

Things of the Spirit - Intro

Today we begin a new series called “Things of the Spirit”. The goal in this series is to learn what the bible says about the Holy Spirit and to dispel the lies that satan has spread about the Holy Spirit.

I’ve told some of you that I feel God has given me direction for this year to preach on some things that our church needs growing and stretching in. That began with prayer which is why we broke down the Lord’s Prayer over several weeks. The second thing was the things of the Spirit.

We need to see more of the Spirit in this church.....in our services and in our lives outside these four walls. We need more of God’s Spirit.

Some of you are afraid of the Holy Spirit. You’ve been lied to and believed those lies. Some have seen people misuse or abuse the things of the Spirit and don’t want any part of it again. Some of you just don’t really know what I’m talking about.

All of those things are ok...for today.....just don’t stay there. I want to pray for God to open your heart and your spiritual eyes to the truths of His Spirit today...

Matthew 28:18-20 (NKJV)

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

Here, Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit on the same level as the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is God just as the Father is God and the Son is God. This is a collective reference to the Trinity. Three persons, one God.

Fun fact...the Holy Spirit is just as important as God the Father and Jesus. Yet many believers today wholly embrace the Father and Jesus but want nothing or at least very little to do with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus teaches that the Holy Spirit is important. And Jesus commanded us to make disciples and teach them to observe all the things He commanded you. So teach the importance of the Spirit! Don’t ignore Him, don’t avoid Him, don’t leave Him out!

Yes I said HIM. Do you know the Holy Spirit is a person? Baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In His name. The Holy Spirit is not a force, He’s a person.

So often the Holy Spirit is talked about like some kind of impersonal force.....this strange thing that does strange stuff.....it is a thing but isn't a thing.....it's kind of like just floating around and sometimes doing stuff.....NO, He's a person.

It may be hard to wrap your mind around because you can't physically see Him. But check this out:

- He thinks:

1 Corinthians 2:11 (NKJV)

For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

- He has feelings:

Ephesians 4:30 (NKJV)

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

- He has desires and decides things:

1 Corinthians 12:11 (NKJV)

But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

- He can be lied to:

Acts 5:3 (NKJV)

But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?"

These things can't be so if the Holy Spirit is an impersonal force. He's personal. He creates, teaches, guides, comforts, empowers, convicts, restrains sin, gives commands.

What I'm trying to do here is change your perspective of the Holy Spirit. Stop thinking of Him as an it. Stop thinking of Him as some mystical force. Start thinking of Him as a person. Start thinking of Him as God!

I've heard it said that the Holy Spirit is the most ignored person in the church. Why is that?

I think the church doesn't talk enough about Him. In a church like ours maybe you hear what He does on occasion. Most churches just skate on by.....

Acts 19:1-2 (NKJV)

And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

I believe this is still somewhat true today! People hear about Jesus, for a good reason right? There is no other name by which you can be saved!

But some people have never even heard about this person the Holy Spirit. And if they have it's been negative.

Can I tell you that the Holy Spirit is GOOD? Can I tell you that He's ONLY GOOD?

Just consider His name....HOLY.....SPIRIT.....he's uncommon, set apart, unlike any other....He is GOD.....therefore He is GOOD!

In the NT when you see references to the Holy Spirit, it's the Greek word *pneuma* - a movement of air, wind, breath

Acts 2:2 (NKJV)

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

He was described AS or LIKE a rushing mighty wind.....I always key in on the rushing or mighty part. I think about the way He came in power and really kind of wrecked those people waiting in that room....and really the whole community.

But the focus shouldn't be on the the rushing or mighty as much as it should be on the wind. See this is where we box in the Holy Spirit. Good or bad. Do you know the Holy Spirit is more than speaking in tongues? Do you know that He's more than a "good influence"?

The Holy Spirit is God.....and God is unpredictable. You know who'd predictable? Satan....he's predictable, once he's come at you a few times, you know how he's coming.....but don't you know that the Holy Spirit comes in ways you can't even imagine? He's like a WIND!

John 3:8 (NKJV)

The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Today, let go of anything you think you know about how the Spirit works. I'm not saying they aren't true, but they aren't the only ways and you need to start expecting the unexpected because that's where you will likely find God's Spirit!

"The early Celtic Christians called the Holy Spirit 'the wild goose.' And the reason why is they knew that you cannot tame him." ~ John Eldredge

Now I'm not proposing that we call the Holy Spirit "the wild goose" but I think we need to have the expectation that when He shows up....it's not always going to be in the form of a gentle dove or a little flickering flame....

Let's look at three ways the Holy Spirit is like the wind:

1. Force

There are days where it seems like the wind is so forceful that it's going to uproot every tree, flip over cars, rip the tops off of houses...yes I think I just described a tornado....but there are days where you wonder.....it seems like the wind is almost blowing to that level of force.

You can't see the wind but you see the effects of the wind. And you can hear the wind, or the effects of it.

But then there are other times, when the wind is blowing yet you can barely detect it. You have to stop, be still, be quiet, and observe.....you can see some leaves barely moving.....if you don't focus you will miss it and think there is no wind at all....

So it is with the Holy Spirit....there are times when He's moving so greatly and powerfully and you see things moving and shaking in your life...possibly to the extent that it even scares you a little because you don't know the effects that this great force of the Spirit is going to have on your life.

Some of you were saved in this manner. Where God picked you up spun you around, it seemed like you were in the middle of a tornado. The wind of the Spirit came tearing through your soul and seemingly destroyed all that had been built so that He could start afresh in you!

Others maybe didn't have that experience, maybe the Spirit moved more like a breeze.....so gently that you didn't even recognize when He first came or if He's still working. It is in the prayer of a mother, father, friend as they pray for you with tears in their eyes.....it is in the reading of the scriptures as seeds of faith are planted in your heart to one day spring up to life in you!

See you can't just look for God to move in the way you expect. Your story is not someone else's. God may not do with you what He did with someone else. He may not even come with the same force that He did the last time.....but know that He's always moving....whether like a tornado or a gentle breeze.

2. Direction

Another way we see the Spirit like a wind is in His direction. The wind is always shifting. I've heard it claimed before that there were never two winds that blew in exactly the same direction, that there is some deviation in every current of wind.

Just when you think you have the wind figured out, it can shift. Have you ever been driving down the interstate with the steering wheel gripped tight and turned about 45% just to drive straight and all of the sudden you feel a gust the other direction and it scares the life out of you?

I think the wind of the Spirit is much like that....just when we think we have Him figured out....He tends to blow this way so I'll set up my resistance just so and it will keep me going the way I want to go....and He'll send that little gust from the other way just to remind you and it about scares the life out of you....

As the Spirit changes direction in your life sometimes it blows from this stage or pulpit, sometimes it blows through a bible study or a talk with a friend....sometimes it will be from the testimony of His work in someone else.

His wind may blow through different scriptures, one brought you to salvation, another comforts you in times of sorrow, yet another builds your faith in times of doubt.

The Spirit blows the direction He chooses. Don't look at the patterns and try to detect where He's going next. He may have done X last time but I think He's kind of like the claim that there were never two winds that blew in exactly the same direction....I think it may be similar yet different in some way. Let God move how God moves.

One thing you can know for sure.....when the wind of the Spirit blows.....it may come from one direction and go to another and whip around in between but it will always end up in the exact same place.....JESUS!

3. Duration

The third way we see the Holy Spirit like the wind is in duration. I don't mean duration as in He will only work in your life for a time and then leave....

John 14:16-17 (NKJV)

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

Jesus wouldn't leave and send the Holy Spirit to just work and abandon us. Rest assured that when Jesus said He is with you, it's by His Spirit. If He's with you, He will never leave you.

But there can be a difference in duration as to the force or direction. See we think when God's doing something that to us is good....that it should continue forever.

How many of you have been in a service or personal time of worship and felt the wind of the Spirit in a way that you never wanted to end? But did it? Of course it did! There's a duration to the things of the Spirit but if it only lasts for a while it's because He's moved on to working in another way or direction. He's still working.

OK so the Spirit will vary in force, direction and duration.....what do we do with this?

“When you read the New Testament, you see the Holy Spirit was supposed to change everything so that this gathering of people who call themselves Christians had this supernatural element about them.” ~ Francis Chan

The Holy Spirit changes lives. In fact you can't even have life without Him....

John 6:63 (NKJV)

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

It's the Holy Spirit who gives life! That life is only available because of the fact that Jesus died on the cross and was raised to life by the power of the Spirit. Jesus is Savior. But the Spirit gives life....

If you don't have the Holy Spirit, you don't have Jesus! The Holy Spirit is the **pneuma** or in the OT, the **ruwach** both mean wind or breath.....He's the very breath of God. This is why He gives life. He IS the breath of God.

This is why we need the Spirit. You can't hear God's voice if not by His breath. You can't live if you don't have breath.

Yes the Spirit is weird. He's supernatural. He's here to CHANGE people....that means make them different....weird....not the same....And He's going to do it His way...with whatever force, direction or duration He chooses.

But know that the result is life. The result is Jesus.

And that should be exciting! The should cause a stirring in your heart!

A desire for something more....something different.

“In my experience, take the Holy Spirit out of the equation of your life and it spells boring. Add it into the equation of your life and you never know where you are going to go, what you are going to do, or who you are going to meet.” ~ Mark Batterson

Today if you want life to be boring....just stay seated where you are at. But if you want life to be different. If you want the Spirit of the living God to breath on you today.....stand to your feet and get to this altar!

If today you need to be born again, made new...come.

If you want a fresh touch from God....come.

If you need the Spirit to come through like a tornado....come

If you need to hear His voice like a gentle breeze....come.

I can assure you that He is able....and not by my power but by God's Spirit!