

“The Ministry Of The Holy Spirit”

Isaiah 61: 1 – 11; John 14: 15 – 27; Acts 4: 1 – 22; John 20: 19 - 22

Throughout the year we focus our attention on the person of Jesus, Jesus’ teachings as well as the attributes of God The Father.

On Pentecost we focus on God’s gift of The Holy Spirit. But we also need to spend some time on the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is a person.

The Holy Spirit not only has the same qualities as God, The Holy Spirit is God.

The Holy Spirit is the 3rd person in The Trinity.

The Holy Spirit was present at creation, the Holy Spirit was involved in the birth of Jesus Christ, and in the baptism of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is given to everyone who accepts Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord.

The Holy Spirit takes up permanent residence in every Christian.

Throughout scripture we are given different pictures or symbols of the Holy Spirit.

These pictures or symbols are important because they help us to have a better understanding of who The Holy Spirit is and the ministry of The Holy Spirit.

Last week we looked at wind and fire which were two pictures or symbols of The Holy Spirit present at Pentecost.

This morning we will look at a several more pictures or symbols of The Holy Spirit.

The next picture or symbol of The Holy Spirit is breath.

In Genesis we read that God made man in His own image.

And in Genesis 2:7 we read, ***“The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being.”***

It is our breath that shows life is present in our physical bodies. In the same way the Holy Spirit gives us spiritual life.

God The Holy Spirit breathes life into our spirit.

In our text from John we read that Jesus breathed on them and said, ***“Receive the Holy Spirit.”*** (John 20:22)

The next picture or symbol of The Holy Spirit is water.

In Isaiah 44:3 we read, ***“For I will pour water on the thirsty land. I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring and my blessing on your descendants.”***

In John 7:38-39 Jesus said, ***“whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him. By this Jesus meant the Spirit whom those who believed in Him would later receive. Up to that time The Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”***

Water gives life and water provides refreshment.

Without water we would quickly die.

When our life becomes dry, cracked, and / or shrivels up we need the refreshing flow of The Holy Spirit in our life to give us healing and restoration of our heart and soul.

Water also provides cleansing.

When our hands are dirty, we wash them with water.

Likewise, when our lives are filthy with sin, we need the cleansing power of The Holy Spirit to purify us.

Just as the gentle rain cleans the pollen and dust out of the air, The Holy Spirit cleanses the less conspicuous sin in our lives.

The next picture or symbol of The Holy Spirit is a dove.

When Jesus was baptized ***“The Holy Spirit descended on Him like a dove.”***

In Genesis 1:2 we read, ***“While the earth was without form, dark, and empty, the Holy Spirit hovered over the waters.”***

Doves have become the symbol of peace, love, gentleness, and purity. Also, doves were used as sacrifices in Old Testament times.

The Holy Spirit represents love, gentleness, peace, self-sacrifice, and purity.

The next picture or symbol for the Holy Spirit is oil.

In Zechariah 4 we read about a golden lamp stand that was fed by a constant supply of oil.

Just as an oil lamp provides light, the Holy Spirit enlightens our understanding of scripture.

The Holy Spirit is our teacher.

The light of The Holy Spirit also shows us the dark parts of our lives so we can be forgiven, repent, and restore a broken relationship with our Heavenly Father.

Throughout scripture we see that oil is used in anointing, to set people apart for service.

In 1st Samuel when David was anointed king of Israel, we read these words, ***“Then the Lord said, ‘Rise up and anoint him. He is the one.’ So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed David in the presence of his brothers and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power.”*** (1st Samuel 16:13)

In 1st John 2:20 we read that as Christians, ***“We have an anointing from the Holy One and all of you know the truth.”***

As Christians we all have been set apart and commissioned by the Holy Spirit to tell other people the truth about Jesus Christ.

The oil is a picture or symbol of God The Holy Spirit.

Oil also has medicinal purposes.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan we are told that the Good Samaritan poured oil and wine on the man’s wounds.

Likewise, the Holy Spirit provides cleansing and healing for our spiritual wounds.

When we anoint someone for healing and put oil on them, we know there is no special magical power in the oil nor is there any mystical power in the pastor’s hands.

The oil represents God The Holy Spirit and it is through the power of The Holy Spirit that we are healed.

It was the power of the Holy Spirit flowing through the Israelites that enabled them to fight off their enemies and for them to complete the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Then in Zechariah 4:6 we read these familiar words, ***“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord Almighty.”***

It is not by our strength or our resources that we are able to fight off our enemy, who is Satan.

It is only through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit that we are able to live the kind of life that pleases God.

And it is only through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit that we are able to accomplish the tasks that God has given each of us to do today.

The Good News is that God gladly gives The Holy Spirit to all who accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

God gave us His Spirit so that we will have the power, the courage, and the strength to follow Him and to live for Him.

God gave us His Spirit so that He will always be with us.

The Holy Spirit encourages us, protects us, empowers us, comforts us, and heals us.

God gave us His Spirit to teach us, to convict us, and to change us into the people He wants us to be.

We have God's gift of the Holy Spirit so we can experience the love, joy, the peace and the hope of Jesus in all aspects of our lives every day.

God gives us The Holy Spirit so we can experience the abundant victorious life Jesus promised, and so we can have meaning and purpose in our life.

The Holy Spirit was given to us so we can be like Jesus.

In our scripture reading from Isaiah we were introduced to the ministry of The Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit gives us the ability to preach the Good News. (verse 1)

The Holy Spirit ministers to broken hearts, delivers people from the bondage of Satan and sin, and The Holy Spirit comforts all those who mourn. (verse 2)

The Holy Spirit replaces grief, sorry, and despair with joy, peace, and praise. (verse 3)

The Holy Spirit rebuilds broken lives, broken relationships, and shattered dreams with righteousness (verse 4) so that we can minister to unbelievers. (verse 6)

The Holy Spirit guarantees our inheritance. (verse 7)

We receive God's blessings so that other people will see the benefits of being God's children and they will want to come to God.

A spirit filled person brings praise and glory to God in all they say and do. (verses 9 – 11)

Throughout The Old Testament we read about the Holy Spirit empowering some individuals like Moses, Joseph, Joshua, Gideon, Zechariah, Elijah, Elisha, and Sampson.

God sent His Spirit to empower those individuals for specific tasks and that power was for limited periods of time.

But the good news of Pentecost is that God The Holy Spirit is a gift to all people who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.

The good news of Pentecost is that God The Holy Spirit takes up permanent residence in all believers.

God The Holy Spirit indwells all believers.

God The Holy Spirit is not just for preachers, evangelists, elders, and deacons. God the Holy Spirit is for every believer.

God The Holy Spirit is given to empower all believers to live a life pleasing to Almighty God. When we stop and think, what task could be bigger or what task could be more important than every Christian living every day of their life in a way that pleases Almighty God?

The greatest miracle is for rotten sinners like me and you to be changed so that we can live a life that models Jesus' life.

Last week we also looked at the ministry of The Holy Spirit recorded in Chapters 14 – 17 of The Gospel According to John.

And we can read about The Holy Spirit empowering the early Church in The Book of Acts (Acts 4:31-35; 8:15-17; 10:44-46; 19:6)

If we as a church want to experience the power of The Holy Spirit today we all need to prepare ourselves by coming together in the unity of Christ, we need to be in constant prayer, and we need to respond to The Lord's leading.

The Holy Spirit is a gift from God to you as a believer.

In Luke 11:13 Jesus said, ***“If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in Heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.”***

You cannot earn the Holy Spirit, nor can you buy the Holy Spirit.

When Simon the Sorcerer tried to buy The Holy Spirit Peter said, ***“May your money perish with you because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money. You have no part in this ministry because your heart is not right before God.”*** (Acts 8:22)

We also need to remember that God created humans with the freedom of choice.

We can choose to let The Holy Spirit work in our lives or we can resist The Holy Spirit.

One of the strongest warnings in The Bible for believers is for us not to resist the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

In 1st Thessalonians 5:19 we are told not to ***“quench the fire of the Holy Spirit working in you.”*** and in Ephesians 4:30 we are told ***“not to grieve the Spirit of God”***

You see the gift of The Holy Spirit is like any other gift.

A gift can have our name on it but we must claim the gift as ours for the gift to do us any good.

We can claim a gift and we can examine the gift but until we use the gift, the gift has not done us any good.

This morning we all need to ask ourselves;

Am I grateful for God's gift of The Holy Spirit?

Am I experiencing the presence and the power of The Holy Spirit in my life every day?

Have I given The Holy Spirit permission to work in my life and to mold me into the person that God wants me to be?

Do I want to experience the fulfilled abundant victorious life that God planned for me?

The choice is up to each one of us.

AMEN