



We believe in The Holy Spirit

Romans 8:1 to 17

Having looked at the Father and the Son, we come to the third person of the Trinity. With the first two there are various attributes given to both Father and Son. With the Holy Spirit it is simply 'we believe'. The first mention of the Holy Spirit is in the second verse of the whole Bible. Genesis 1:2 tells us the Spirit was there in the formless darkness of pre-creation and was 'hovering over the waters'. Theologians sometimes call mention of the Spirit in the Old Testament as 'scattered'. (e.g Isaiah 11:2 and 61:1).

The first mention in the New Testament is Matthew 1:18 where Mary 'was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit'. The Synoptic gospels record the descent of the Holy Spirit 'like a dove' at Jesus' baptism. (Matthew 3:16)

- Talk about your own experience of the Holy Spirit
- Do you find him rather distant or mysterious?
- Have you experienced the ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life?
- What do you find hard to understand about the Holy Spirit?

Jesus' own teaching is significant. He talks about the coming of the Spirit in John 14:16 & 17. He is 'another counsellor' which means the Spirit is a comforter in addition to what Jesus has been. It literally means 'one who comes alongside' (Gk – parakletos). So just as Jesus had come alongside the people he met when he was on earth so the Spirit comes alongside us and 'walks with us' in our daily lives.

- It would be good to share at this point where you have been conscious of God's spirit walking with you in either good times or hard times.
- If you have time, you could have a brief prayer time where you thank God for 'walking' with you.

Here is a selection of facts the Bible teaches about the Holy Spirit

- He is a gift from the Father – 'I will give you ' (John 8:16)
- He would come as a result of Jesus' intercessions – 'I will ask ... ' This may be implied by Jesus' prayer in John 17.
- He is the 'Spirit of Truth'. He witnesses only to truth and leads us only to the truth (Hebrews 6:18 & John 16:13)
- He lives in us from the very start of our Christian life. (Romans 8:9)

- Are any of these facts tricky to understand?
- Add some other things you know about the Holy Spirit.

One of the most significant roles of the Holy Spirit is that he acts as our teacher. The WORD without the SPIRIT is dry. The SPIRIT without the WORD can lack meaning. The wonderful double act is when the SPIRIT lights up the WORD and writes it on our hearts. The disciples were still learning – Jesus did not tell them everything (John 16:12) Always ask the SPIRIT to be your teacher when you read the Bible. So, the Spirit does not invent new teaching – he reveals what is already there.

- Have you experienced times where God's word has really spoken to you – maybe in your own reading, maybe in your small group, maybe in church?

That has to be the work of the Holy Spirit
Share some experiences when God really spoke to you

R.T. Kendall writes – ‘His essential role is to witness to Jesus Christ (John 15:26). It’s as if the Holy Spirit (who lives in us) is constantly prompting us to look at Jesus. Look at who he is, what he came to do, why he came to do it, why he rose from the dead, where he is now, why he is there, why he is coming again. God wants us to know these things and we are led to those truths as the Spirit lights up the word that explains these things.

Share some things you know about Jesus – they have all come to you by the work of the Spirit.
Share some things you’d like to know about Jesus – if you’d like help in finding those answers please ask.

This is leading us to Romans 8 which tells us we are to live by the Spirit (8:5). The spirit-filled life is not meant to be just about a wonderful moment in a Christian meeting (it can certainly be that). But it is how we live our daily lives. Paul tells us we are ‘not to live according to the sinful nature’ (8:4). He says that such people have ‘their minds set on what nature desires’ (8:5). Such a mind ‘leads to death but the mind of the Spirit leads to life and peace’ (8:6)

We all get it wrong and do things that we know displease God. Does this mean we are NOT living by the Spirit?
How do we deal with things we do which appear to be more about the sinful nature than about the Spirit living in us?

FEAR NOT – we all battle in this territory. Even the great apostle struggled – read Romans 7:7 to 28. But notice how that passage finishes. ‘Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord’ (7:28). As long as we live in a fallen world, we will experience the frustration of the sinful nature trying to control our thoughts and actions. But we belong to Jesus Christ, His Spirit lives in us and is with us even in the darkest times.

Does Paul’s teaching in Romans 8 sound too good to be true?
Are we conscious of the daily presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives?
How can we make that better?
How much is up to us and how we live our lives?
How much is up to God giving us his strength?

Two things that come from living in the Spirit. We are to show fruit from the fact that he lives in us (Galatians 5:22). Notice that the word ‘fruit’ is singular so we can’t pick and choose the ‘fruits’ we are good at. We should strive to show all of them.

Read the list in Galatians 5:22.
Talk about the ones you find easy and the ones you need to work on.

We must mention the gifts that God gives to his people. God gives them to every believer – they should be a blessing to all and build up the church. There is no time for a detailed study but you may like to read the 3 key passages

1 Corinthians 12 to 14
Romans 12:3 to 11
Ephesians 4:2 to 16

So keep in step with the Spirit !!!!!