaking is practiced.

I hate it when perfectly good Bible designations are hijacked and misappropriated. We're not charismatic around here but if we're not a Spirit filled church we're in big trouble. We might as well pack it up and go home!

Listen because this is so vital. To be filled with the Spirit is very simply and very plainly to live your day-to-day life with God the Holy Spirit in the driver's seat of your life, on throne, running the show.

Grammatically speaking we have two commands and then 4 results in verse 18 - 21 of being controlled by the Spirit .

The first command is "do not be drunk" and the second is "be filled with the Spirit."

There's a unique comparison between drunkenness and the filling of the Spirit. There's a purpose behind this particular comparison.

For one thing, both are a state of being controlled by an influence within you. We say that a person who is drunk is under the influence. If you get a DUI it's "Driving Under The Influence." A Spirit filled Christian is definitely under the controlling influence of God the Holy Spirit.

Another similarity lies in the fact that a person who is under the influence of the Holy Spirit or distilled Spirits acts differently.

Alcohol affects a person's walk. That's why the traffic cop has them walk a straight line. The Holy Spirit affects a person's walk too.

It's through the Holy Spirit that we walk a walk worthy of the calling by which we're called.

Wine causes people to talk differently. When the Holy Spirit takes control He changes our speech. If we're controlled by the Holy Spirit He takes control of what we say and how we say it.

Of course there's also some very obvious differences as well as similarities.

Too much alcohol can dehumanize, but the fullness of the Holy Spirit makes us more human. It makes us more like the perfect man, Jesus Christ.

We're not talking about some experience that we agonize over and go through. This isn't about us getting more of the Holy Spirit. That's impossible. It's about the Holy Spirit, who is already in us, getting more of us.

Where's your power come from this morning? Power to live, to love, to forgive, to serve? If you're plugged into yourself, that's a failed source. But if you're plugged into the Almighty God through His Spirit the next verses in Ephesians lists the results...

There'll be worship and joy in the face of the hardships of life. There'll be thankfulness in the midst of suffering and there'll be a servant's heart that wants the best for everyone, even the people who are the biggest pain in the neck.

This one the "acid test" of spirituality.

This is the real test of spirituality. It'll tell you quicker than anything else who's walking with the Lord and who isn't.

See, it isn't shouting "hallelujah" and punctuating all of your sentences with "praise the Lord" that demonstrates godliness. Its submission to humility, gentleness, peacefulness, that shows the Spirit's control.

Are you plugged in this morning? Or are you still trying to figure out why there's no power?

