

The Life-Giving Spirit

Jeremiah 31:31-34

John 14:15-31

A young Luke Skywalker and an aging Obi-Wan Kenobi were in a Chinese restaurant having a meal. Skillfully using his chopsticks, Obi-Wan deftly dished himself a large portion of noodles into his bowl, then topped it off with some chicken and cashew nuts. All this was done with the consummate ease you'd expect from a Jedi Master. But poor young Luke was having a nightmare, using his chopsticks in both hands, dropping his food all over the table and eventually himself. Finally, Obi-Wan looked at Luke disapprovingly and said, "Use the forks, Luke."

Often, we think of the Holy Spirit as something similar to 'the force.'

In truth, it is difficult for us to comprehend someone that is spirit rather than flesh and not think of them as a force or power.

Who is the Holy Spirit? When we talk about God the Father, we can understand the concept of a Father, when we talk about God the Son, again we can understand a Son, but what happens when we say, God the Holy Spirit?

People can understand something they see or know, but we can't see the Spirit

In fact, it is quite common for people to talk about 'the Spirit' as a thing rather than as a person.

However, the Holy Spirit is God, He's not an it, but a person of the Godhead, and He is in every believer. The Holy Spirit does today what Jesus did 2000 years ago.

This morning, I'm going to look at the Articles of Faith of the Church of the Nazarene and we are going to focus our attention on the third Article, which is:

The Holy Spirit

Here is the description of this 3rd tenet of our faith:

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Triune Godhead, that He is ever present and efficiently active in and with the Church of Christ, convincing the world of sin, regenerating those who repent and believe, sanctifying believers, and guiding into all truth as it is in Jesus.

When I think of the Trinity, I like to think of each Person of the Trinity as they relate to their personalities and functions.

When I think of God the Father, I think of the Creator of the universe. I think about His majesty and His power. I think of His holiness and His righteousness and His mercy and love.

When I think of Jesus Christ, I think of my Redeemer. I think of my Savior and my Advocate. I think of my Friend who was willing to give everything He had for me and for you. He is the Lamb of God and the Lion of Judah.

And when I think of the Holy Spirit, I think of the Word of God in my own heart and mind.

He is my Conscience and my Guide. Without Him, I could not hope to walk this Christian life.

He is the Messenger. He is my constant Companion who reminds me that I belong to Christ and am a child of the Most High.

Romans 8:16-17 says it quite eloquently:

it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ...

Jesus spoke several times of the coming of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17):

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

Jesus Christ said that the Father would give us another Advocate.

An ‘advocate’ is one who publicly supports or recommends someone or something.

But what did He mean by ‘another?’

Jesus is your Advocate before God because it is only because of His righteousness and His blood that we can stand before God.

The Holy Spirit is God’s Advocate to you, enabling you to understand His Word when you study it and guiding you in your daily walk as you allow Him to work in and through you.

In fact, Jesus goes on to tell His disciples in verse 26:

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.

The Holy Spirit enters, and establishes a new relationship with us and God but this is only the beginning of His work in us.

The Holy Spirit marks us as belonging to God.

EPH. 1:13-14

13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

He is our seal of salvation, so that God can see from Heaven and know us to be His sons and daughters, He becomes our direct line, through Jesus, to the Father.

He convicts us of sin and the need for righteousness in our lives.

JOHN 16:8

8 When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment:

He teaches us to obey the Lord and to trust Him to direct our every step, and to put all our cares on Him for He is greater than any problem.

Through the Spirit we learn to develop greater reliance on the Lord, and less on human wisdom, or strength, or our own abilities.

Christians do not walk the road of holiness alone. Our Advocate, the Holy Spirit, was sent to instruct us and remind us.

In fact, God foretold the coming of the Holy Spirit to the people of Israel through the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:33):

But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

The way that God has written His law within us is through the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit knows our search for truth in the visible world is futile, we must seek God's Word.

JOHN 16:13 - He teaches us ways to see things deeper than what's on the surface, to help point out blind spots in our minds eye to those areas that are not completely yielded , or fully surrendered to God.

The Holy Spirit helps us to know God.

EPH. 1:17 - 18

17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit[a] of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,

He makes us wise and reveals God to us, and He helps us to understand the mind of God.

Without the Spirit, you cannot understand the things of God.

We need spiritual "eyes" in our hearts in order to see God and His ways more clearly. That's when we begin to understand the mind of God, how He thinks, and how that knowledge will help us in our daily walk.

The more we want to know of Him, the more the Spirit reveals to us.

One of the biggest mistakes that we can make is to try to live a holy life without nurturing the relationship that we have with God through the Holy Spirit.

Some of you may have never never driven a car that doesn't have power steering.

If you had ever driven a truck or bus without power steering, you'd realize how difficult it is to steer the vehicle, especially at slower speeds.

You are constantly fighting the vehicle's natural desire to go where it wants to go rather than where you want it to go.

That is how it is if you do not surrender to the power of the Holy Spirit in your life and try living a Christian life without His power.

One of the most important things the Holy Spirit does for us is to help us learn to think like God.

When His Spirit takes over our thoughts, that's when things happen. Our priorities change.

Before Christ, it was all about me, what I could do, what I wanted, what I thought was best.

My carnal desire is to go in the wrong direction.

If you try to go in the right direction without the power of the Holy Spirit, you will find it almost impossible. Much of the book of Romans is based upon this teaching.

We don't belong to ourselves anymore, we belong to God.

We've been bought by a price and are no longer our own.

We become better because God's Spirit is a superior influence in our life, not because we are superior as individuals.

The Holy Spirit gives wisdom beyond our natural abilities, as we learn to listen to Him.

As it speak about in JAMES 3:17, If we allow ourselves to be totally immersed in God, to focus on His thoughts, then we can do powerful things in this world.

And Paul tells us in Ephesians 3:16

I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit...

The Greek word for ‘power’ that Paul uses is ‘dynamis,’ from which we get our word ‘dynamite.’

The Holy Spirit at work within us can be dynamite power if we allow Him to work within us and through us.

Obedience is only possible through the Holy Spirit.

Peter begins his letter to the exiles that have been dispersed throughout the known world and says (1 Peter 1:2):

...who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood...

We are sanctified, or made holy, only by the Spirit.

In Fact, it is only through the Holy Spirit that anyone can come to Christ in the first place, let alone begin to be molded into the person that God made us to be.

It is the Holy Spirit that convicts of sin and urges the lost to the cross of Christ.

Church, The Holy Spirit reminds us of who we are in Christ.

WE ARE :

. God’s children JOHN 1:12

. Christ’s friend JOHN 15:15

- . United with the Lord 1COR. 6:17
- . Bought with a price 1 COR. 6:19-20
- . Member of the body of Christ 1 COR. 12:27
- . A saint, set apart for God EPH. 1:1
- . Established, anointed, sealed by God COL. 2:10
- . Citizen of Heaven PHIL. 3:20
- . Salt and light of the earth MAT. 5:13-14
- . Assured all things work together for God ROM 8:28
- . God's Temple 1COR. 3:16
- . Seated with God in Heavenly realms EPH. 2:6
- . Redeemed and forgiven COL. 1:14
- . A personal witness of Christ ACTS 1:8
- . Can approach God with freedom and confidence EPH. 3:12
- . Can do all things through Christ . PHIL 4:13
- . A branch of the true vine JOHN 15:1-5
- . Complete in Christ COL 2:10

In short, we belong to God!

Today, let's think about what this country really needs. We think that it needs a leader with Christian ethics that puts God first in all things.

That is not likely to happen.

We think that we need a Supreme Court that will uphold laws that were principled on the Bible.

That is not likely to happen any time soon either.

We think that we know what America needs, but I want to tell you right now that what America needs most is a revival!

The common misconception is that a revival is a time when a bunch of people come to Christ, but that is not what a revival is.

People coming to Christ is a byproduct of a revival.

A revival is a time when Christians come back to God and remember their 'first love.'

In Revelation, Jesus Christ tells the church at Ephesus that He sees all that they are doing for Him, but that they have forgotten their first love...Him.

He tells them to repent and do the works that they did when they first came to Him.

Jesus tells the church at Laodicea that they are neither hot nor cold and since they are lukewarm, He is about to spit them out of His mouth.

Far too many Christians today have lost their first love and have become lukewarm.

I believe that this is the real reason that God may have taken His protective hand away from America.

Let us pray for what America needs the most: Revival.

Let it start right here with you and with me. May Christians all over this nation repent of their failing morality and remember their first love. Let it start right here at LCN!

