

The Holy Spirit  
*Romans 8:26-27*

Sermon

*Hobart June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012*

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## Scripture Readings:

### **Romans 8:26-27**

<sup>26</sup> And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. <sup>27</sup> And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers\* in harmony with God's own will. <sup>1</sup>

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\* Greek for *God's holy people*.

<sup>1</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (Ro 8:26-27). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

**INTRODUCTION:**

**I. AT THIS TIME OF YEAR WE FOCUS ON THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH**

**A. THE HOLY SPIRIT TENDS TO BE THE MOST MISUNDERSTOOD MEMBER OF THE TRINITY**

1. At Pentecost we looked at the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- a) The way God the Holy Spirit gifts us uniquely and specially to share in God's life,
- b) To receive God's blessings, and to share them with fellow members of the body of Christ, and our neighbours

**A. TODAY WE ARE GOING TO FOCUS SOME MORE ON WHO OR WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

- a) The nature of the Holy Spirit
- b) The role the Spirit plays in the Godhead and in our lives

**B. PRAYER**

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## BODY:

### II. THE NATURE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

#### A. THERE ARE TWO KEY MATTERS THAT MOST UNORTHODOX GROUPS DISAGREE WITH ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY

1. Can you think of what they might be?
  - a) The nature of Christ
  - b) The nature of the Holy Spirit
2. Most of these groups insist that the Holy Spirit is not a person
3. One group claims the Holy Spirit is;

God's power *in action*. Hence, an accurate translation of the Bible's Hebrew text refers to God's spirit as "God's active force."

Contrary to popular belief, God is not present everywhere at all times. Rather, he dwells in the spirit realm, in an "established place of dwelling," or residence. However, from his "established place of dwelling," he can use his active force to reach out into every corner of both the spirit realm and the physical realm.

4. They go on to use an analogy;

"For example, we say, 'Open the shutters, and let the sun come into the room.' We mean, not the real, bodily sun, but the solar ray, *that which proceeds from the sun*." Similarly, God has no need to travel to the locations where he intends to use his active force. He simply employs his holy spirit, which can reach to the extremities of creation.<sup>2</sup>

#### B. PROBLEMS WITH THESE VIEWS;

1. These views see the Holy Spirit as an it, a force, power or spirit essence.

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<sup>2</sup> *Is the Holy Spirit a Person?* Article in *Awake!*, July 2006, [http://www.watchtower.org/e/200607a/article\\_01.htm](http://www.watchtower.org/e/200607a/article_01.htm)

2. But, if the Holy Spirit is spirit essence, and God is Spirit—that is, God is composed of Spirit—then we get into all sorts of problems.

a) It would imply God is made, that he is composed of something other than himself.

b) The whole godliness of God is that he is uncreated, he exists completely of himself

c) God is spirit, he isn't made or composed of spirit

d) He is not made, or made of, or composed of anything but himself

(1) He is the self-existent one, as the name Yaweh implies. "I am that I am"

3. We also end up with problems if we see God restricted to one location, and having to send a separate force to do his work.

a) God doesn't dwell in space and time. He isn't restricted or constricted in where or how he works, or acts, by location or lack of inherent ability or power

4. We need to humbly recognize that God exists outside of time and space. That our human concepts and descriptions are inadequate. We cannot force fit God into our world, using logic and concepts that are restricted to the physical world.

a) Arguing about how God is three and one is nonsensical in our world, and illogical according to mathematics and scientific terms and methods. But God exists outside of all we can measure, or calculate.

(1) We need to resist the temptation to solve and boldly claim to understand the depths of the mystery of God's existence and nature.

(2) We see but through a glass darkly. We can conclude a basic outline of God's nature and purposes through what he has revealed in his written and living Word. But we cannot claim to comprehend fully.

b) With these caveats in mind, let us see what the written word has to say about the nature of the Holy Spirit.

**C. LET'S DEFINE WHAT A PERSON, OR PERSONAL BEING IS; IN CONTRAST TO AN IMPERSONAL OBJECT, POWER OR ENERGY SOURCE**

1. What are some key characteristics or traits of a person?

- a) Intelligence, Knowledge
- b) Independent actions, Creativity
- c) Ability to make decisions, and choose what actions to take
- d) Consciousness and sense of self and identity
- e) Ability to have relationships
- f) Communication
- g) Emotions

2. Inanimate, impersonal objects and powers don't have any of these abilities or characteristics

**D. GROUPS:**

1. Which of the above does the Holy Spirit have?

2. With the list of characteristics of a personal being, look up the following scriptures, and any others you'd like to add

- a) Note which of these personal qualities are assigned to the Holy Spirit

3. Report back briefly

- a) Give the scripture reference, and what quality is mentioned

Trait	Scriptures
<b>1. Intelligence, decision making</b>	
<b>2. Independent action, Creativity</b>	
<b>3. Knowledge</b>	
<b>4. Self-Identity</b>	
<b>5. Personal relationships</b>	
<b>6. Communication</b>	
<b>7. Emotions</b>	
<b>8. Others: (Note what they are)</b>	

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Look up the following scriptures, and any others you'd like to add
2. Study each scripture and decide what personal traits of the Holy Spirit are shown.
3. Note the relevant verse beside each matching trait in the table above.

**SCRIPTURES:**

- |                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Mat 12:31     | 10. Rom. 8:11-14  |
| 2. John 16:12-15 | 11. Rom 8:26-27   |
| 3. Acts 8:29     | 12. 1 Cor 2:11-14 |
| 4. Acts 10:19    | 13. 1 Cor 12:11   |
| 5. Acts 10:20    | 14. Eph 4:30      |
| 6. Acts 11:12    | 15. Heb 3:7-8     |
| 7. Acts 13:2     | 16. Heb 10:29     |
| 8. Acts 15:28    | 17. Rev 14:13     |
| 9. Acts 28:25-27 | 18. Rev 22:17     |

### III. THE NATURE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

#### A. GOD HAS NOT STAYED DISTANT FROM US

1. and just sent an inanimate object, or power or active force to simply energise us or move us in a certain direction
  - a) He is not acting like some cosmic army commander using a force-field or long distance remote control, pushing around humans like chess pieces, without personal relationship or care
2. Thankfully, from these and other scriptures we understand that the Holy Spirit is a very personal being, often deliberately called “he” in the Scriptures

#### B. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD

1. These and other scriptures show that the Holy Spirit is also God, on the same level of existence and in total union with the Father and the Son
2. The Holy Spirit is eternal, Holy and creates
3. The Holy Spirit communicates God’s love and truth

#### C. A “PERSONAL” COMPUTER

1. can record and transmit our words, our photos and other electronic records.
  - a) But it doesn’t even know we exist, it cannot communicate our emotions and cares.
  - b) It can only replicate, store and transmit electrical current in the form of on and off codes.
2. It is an inanimate energy based device .



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## **D. PAUL MAKES CLEAR THE HOLY SPIRIT IS PERSONAL**

### **1 Corinthians 2:11**

<sup>10</sup> But\* it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit. For his Spirit searches out everything and shows us God's deep secrets. <sup>11</sup> No one can know a person's thoughts except that person's own spirit, and no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit. <sup>12</sup> And we have received God's Spirit (not the world's spirit), so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us.<sup>3</sup>

## **E. THE HOLY SPIRIT ENABLES US TO UNDERSTAND AND EMPOWERS US TO THINK AND ACT IN RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS AND THE FATHER COMFORTER**

### **John 14:16-18**

<sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, [comforter, encourager, counselor]\* who will never leave you. <sup>17</sup> He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.\* <sup>18</sup> No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. <sup>4</sup>

#### 1. As Mike Morrison says about this passage;

Jesus used the masculine form of *parakletos*; he did not consider it necessary to make the word neuter or to use neuter pronouns.

In John 16:14, masculine pronouns are used even after the neuter *pneuma* is mentioned. It would have been easy to switch to neuter pronouns, but John did not. In other places, neuter pronouns are used for the Spirit, in accordance with grammatical convention. Scripture is not finicky about the grammatical gender of the Spirit, and we need not be either.<sup>5</sup>

#### 2. Later Jesus spoke more about the role of the Holy Spirit

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\* Some manuscripts read *For*.

<sup>3</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (1 Co 2:10-12). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

\* Or *Comforter*, or *Encourager*, or *Counselor*. Greek reads *Paraclete*; also in 14:26.

\* Some manuscripts read *and is in you*.

<sup>4</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (Jn 14:16-18). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Morrison, *The Deity of the Holy Spirit*, <http://www.gci.org/god/holy-spirit>

### **John 16:12-15**

<sup>12</sup>“There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can’t bear it now. <sup>13</sup>When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. <sup>14</sup>He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. <sup>15</sup>All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, ‘The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.’”

### 3. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit in his place

- a) Revealing Jesus and his teachings, more and more
- b) And enabling us to know him as Lord, the Son of God
- c) To understand God’s plan for the future
  - (1) To join us with him, and lead and enable us to participate in Jesus’ life and mission, to unite the creation with the creator
  - (2) To be involved in his work of reconciliation and bringing in the new life, the new era, the kingdom of God

### **F. ONE OF THE MOST MEANINGFUL, PERSONAL AND IMPORTANT ROLES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS HIS ROLE IN PRAYER**

- 1. Joining us in our prayer relationship with the Father through the Son
- 2. This is a very personal activity, as the Holy Spirit listens to us, and deeply understands and comprehends our thoughts, our feelings, our needs
  - a) And thus communicates what we really mean when we pray

### **Romans 8:26-27**

<sup>26</sup> And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don’t know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.

- 3. The Holy Spirit clearly has the intelligence and ability to understand and communicate at a level far greater than human beings are able to.

4. The Father understands the Spirit, and the Spirit understands the Father and understands us

a) The Spirit makes up for our inadequacies, speaking up for us, pleading on our behalf

b) Communicating things even we can't put into words about how we feel, and what we need, and want to say

<sup>27</sup> And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers\* in harmony with God's own will.

5. What a beautiful picture of the two way relationship between the Father and us, and us and the Father, all through the intensely personal activity of the Holy Spirit

6. Being in intimate relationship and harmony with God, is at the heart of what God has always planned

7. As we saw at Pentecost in I Corinthians 12, the Father, Son and Spirit all work together to bring us into harmonious relationship with the Trinity

a) Gifting us, guiding and enabling us to share in God's life and mission.

8. This all shows that the Holy Spirit is a personal member of the Godhead, sharing and engaging in the same love and concern, the same thinking and planning and activities as the Father and the Son.

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\* Greek for God's holy people.

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## IV. CONCLUSION:

### A. SO VERY CLEARLY, THE HOLY SPIRIT IS NOT AN IMPERSONAL POWER,

1. but an intelligent and divine Helper who lives within us. God lives within us, and the Holy Spirit is God.
2. This is part of the scriptural evidence that led early Christians to formulate the doctrine of the Trinity.
3. Theologian Geoffrey Bromiley gives a summary:

Three points that emerge from this survey of the New Testament data are: (1) The Holy Spirit is everywhere regarded as God; (2) He is God in distinction from the Father and the Son; (3) His deity does not infringe upon the divine unity. In other words, the Holy Spirit is the third person of the triune Godhead....

### B. ANOTHER ARTICLE FROM LIGHT MINISTRIES,

1. explains the personal role of the Holy Spirit further;

the Holy Spirit is indeed a Person and Being other than the Father and the Son; that the Holy Spirit has a distinctive personality all his own; and that

It should then be clear that the Father is not the Holy Spirit, but He uses the Holy Spirit to represent and bring Himself to us. Thus the Father sends the Holy Spirit, calling it His Spirit--or the Spirit of the Father; but the Father is not the Holy Spirit.

It should also be clear that Christ is not the Holy Spirit either, but the Holy Spirit represents Christ to us. Thus Christ can send the Holy Spirit--His representative--calling it His Spirit, or the Spirit of Christ; but Jesus is not the Holy Spirit. In fact, Christ had the Holy Spirit given to Him (see Luke 4:18-19)!

Neither is the Holy Spirit just a power, or force, or essence, or mind of God--the Father, but is a living Person and Being with Its own personality. The Holy Spirit bears Its own witness, gives Its own comfort to us in Christ's place, and acts in His stead. The Holy Spirit Itself teaches and enlightens us by using Its own mind. It puts forth Its highest energies in working for our salvation by taking the words of Christ and infusing these words of life into our hearts. So you can clearly see that

the Holy Spirit is as much a Person as God—the Father and Jesus Christ are Persons.<sup>6</sup>

**C. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A HUMBLE, SERVING MEMBER OF THE GODHEAD**

1. He serves God the Father, and the Son,
2. And he serves and empowers each and everyone of us
  - a) Let us allow the Spirit to do His work effectively, by yielding to his loving guidance and comfort, his teaching and correction
  - b) So that we may be empowered and guided to grow more and more in the love and life of the Father and the Son , and in our relationships with one another
  - c) All to the glory of God

**D. PRAYER**

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<sup>6</sup> *Is the Holy Spirit a Distinct Person Apart from the Father and the Son?*, <http://www.lightministries.com/id1297.htm>