

The Person of the Holy Spirit

by Chuck Smith

The Holy Spirit is a person who comes alongside of us to help us in and through every situation of life, bringing us into a full, rich relationship with Him.

Scripture: John 14:16

Topics: "Relationship with the Holy Spirit", "The Person of the Holy Spirit"

Description

Chuck Smith emphasizes the significance of understanding the Holy Spirit as a person rather than an abstract force, encouraging believers to develop a personal relationship with Him. He references Jesus' promise of the Comforter in John 14, highlighting the Holy Spirit's role in guiding, teaching, and empowering believers. Smith shares the transformative experience of evangelist Finney, illustrating the profound impact of the Holy Spirit in one's life. He urges the congregation to yield to the Holy Spirit's influence, leading to a life filled with His love and power. Ultimately, Smith prays for a renewed outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the church and individual lives.

Transcript

Jesus is about ready to go to the cross to be crucified. He is in the final sessions with His disciples who are deeply disturbed by His words as He speaks about going away. But in John 14 He said,

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. (John 14:16-17)

The purpose of the series that we are beginning tonight is to bring you into the knowledge of the person of the Holy Spirit, in order that you might come into a full, rich relationship with Him. It is our desire to so present His glory and beauty that you will seek to yield your life fully to Him, that you might know His grace, His love, His power, and the gifts of the Spirit in your life. We desire that you might come to experience Him as did Finney--that great American evangelist and theologian, who wrote these words:

After dinner we [referring to Squire Wright and himself] were engaged in removing our books and furniture to another office. We were very busy in this, and had but little conversation all the afternoon. My mind, however, remained in that profoundly tranquil state. There was a great sweetness and tenderness in my thoughts and feelings. Everything appeared to be going right, and nothing seemed to ruffle or disturb me in the least.

Just before evening the thought took possession of my mind, that as soon as I was left alone in the new office, I would try to pray again--that I was not going to abandon the subject of religion and give it up, at any rate; and therefore, although I no longer had any concern about my soul, still I would continue to pray.

By evening we got the books and furniture adjusted; and I made up, in an open fireplace, a good fire, hoping to spend the evening alone. Just at dark Squire W, seeing that everything was adjusted, bade me goodnight and went to his home. I had accompanied him to the door; and as I closed the door and turned around, my heart seemed to be liquid within me. All my feelings seemed to rise and flow out; and the utterance of my heart was, "I want to pour my whole soul out to God." The rising of my soul was so great that I rushed into the room back of the front office, to pray.

There was no fire, and no light, in the room; nevertheless it appeared to me as if it were perfectly light. As I went in and shut the door after me, it seemed as if I met the Lord Jesus Christ face to face. It did not occur to me then, nor did it for some time afterward, that it was wholly a mental state. On the contrary it seemed to me that I saw Him as I would see any other man. He said nothing, but looked at me in such a manner as to break me right down at his feet. I have always since regarded this as a most remarkable state of mind; for it seemed to me a reality, that He stood before me, and I fell down at his feet and poured out my soul to Him. I wept aloud like a child, and made such confessions as I could with my choked utterance. It seemed to me that I bathed His feet with my tears; and yet I had no distinct impression that I touched Him, that I recollect.

I must have continued in this state for a good while; but my mind was too much absorbed with the interview to recollect anything that I said. But I know, as soon as my mind became calm enough to break off from the interview, I returned to the front office, and found that the fire that I had made of large wood was nearly burned out. But as I turned and was about to take a seat by the fire, I received a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost. Without any expectation of it, without ever having the thought in my mind that there was any such thing for me, without any recollection that I had ever heard the thing mentioned by any person in the world, the Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through me, body and soul. I could feel the impression, like a wave of electricity, going through and through me. Indeed it seemed to come in waves and waves of liquid love, for I could not express it in any other way. It seemed like the very breath of God. I can recollect distinctly that it seemed to fan me, like immense wings.

No words can express the wonderful love that was shed abroad in my heart. I wept aloud with joy and love; and I do not know but I should say, I literally belled out the unutterable gushings of my heart. These waves came over me, and over me, and over me, one after the other, until I recollect I cried out, "I shall die if these waves continue to pass over me." I said, "Lord, I cannot bear any more;" yet I had no fear of death. (Finney)

The experience in his own words, of Finney, that great American evangelist.

It is my prayer that you also shall come to a very vivid, glorious experience with the person of the Holy Spirit. It is important that we realize that the Holy Spirit is a person. If you think of the Holy Spirit only as an essence, only as a breeze, only as a power, it is very difficult to develop a meaningful relationship with an essence. If you think of the Holy Spirit as an impersonal force, an unintelligent power that permeates the universe, you really cannot love Him or call upon Him in your time of need.

He has been sent by the Father at the request of Jesus to come alongside of you to help you. Jesus said, "I will pray the Father. He shall give to you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16). And

even in that you have--what we will take up in the next lesson-- the Trinity, or the triunity of the Godhead. You have Jesus declaring,

I will pray the Father. He will give to you another Comforter [paraclete], even the Spirit of truth. (John 14:16)

The Son is praying to the Father that you might receive the Spirit.

Now there are certain necessary characteristics of personality. Three things are necessary for personality: 1) will, 2) intelligence, and 3) emotions. Personality has will, intelligence, and emotions. And if the Holy Scriptures ascribe these characteristics to the Holy Spirit, then it is safe to assume that He is indeed a person.

Personal pronouns are also used in reference to the Holy Spirit. In this promise that we read,

I will pray the Father. He [that is, the Holy Spirit] or the Father, He will give you another Comforter that He [the Holy Spirit] may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him. But you know Him for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you. (John 14:16-17)

And then in John 16,

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away. For if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you. But if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin because they believe not on Me. Of righteousness because I go to My Father and you see Me no more. Of judgment because the prince of the world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth, for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you. (John 16:7-14)

And so all of these personal pronouns are in reference to the Holy Spirit.

Intelligence is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 2,

But as it is written: Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those that love Him, but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of man save the spirit of man which is in him. Even so, the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God. (1 Corinthians 2:9)

He knows the things of God.

Which things also we speak [Paul said] not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but with the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (1 Corinthians 2:13)

Now notice the things that Paul says about the Holy Spirit in this passage. And that is that God reveals things to us by the Holy Spirit--that the Spirit searches all things, the deep things of God. The things of God that man does not know, the Spirit knows. We have received the Spirit of God that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God, and the Holy Spirit then teaches us.

The Holy Spirit is spoken of as having a will--a second characteristic of personality. In the disbursement of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul said,

But these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will. (1 Corinthians 12:11)

And then the Scripture speaks of the emotions of the Holy Spirit in Romans 15,

Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake and for the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me. (Romans 15:30)

Again the three, "I beseech for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake...for the love of the Spirit...and that you would strive together with me in your prayers to God for me"--Father, Son, Spirit.

In Isaiah 63 it says,

But they rebelled and vexed His Holy Spirit, therefore He was turned to be their enemy and fought against them. (Isaiah 63:10)

You can vex the Holy Spirit. Ephesians says,

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30)

So He can be grieved.

Now this would be impossible to say of just an essence or a non-person. A plant is a non-person. It would be ridiculous to say, "Oh, don't grieve that plant," or "You have vexed that plant--he is angry with you," or "Oh, that plant loves me." You see, you cannot say this of something other than a person. The Holy Spirit is a person who loves you and who can be grieved by you.

Not only are these characteristics of personality ascribed to the Holy Spirit--personal pronouns given to Him--but also there are personal acts that are attributed to the Holy Spirit. He speaks--again, it is hard for you to think of something other than a person speaking. In Acts, as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said,

Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. (Acts 13:2)

In 1 Timothy,

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith. (1 Timothy 4:1)

In Revelation,

He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit sayeth unto the churches. (Revelation 2:7)

Secondly, He intercedes,

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. (Romans 8:26 KJV emphasis added)

In the Revised Standard Version, "the Spirit Itself" is changed to "the Spirit Himself."

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. (Romans 8:26 RSV emphasis added)

He testifies in John,

But when the Comforter has come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceeds from the Father, He shall testify of me. (John 15:26)

Note again the three--when the Comforter has come, whom I will send to you from the Father--I will send from the Father. You have the Father, the Son, the Spirit.

Even the Spirit of truth which proceeds from the Father. He shall testify of me. (John 15:26)

It is doubly bound up in that verse. The Spirit of God teaches,

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:26)

And in Nehemiah,

Thou gavest also Thy good Spirit to instruct them and withheldest not the manna from their mouth and gave them water for their thirst. (Nehemiah 9:20)

He guides us in Acts,

Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go to Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered them not. (Acts 16:6-7)

And then He communes with us. Paul said,

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen. (2 Corinthians 13:14)

Again notice the three: grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; love of God; and communion of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit strives with men in Genesis,

And the Lord said, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man.' (Genesis 6:3)

And then He works miracles in Romans,

Through mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. (Romans 15:19)

Mighty signs and wonders are worked by the power of the Spirit of God.

Personal treatments are accorded to the Holy Spirit--that is, He can be grieved.

Paul said,

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30)

He can be lied to. In the case of Ananias and Sapphira,

But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? (Acts 5:3)

He can be resisted. Stephen, in his defense, in Acts said,

Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. (Acts 7:51)

He can be vexed. We have already looked at that in Isaiah,

But they rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit. (Isaiah 63:10)

He can be blasphemed. In Mark, Jesus said,

Verily, I say unto you, All sin shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme. But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. (Mark 3:28-29)

Now from these passages we can safely conclude that the Holy Spirit is indeed a person, possessing all of the characteristics of personality. And as a person, He can be known. As a person, you may develop a relationship with Him. As a person, you can come into a close, intimate fellowship with Him. And as a person, you can commune with Him.

Jesus, in promising the Holy Spirit, referred to the Holy Spirit as the paraclete. And He promised His disciples that He would pray the Father to give to them another Comforter--parakleton. The word paraklete in Greek means one who comes alongside to help. Jesus has been alongside of the disciples for several years. And He is now saying to them, "I am going away. Where I am going you cannot come now."

Surely you can imagine how they felt because they had come to so trust in the Lord. They had such confidence that He was the Master of every situation. Jesus was just a handy person to have around. They never had to worry when Jesus was there. If the Pharisees were trying to trip them up and stump them with some kind of a technical question, Jesus would handle them. And He could handle them quite handily. And so they would not have to worry--just talk to Him, you know. If there were taxes to pay and they did not have the money available--it was wonderful to have Jesus around--He would tell them just exactly how to get the money. "Go catch a fish, take the coin out of his mouth and pay the man." If they were out on a stormy sea in danger of sinking, it was always great to have Jesus around because He had the power to still the storm and to bring them safely into the desired haven.

All the way along they had come to trust in Jesus. They had come to rely upon Him. When Jesus was there, there was nothing to worry about. There was nothing to fear--He was there helping them. Now He is saying, "I am going away," and the disciples' hearts are filled with fear and turmoil. And that is why Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Those words indicated that their hearts were troubled--they were afraid. They wondered, "What will we do without Jesus?" And Jesus is now telling them what they will do.

"I will not leave you comfortless." The word there is orphans. I will not leave you as orphans. I will pray the Father--He will give you another parakleton, another Comforter--one who will come alongside of you to help you. And that is exactly what the purpose of the Holy Spirit is. He is the one to whom you may come into a personal relationship, who will come alongside of you and help you in and through every situation of life. And Jesus is saying, "Just as I was with you and took care of every situation, so the Holy Spirit will be with you and will take care of every situation for you."

And that is why it is so very important that each of us come to know the person of the Holy Spirit. To know Him in His fullness, in order that we might experience that comfort, that help, the strength that we all need, especially in these days in which we are living.

Through the grace of God we are praying that during this series of studies, God will give to you such a knowledge of the Holy Spirit, such a hunger for the Holy Spirit, such a thirsting after the Spirit, that you will come to know Him as He has been revealed to us in the Scriptures. As you come into a deep, personal, intimate relationship with Him, your life will be absolutely transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit working in you.

So, it is my purpose during these studies to introduce you to the Holy Spirit. And it is my prayer that you come into a long and fruitful relationship with Him--that you will come to depend upon Him for your guidance, for your help, for your strength, for your comfort, and for power. And I pray that He will come and become closer to you than any person you know. May you be bathed in His glory and may you yield to His influence as you allow Him to conform your life into the image of Jesus Christ.

Now it is always dangerous to look at the experience of others and seek to have a duplication of their experience. Although Finney described his experience as waves of liquid love just flowing over and over and over until he cried out, "I will die if these waves continue to pass over me"--and though he described his experience as electricity, waves of electricity going through and through him--that could very well not be your experience. It is not necessary that you have the same reactions to the Holy Spirit or the same feelings that Finney had. The Holy Spirit is sovereign in the gifts that He bestows upon the believers. He is sovereign in the way He relates to us. Some, as Finney, have described experiences like electrical shocks and others have described tingling sensations. Some have described just waves of glory, while still others have described just an incomprehensible peace and love filling and flooding their soul.

I cannot tell you what experience you may have or how you might relate and how it will feel to you. That is not the important issue. It is not the feelings that are important and the Lord did not give us the Holy Spirit that we might have sensational feelings, such as electricity or liquid love. Those are wonderful! I am not discounting them, but I am just saying, do not premise your experience on the feelings or reactions that you may have to the Holy Spirit. Yours may be entirely different and it may be that you will not feel anything. But that does not negate the relationship with the Holy Spirit and the power that you will experience in your life when you come into that full, complete relationship that God wants you to have--that the Holy Spirit desires to have with you.

The purpose is not that you might get more of the Holy Spirit; but the purpose is that the Holy Spirit might get more of you--that your life will become controlled by the Spirit. Your character will be controlled by the Spirit, so that you will be led by the Spirit, that you will walk in the Spirit, and that you will be filled with the Spirit.

We have some exciting days ahead. Now, you do not have to wait for the end of the lessons to gain the benefit. You can go home tonight and just yield yourself to the Holy Spirit, giving yourself over to His control, to His filling--the yielding and the surrendering of your life to Him. And you can begin even this night--that glorious walk in the Spirit and experience that fullness that God desires for each of us.

When you look at the life of Finney and read of his revival meetings in which thousands of people came to Jesus Christ--eighty-five percent of them stuck with the Lord. When you read about cities where he was holding meetings and, after the meeting, every bar in town was closed due to the lack of customers, you begin to realize what the Holy Spirit can do when He comes upon a person's life. You will never know your full potential in Christ until you have yielded to the fullness of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Gordon, Finney, Moody, Torrey, Jonathan Edwards--down the line, these men of God who have done such a great work for God in their lifetime--each of them have their own testimonies of experiencing of the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. And we hope, that as we go through this series that each evening, we will be able to give you a little personal testimony of these men as they relate, as did Finney, the experience they had of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And you will realize that the church is in desperate need today of a new, fresh work of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, we have sought to substitute programs and psychology and many other gimmicks for the power of the Holy Spirit. The church is suffering as a result and I am praying that God will give to us a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in each of our hearts and lives--a renewing of the life of the Spirit within the church. Surely we need it and surely our community needs it desperately.

Shall we pray?

Father, we thank You that You sent the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth; to teach us; to bear witness of Jesus Christ; to empower us. And we pray, Father, that You will bring us into a very rich, meaningful relationship with the Holy Spirit. As we learn about Him, as we learn about His work, as we learn about His gifts, and as we learn about His power, may we know more of His power in our own lives. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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