

**WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND WHERE IS HE?**

John 14:16-17

**Intro:** As you all know, we have just concluded the study of the Apostle Paul's epistle to the church at Ephesus. I want to follow that study up with a series of message on the Holy Spirit, His Person, that is, Who He is, and His Work, what He does, especially in connection with our salvation. In Ephesians Paul explained to the believers in Ephesus the great doctrine of salvation, and followed it up with a strong emphasis on the way the people of God should live. I feel sure that I am right when I say that he used the word "walk" to describe the Christian life more in Ephesians than he did in any of his other epistles which he wrote under the direction of the Holy Spirit. He wanted them to understand the great doctrines of salvation, but he also wanted them to know that, as the people of God, they were expected to live lives that were evidence of the changes that salvation had made in their lives. That is the reason for his emphasis on their walk.

But he did another thing in Ephesians that was unique. As he closed his letter to them he told them that they, as the people of God, needed to realize that they were engaged in a spiritual warfare with the Devil and his evil forces. For this he told them that they needed to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." To be strong, they needed not only to know what they were to believe, and to walk in the light of what God had done in their hearts, saving them from their sins, but they also needed to put on the armor of God which God has provided for every believer. They were to put it on, and to keep it on. Every part of the armor is important. But then he added one more point: they needed to be continually praying, praying for themselves, and praying for each other – praying for all of the people of God as God brought them to their attention. But then he brought his letter to them to a close.

Well, now let us ask an important question: ***How did they do?*** And we need to ask ourselves the same question. ***How are we doing?*** Usually when people are first saved, their hearts are full of joy. They have a deep love for the Lord. They enjoy being with the Lord's people, so the church has a major place in their lives. Perhaps you remember how your life was changed, and what joy you had in your hearts when you first came to the Lord. How are you doing now?

In the case of the Ephesians we have some evidence in the Bible as to

how they were doing. After the Apostle Paul had died, and possibly thirty years after the Ephesians had received Paul's letter to them, they received another letter. This time it was from the Lord Jesus Christ. It was addressed to the Pastor of the church, and in some ways it was encouraging. It was a very busy church. They were serving the Lord. It was still an orthodox church. They knew how to check where people stood with regard to the truth of God's Word, and they had rejected false teachers. And they had been faithful in serving the Lord. The Lord was giving them His own evaluation of the work. He could say commendable things about them that frankly could not be said about many churches today. We would probably have felt that the Ephesian church was about as close to being perfect as a church could be.

But then in the Lord's letter to them, they came to the word, "Nevertheless." Everything was not perfect after all. What had the Lord noticed that was missing which had been there, evidently, in Paul's day? The KJV renders the words of the Lord like this: "Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." This means that although they were busily going about serving the Lord as they always had, some their work had taken over the place that the Lord had when they were first saved. The Lord was telling them that they did not love Him as they had loved Him at the first. Apparently no one in the church had taken the time to notice this, but the Lord noticed it. And if the people had taken the time to remember how much the Lord meant to them at the first, how they delighted in Him, how they used to enjoy praying. Oh, they probably still enjoyed praying, but they didn't pray as much, and they didn't pray as fervently as they had prayed at the first. In fact, the Lord said nothing about a prayer meeting in the church at Ephesus. Maybe they had one, but the people had become so busy serving the Lord that they didn't really have time for Him. That can happen to any Christian, you know. It can even happen to a Pastor.

What did the Lord tell them to do? He called upon them to repent. This means that the way they were treating the Lord was a sin which needed to be repented of. And then the Lord said what is really a shocking thing. He told them that if they did not change, and get back in fellowship with the Lord Himself, their testimony as a church would be gone. I wonder if what the Lord was saying was that our neglect of real fellowship with the Lord can actually put an end to the effectiveness of a church as quickly as any other sin can.

This is a question we all need to face. How are we doing? What part does the Lord have in our lives? How long does it take when you get up in the morning before you find yourself talking to the Lord like you talk to someone you love. As you think back over your life, can you think of a time when Bible reading was a greater blessing to you than it is now? Can you think of a time when you enjoyed praying more than you do now, and when you prayed more than you do now? Can you think of a time when you were more inclined to trust the Lord, even in little things, than you are now? Does it concern you that we as the Lord's people can often get together, and yet so little of our conversation is about the Lord?

I think we all know the difference that I am talking about. We have to say that we are often like Martha was when she was fretting about Mary, and the Lord said to her, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful (full of care) and troubled about many things." Would the Lord say that to me, and to you this morning. We are not to worry about anything, but we do anyway, and so we carry burdens that the Lord wants to carry for us. We may know a lot about the Lord, but how well do we know Him?

William Cowper, an English poet and godly theologian (1731-1800), and a friend of John Newton, wrote several of the hymns in our Hymnal, one of which was "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform." But another of his hymns has been running through my mind recently. I had to look for it, but found it in one of the hymnals I have at home. It expresses what I have been trying to say this morning, and I want to take the time to read it to you. Some of you will probably remember part of it. I read it, not only because it deals with the distance that seems to exist between the Lord and us, but because he called upon the Holy Spirit to restore the fellowship he once had with the Lord. The Holy Spirit never departs from us, but we often feel like He has left us, but what has actually happened is that we have turned away and neglected Him. But here are Cowper's words:

O for a closer walk with God, A calm and heavenly frame;  
A light to shine upon the road That leads me to the Lamb.  
Where is the blessedness I knew When first I saw the Lord?  
Where is the soul-refreshing view Of Jesus and His Word?  
What peaceful hours I then enjoyed, How sweet their memory still!  
But now I feel an aching void The world can never fill.  
Return, O holy Dove! return, Sweet Messenger of rest!  
I hate the sins that made Thee mourn, And drove Thee from my breast.  
The dearest idol I have known, Whate'er that idol be;  
Help me to tear it from Thy throne, And worship only Thee.

John 14:16-17 (4)

So shall my walk be close with God, Calm and serene my frame;  
So purer light shall mark the road That leads me to the Lamb.

Although it often may seem in our hearts like the Lord has departed from us, or that the Father has left us along, or that the Holy Spirit no longer is with us, yet the truth is that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit will never leave us. We are the ones who often turn away from Them.

There is a great deal of comfort and encouragement to be found for us when we meditate upon the Three Persons of the Godhead – the Father, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the blessed Holy Spirit. Spiritual declension sets in our hearts when we love sight of, or neglect, the personal relationship that we have with all Three Persons of the Godhead. The Christian life is not a relationship with the Father, or Christ, or the Holy Spirit. But a relationship with the Father *and* the Son *and* the Holy Spirit. But it is the work of the Holy Spirit to revive our hearts and to show us the blessings that await us as we faithfully walk with Him, and by His power, enjoy the fulness of our salvation by a vital relationship with the Father and the Son. Paul in Ephesians warned the believers in Ephesus about grieving the Holy Spirit, which we do with our sins. When he wrote to the church in Thessalonica, he told the believers there not to quench the Spirit, which we do when we fail to obey the Word of which the Holy Spirit is the Author. A godly writer whose works I have enjoyed says that we need to see an outpouring the Spirit, which is probably what Paul had in mind when he exhorted the Ephesians to be filled with the Holy Spirit, that blessing might be restored in our relationship with our heavenly Father and with our Savior. This only will restore joy to our praying, humility to our hearts, both zeal and fruitfulness as we serve the Lord.

It is my prayer that in our focus upon the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, the fires of revival will stir our hearts anew with love and devotion for all of us toward our heavenly Father, our precious Savior, and the Comforter of our souls, the blessed Holy Spirit.

Now for the remainder of the time today I ask you to turn with me to John, chapter 14, verses 16 and 17. And I want to answer the two questions that I have taken as my subject for this morning. **(Read John 14: 16 and 17.)** I will be dealing with the answers to these questions more in detail as we go along, but I trust that the Lord will write the basic answers on all of our hearts.

## I. WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

He is a Person. He is a Member of the Godhead, equal in His Deity to the Deity of God, our Father, and to the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior. He is God's gift to us who are trusting in Christ. And He has come to abide with us forever. To abide means to remain.

There are many ways in which the Deity of the Holy Spirit is revealed to us in Scripture, but we see it here in our Lord's description of Him as "another Comforter." As you probably have been told the Greeks have two ways of saying "another." With one word the Lord could have indicated *another of a different kind*. But they also have a word in which they mean *another of the same kind*. And that is the word which the Lord used here. The Holy Spirit is just like the Lord Jesus.

Earlier in this chapter, in verse 8, when Philip, one of the disciples said to the Lord, "Show us the Father," the Lord responded by saying, "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." As I have said many times, if the Father had become incarnate, had been born of the virgin Mary, He would have looked exactly like the Lord Jesus. So we can say, if, when the Holy Spirit came into the world, if He had come with a human body, He would have looked like the Lord Jesus. But the likeness goes even deeper than that. It had to do with the Deity of the Holy Spirit. He was not coming in a body; the Holy Spirit was coming to dwell in their bodies.

It is hard not to get ahead of myself in answering these questions. But let me go on to the second question.

## II. WHERE IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

In the light of all that I have already pointed out about the Holy Spirit, that His Deity is just like that of the Father and the Son, the answer to the question, Where is He?, is, He is everywhere. The Father is omnipresent. The Lord Jesus is omnipresent. And the Holy Spirit is omnipresent. But at the same time the Lord Jesus said, as we go on to verse 17, that at that very moment the Holy Spirit was with them, but then our Lord added the words, "and shall be in you."

So when we put the last statement of verse 16 together with the last statement of verse 17, we see that the Lord was predicting that the Holy Spirit would come to dwell in them forever. Now we are dealing with truth here

that we cannot fully explain or understand, but we accept our Lord's words as true because He is the Lord, He is Deity, and He cannot lie! We accept by faith what the Lord taught because He is the Lord. He did not mean that each of His disciples would have a little bit of the Holy Spirit. But He meant that each disciple would have the Holy Spirit dwelling in him just like the Holy Spirit did not dwell anyplace else. You ask me how the Holy Spirit could do that, and I can't. But this was not just a promise for the twelve apostles; this is a promise of what would be true of all believers everywhere around the whole world. Neither can I explain what the Bible tells us about the God when it says that "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3). I can't understand how the Lord can do that, but I believe it because He is God and I would expect that He can do a lot of things that I can't do.

Sometimes you hear of a father who has several children, and they all may be asking him a question at the same time, or asking him to do something for them at the same time. That goes on for a while, and finally the father says to his children, "You are all going to have to be patient because *there is not enough of me to go around!*" God never has that trouble. The Lord Jesus never has that trouble. And neither does the Holy Spirit have that trouble. And the reason they don't is because They are GOD! The work that all Three Members of the Godhead have to do, is dependent upon the fact that they are God.

There is a lot of truth here for us to digest, isn't there? But remember: we do not accept the Bible because we can understand and explain it all; we accept it because God has give us the faith to believe that the Bible is the Word of God. After all, wouldn't you have a problem believing that the Bible is the Word of God if you had no trouble at all understanding it?

Before I close I want you to know what the Lord called the Holy Spirit. He gave Him two names. In verse 16 he called Him a "Comforter." And in verse 17 our Lord called the Holy Spirit, "the Spirit of truth." Keep these titles in mind. The Lord had been a Comforter to the disciples because we have noticed that He called the Holy Spirit "another Comforter," meaning that the Holy Spirit would be to them what He, the Lord, had been to them. This word Comforter is the Greek word from which we get our word paraclete. Well, you say that doesn't help me much because I don't know what a paraclete is. Well, this is a good dictionary word. It means a helper, even an intercessor. It is someone who is called to your side to help you. In 1 John 2:1 we are told that the

Lord Jesus is still our Paraclete. There the word is translated Advocate. So even though the Holy Spirit was given to be our Comforter, He does not replace the Lord Jesus. So we have two Comforters. How blessed we are. The Apostle John in 1 John 2:1 said, “If any man sin (referring to a child of God), we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

I don't have time to deal with the Holy Spirit as “the Spirit of truth” except to say that the meaning here has reference to the Bible. The Bible gives us the truth of God.

**Concl:** There is a lot of wonderful truth in these two verses, isn't there?

Let me leave you with this thought about the Holy Spirit. It is impossible for any of us to be spiritual in character and spiritually minded, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. Ignorance of the Holy Spirit will mean that we leave ourselves in a state of spiritual infancy. So let us pray that the Spirit Himself will bless our study of the Holy Spirit that we may learn to be in mind and heart what God intends for us to become by His grace. We can't do it on our own, but we can by the fellowship that is ours with the Holy Spirit. Some of the old timers in Bible exposition used to speak of God's work for us and in us as salvation, sanctification, and consolation. I like that. May the Lord enable us to know in our personal fellowship with the Holy Spirit more about all three – salvation, sanctification, and consolation. Without the Holy Spirit none of these would be possible.