

BFF403 The Person of the Spirit

Scott Moore: Welcome to the "Building Faith Families" podcast with Steve Demme. I'm your host, Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us today. Good morning, Steve. How are you today?

Steve: I am well, Scott, and how are you this fine, last day of winter?

Scott: Is that what it is? All right.

Steve: At 11 o'clock tonight, it is the vernal equinox, when this is being recorded.

Scott: Yes. Awesome.

Steve: It feels like it. When I go out and walk the pups, they have spring fever. They are chipper and bouncing around and it's fun to watch them get excited.

Scott: Nice.

Steve: Today, we're going to do our second study on the Holy Spirit, and the only thing I want to say is that the Holy Spirit is not a force or energy or an it. The Holy Spirit is a distinct person with a mind, a will, feelings. He speaks, he listens, and he oversees the body of Christ. Let's pray.

Father, thank You for Your, -- I don't know how to say it -- God is one and yet you're three. Today, give us insights as we examine the third person, often the last person that we think about. We think of You, the Father, we think of Jesus, Your son, who's praying for us, and now, Your dear Spirit has been sent and for 2000 years has been managing the body of Christ and talking to us.

I pray today that You'll increase our comprehension of the person of the Spirit. In Jesus name. Amen.

Scott: Amen.

Steve: I remember sitting in church 2012, and it was the year that God had been revealing His grace to me in a new way and His love in a new way. It was the end of the service and the pastor was pronouncing a benediction.

I confess, I often don't listen to the words of the benediction because they always have something to do with grace and peace and positive and uplifting, but I don't give attention to it like I do the text for the service, but that day they were emblazoned.

This is the last verse in 2 Corinthians 13, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ," -- and that caught me and I went, "Yes, I'm getting that more and more" -- "and the love of God," -- and I went, "Yes, I'm getting that more, too" -- "And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

The last phrase caught me and I thought, "Fellowship." Other translations say communion, but the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Now I understand that you and I, we have fellowship and I go on retreats and I came from a conference in South Carolina and there was a lot of wonderful fellowship, and it's connecting.

It's connecting with people. It's connecting with real persons created in the image of God, but here he's talking about the fellowship. He wanted the fellowship, the communion, the connection of the Holy Spirit to be with all the people that he'd been preaching to. So that's a good place to begin.

So let's do some pronoun studies and then we'll get into some specific characteristics of the Spirit. In the three chapters of John 14, 15, and 16, the Spirit of God is referred to as "He" 13 times and "Him" 4 times. I'll read two to get us started.

"I will ask the Father and He will give you another Helper to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, Whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you." There are several pronouns in that one verse.

In John 14:26, "The Helper, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." This gives us a flavor to get started that "He" is a "He" and not an "it".

There were several different names for the Spirit right there. We talked about the Helper, the Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit. Some translations say the Comforter or the Paraclete, the one who comes alongside. This is the person of the Trinity that we are having communion with or fellowship with and we're connecting with as a person.

Romans 8:26-27, "Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And He who searches the heart knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."

Two thoughts. The first one is He has a mind, the mind of the Spirit, and He not only helps us pray, but He prays. So He's a praying Spirit. He has a mind and He comes alongside and He helps us in our weakness. He is the Helper.

1 Corinthians 2 says, "Who knows a person's thoughts except the Spirit of that person which is in him?" So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. He comprehends and He knows the thoughts of God.

1 Corinthians 12, "All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit Who apportions to each one individually as He wills."

The Spirit gives gifts. 1 Corinthians 12, talks about the different gifts, but these gifts are stewarded out, you might say, to each one person individually as the Spirit decides. So it's the Spirit Who is the distributor, the giver of the gifts. He's the one that decides who gets what.

We recognize that the gifts of the Spirit are wonderful and needed and special and are for the building up of the body of Christ. It's also important that we don't seek the gift alone, but also the giver of the gift.

He does distribute gifts and He gives some the gifts of healing and some of the gifts of prophecy, some the gift of faith, but today let's get our eyes past the gift to the one who's giving us the gift.

Scott: We do the same thing with the fruits.

Steve: Yes.

Scott: Love, joy, peace, patience, like we make a list of things we ought to do this. Like we ought to be more peaceful, more patient, more kind, you know? It's like, "Actually the Spirit gives you that."

Steve: Yes.

Scott: It's not an ought-to list.

Steve: Exactly. We not only do that, we stick these fruits on our refrigerator, so we can focus on them.

Scott: Then feel badly about it when we fall short of what we think we're supposed to be doing.

Steve: Which we usually do. So it's nice to be able to focus on the giver of the gift and the giver of the fruit. Excellent point.

My first song that I ever wrote, was at a summer Bible school. We used to meet every morning from 8 to 10, and then we would work the rest of the day. I started up my painting company, so we could all have a job and we painted from 10:30 to 5:30, so we had some income. But we were together every morning for two hours studying the Scriptures. We were studying the Holy Spirit at that time. Are you ready for the song?

Scott: Yeah.

Steve: The tune is "Let it Snow." OK? [sings] As spirit trees in his garden, with faith for all nine fruits, we acknowledge his work and we say Amen. Let 'em grow, let 'em grow, let 'em grow.

Scott: Nice.

Steve: Sorry. It never made the number one hit list, but instead of focusing on the fruits, what I was acknowledging or trying to state was that we are spirit trees, and He's the trunk, you might say and the fruits are on the branches. We're all spirit trees.

Scott: Nice.

Steve: Romans 15:30, "I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit." Isn't that nice? The love of the Spirit. So the Spirit loves.

Acts 5:3-4, People were coming up and deeding over their farms and property. Everybody had everything in common, and Ananias and Sapphira, as you know, held a portion back. "Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not your

disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man, but to God."

There are some that say that the Spirit is not God. There have been church debates and councils about this concept. But this situation clarifies it for me. If you lie to the Holy Spirit, you lie to God. So the Spirit is God.

Ephesians 4:30, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by Whom you are sealed for the day of redemption." The Spirit has feelings.

Isaiah 63:10 reinforces this, "They rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit." So we can grieve the Holy Spirit, because we've already learned He's got a mind, He has a will, He loves, and He's God, but we can grieve Him.

I think many of us know this verse, "The Helper, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."

I love the fact that the Holy Spirit is the one who's the author of scripture. It's the Holy Spirit breathing and speaking and leading these men to write scripture. He's the one that took Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, He taught them, and then He brought to their remembrance all that Jesus had said to them.

Way back in Nehemiah, we read my favorite name for God, the Spirit. Nehemiah 9:20, "You gave your good Spirit to instruct them, and did not withhold your manna from their mouth, and then gave them water for their thirst." I like that, the Good Spirit.

When I was a young believer, I had no idea what the Spirit was about, but when I began to learn, it was usually associated with speaking in tongues or something like that, and I used to envision that I would be walking through a supermarket check out line, and the Spirit would make me stand up on the conveyor belt and begin to speak in tongues or prophesy. I'm not making this up. This is what I had in my head.

In other words, I thought the Holy Spirit was kind of bizarre, and I thought He would be way out of my comfort zone, and I think that's why I latched on to this verse. "You gave your good Spirit." The Holy Spirit is plain old good.

He not only teaches and loves and directs and instructs, but He also speaks. Seven times in the book of Revelation, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." That phrase is used in the second and third chapters of Revelation seven times. Each of the churches heard that. It says in Hebrews 3:7, "As the Holy Spirit says today if you hear His voice," and right at the end of the Bible, "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.'"

That's our goal, to be so in harmony with the Spirit that when the Spirit and the bride are one, they're thinking the same things, they're believing the same things, they're praying the same things. They're so filled with the Spirit that it becomes one voice, and the Spirit and the bride say, "Come."

John 16:13, "When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever he Hears, He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come." He not only speaks and teaches, He guides us, and He hears. That's exactly what the Bible says.

Acts 20:28, "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood." The Holy Spirit is the one who appoints the overseers, the bishops, the deacons, the people that manage the affairs of the church. He is the manager.

Acts 15:28, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements." This was James in Jerusalem speaking for the council, after they had decided what to do with Paul and Gentiles coming to the faith, they had this big church council, and he said, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." They collaborated, they prayed, they sought God, and then the Spirit and the leaders came together and were as one.

The Spirit also directed the missionaries of the church. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work to which I have called them." (Acts 13:2)

He's the one that made them know, you need to take Barnabas and Paul, we're going to lay hands on them, we're going to pray for them, we're going to make a plan to send them some funds, the whole thing, but it started when the Spirit put His finger on those men and said, "You're the ones."

Then in Acts 16:6-7, "They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they did come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them."

Scott: That one hit me one day when it's like, the Spirit was that personal to them that they were going somewhere and the Spirit stopped them from going there. How did that work out? How did that happen? I want that kind of a relationship with the Holy Spirit that I hear him telling me things.

Steve: Amen.

Scott: Full disclosure, I don't really experience that very often, so...

Steve: Well, we're going to pray that we all experience that more, but that really is a nice verse as a spinoff because the Holy Spirit was very clear in directing these men, where they're supposed to go, who they're supposed to talk to. I also like the name for the Spirit here, the Spirit of Jesus because sometimes in my head, I like little boxes, "Well, this is the Father's responsibility, and this is the Son's responsibility, and this is the Spirit."

I have trouble putting the three together. In fact, when I was learning to listen to the Spirit, one time was a little perplexed and asked, Who do I pray to? Because I know that Jesus is not here anymore. He's at the right hand of the Father, and He said, "It's really good that I go, because then I'll send the Spirit," but do I ask the Father to send the Spirit? Or do I talk to the Spirit?

I was kind of going over this in my mind, and I think I prayed about it, and as soon as I did, I knew that the Spirit is God. He's not an angel. He's God. He's not a messenger of God. He is God. He's the Spirit of Jesus, and they are one and they have an incredible relationship, the Father, Son, and the Spirit, and that's our ambition is to be as unified as they are, according to Jesus' prayer.

So, I think another good place to start, though, or to stop would be something that is very, very real to me, probably in the last couple years, is there's so much in the Bible about people that are hard of hearing. They are hard-hearted. They're unbelieving. They haven't turned. They haven't inclined their ear. This expression is used in the Bible, "Incline your ear and come to me."

In Revelation, seven times, "He who has an ear, let him hear." I pray this almost daily when I'm going through my priestly studies, after I study the Scriptures, and as I'm studying the Scriptures, I pray for God to give me ears to hear.

Spiritual ears, because Samuel heard a voice, but he didn't know who it was and know what to do with it, and so, Eli taught him, "OK, next time you hear a voice, you say, 'Speak, Lord, where your servant's listening.'" Then it's like something changed in his hearing, and he knew now, "Hey, this is God that's been talking to me," and he became a prophet who heard God, and he had that relationship that he was able to be led.

I feel like that's something we have to seek God for is to have our ears opened. If you can picture this, take the earplugs out and open our spiritual ears so that we can hear what the Spirit is saying.

Scott: That's really critical. Like you hear people...There's a verse that I forget where exactly it is. I honestly don't know if it's Jesus saying it or who it was, but saying to test the spirits to know which one is speaking to you. Because you hear people nowadays who say, "Well, God told me to leave my wife," or you know, some crazy thing like that.

I'm like people, they actually believe that they're hearing the Holy Spirit. I was like, "Probably not." You know?

Steve: You're exactly right, because the same Spirit that wrote the Scriptures is going to be in harmony with the Scriptures.

Scott: Yeah, and it's really key to know which one's which like we ought to pray for...That isn't ought to, man. You ought to pray for, I ought to pray for the Holy

Spirit, like for me to be able to hear His voice and be filled with him and know Him, you know, like that's...

Steve: Yeah.

Scott: And be able to discern His voice from others. Since I'm speaking at the moment and have the floor...

Steve: Go for it.

Scott: The Holy Spirit and Jesus are one and Jesus made it clear, "I and the Father are one. If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father." I get tripped up with that every once in a while and have to be reminded, "Oh yeah, if I'm praying to him, it's as if I'm praying to the Father as well, and the Holy Spirit as well."

It's really not that big of a deal, I guess is what I'm saying, which one you choose to pray to. It's not like your prayers are less powerful if you prayed to the Spirit instead of to Jesus or instead of the Father, they're all together.

Steve: Well, I did want to make mention of the fact that that one verse that I referred to that it's the Spirit that wrote the Scriptures. 2 Peter 1:21, "No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

It's the Spirit that's been carrying along the authors of scripture. Isaiah 55:3, "Incline your ear and come to me, hear, that your soul may live, and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast sure love for David," which is an incredible promise, but here is a reference to an inclining of your ear.

Recently I did something and I sensed the Holy Spirit saying, "You're inclining your ear now, that's good," and so he encourages me. Every time I look to God and turn my attention to Him and really seek Him, then I find Him. We have a part to play in taking initiative.

Revelation 3:20, when God is talking to the church at Laodicea, He said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come into him." Basically he's saying, "I want to go deeper, but you need to open the door." Now that's as far as I've gotten on that particular part of my theology, but I want to keep that door open. I want God to have meals with me and I have meals with God. I want to be led by Him. I want to honor Him. I want to know Him. Let's pray.

Father, thank You for sending Your dear Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, the good Spirit, the Helper, the one who comes alongside, and You're awesome. All of You, Father, Son, and Spirit, if I can say that.

We love You, but there's a lot of misunderstandings about the Spirit. So help us to see and understand the Spirit according to scripture and not according to some secondhand exposition. I pray that You'll give us ears to hear Your dear Spirit. Give us

hearts that are inclined to open our ears to hear the Spirit. Help us to open the door and invite the Spirit in, in a deeper way.

We know that we can't even say Jesus is Lord except by the Spirit. Thank You for doing that work in our heart. We know that we experience conviction of sin all the time by the Spirit.

Steve: Thank You for that work, but we want to take our game up another level today. We want to grow closer to You, the giver of the gift and not the gifts. We want to grow closer to the person of the Spirit and not the attributes.

So teach us to have, as we started with, communion of the Holy Spirit. Answer that prayer that Paul prayed for the church a long time ago. Answer it for us today in Jesus' name. Amen.

Scott: That's our show for this week, folks. Thanks for joining us for the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme. If you have a question for the show, email Steve at spdemme@gmail.com. If you have a question for me, you can reach me at scott@unsocializedmedia.com.