

Pentecost is a day we celebrate the Holy Spirit. He is impossible to miss on this day. He bursts onto the scene, as we heard in Acts ch.2 (earlier in our service).

People often have questions about the Holy Spirit: What *does* He *do*? [pause] How does He do it? [pause]

Some might think the Holy Spirit's part in *HisStory* comes on Pentecost, like: first came the Father, then came the Son, and finally the Holy Spirit's time to shine arrives. Did it happen that way?

There are many ideas and opinions about the Holy Spirit and his work. Some people simply don't know what to think. They haven't yet learned what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit and His work. What is true? Just who is the Holy Spirit? What has he been up to? And for how long? That's what we'll answer today.

Go back with me. Does the Old Testament specifically mention the Holy Spirit? If so, how often – in how many books?

Answer: Would it surprise you to hear? There are more than one hundred such references to the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. They come in almost two-thirds of the Old Testament books: 22 of the 39! You'll find them spread across all the major sections: the first 5 books recorded by Moses, the historical books, the Psalms and the Prophets.

In fact, to stretch our view... the Holy Spirit is named from Genesis ch.1 to Revelation ch.22.

Do you know where and how the Holy Spirit is mentioned in Genesis ch.1?

Answer: vs.2 – “the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”

Where and how is the Holy Spirit mentioned in Revelation ch.22?

Answer: vs.17 – “the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ ... Whoever is thirsty, let him come... let him take the free gift of the water of life.”

What do these first and last references remind us about the Holy Spirit?

The Bible isn't quiet – never has been – about the Holy Spirit and His work. “Ok, got it! [He is] Present from eternity and active throughout all time.”

Someone might still think: “Maybe the Holy Spirit is just the quiet type, the ‘silent one’ in our Triune God.” After all, we hear the Father's voice boom from heaven on several occasions. Each Sunday we hear some of the words Jesus spoke. So what do you think:

How quiet is the Holy Spirit?

Do we forget that before “In the beginning” of Genesis 1:1, and after the “amen” of Revelation 22:21, we should really in our minds picture a pair of huge quotation marks? This whole book is the Holy Spirit’s own words – every word here!

- 2 Peter 1:20-21 – Know this – it is a matter of first importance: never did a single prophecy of Scripture come about by the prophet’s own ideas. Here’s why: prophecy certainly never had its origin in the will of a man. Instead, men spoke from God; specifically, they were carried along by God the Holy Spirit.
- 2 Timothy 3:16 – All Scripture is God-breathed. (God the Holy Spirit is the source; the Words are 100% his.)

“Ok. Check! The Holy Spirit has spoken a treasure load.”

And yet, let’s admit: we can’t see the Holy Spirit. We can’t hear Him speak in our ear. And so there is a danger of us forgetting his work. It is important to impress on our hearts just how he is at work. What is he up to in the world?

Consider this fact: 1 Corinthians 12:3 “No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.”

Think of the millions who have raised their voice in faith... “We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life.” Yeah! What joy! Friends, that is the power of the Holy Spirit!

He is our Life-giver. That title is taken right from John 6:63: “The Spirit gives life.” The Holy Spirit breathes faith into our souls and keeps that faith strong through the Word.

Just how does he do this? “These words are Spirit and life” – John ch.6. He delivers the words of Law to us. Yep. You betcha! He opens our eyes to see the truth we so often try to hide. We may hide it from others. We try to even shove it where we won’t see it. But as soon as I look here [Bible], I don’t have to look any further than the first commandment to see what I’d just-as-soon forget. I see when I have gotten mad or copped an attitude toward God, because I didn’t get just what I wanted. Or, I didn’t get it as fast as I wanted. I see when I have had plenty of appreciation for what I was able to accomplish, while forgetting to thank or think of the Giver of my eyes, ears and all my members, my mind and all my abilities. I see when I have thought: “I know better than Him, and so I ignored what He has spoken so clearly right here [in God’s Word].

In John 16:7-8 Jesus says, “The Holy Spirit, the Counselor, will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin.” People don’t like to hear this. Many close their ears to it. There is a part of us – our sinful nature – that hates to hear this (it always will!). But – Praise the Lord! – the Holy Spirit broke through our dead, cold hearts of stone.

He breathed spiritual life into our cold hearts. He breathed into us the good news of what Jesus has done to rescue us from sin. And through that good news, He breathed life into our

souls – life that came in Jesus. When that breath of Life fills our spirit, we shudder at our sin – our eyes see it for what it is, and turn towards Jesus in joy over His forgiveness.

You and I thank our Lord for this new life that we enjoy and the eternal life that is ours in Jesus. But there's more! The Holy Spirit is a tremendous gift to us every moment of our lives.

Do you ever think... "Life gets so confusing at times." Where is truth to be found at such moments? Do you ever hear... "There is no truth! Truth is only what people make it to be. What you say doesn't matter!"? Do you ever wonder... "How am I going to teach my kids to navigate through this world?" Do you ever just... throw your hands up and say: "I feel so lost right now!"?

From the day the Holy Spirit gifted you with faith, He has been at your side ... at your side from that point forward, every moment.

John 16:13 "When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all truth."

John 14:26 "The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, will teach you all things and will remind you..."

When you open your Bible or recall to memory God's Word you have previously learned, the Holy Spirit is there – teaching you truth – reminding you of the Truth. When you study these words, the Holy Spirit is directing you by showing you there is nothing more important for you and for your children in this life than to know the Truth about how much God loves you and just what he did to save you.

When you think, "I know it all already – I don't need to hear any more for now – I've got this," the Holy Spirit directs you to how mistaken that thought is. He tells you how very important it is that you keep studying His Word. Keep learning. For that is how faith is fed and grows.

He shows us how we have enemies who want to destroy us – the closest of these lives in our own hearts.

The Holy Spirit, through the Word, identifies sin at work in our minds, our emotions, our world. It's such sin that our enemies – the sinful nature, the world and the devil - would seek to utilize. They always seek footholds in their effort to destroy our faith in Jesus. They want to drain us of strength (physically), to drag us into despair (emotionally/psychologically), and to lead us to give up spiritually and fall away from God.

The Holy Spirit leads us to confront sin and call it what it is – see it for what it is.

The Holy Spirit turns us again and again to Jesus. He walks us to the cross. He takes us by the hand to the empty tomb... He assures us: HE has won the victory for us; He loves us. When the Accuser stabs at us with thoughts to get us to doubt, the Holy Spirit comforts us with the good news that our sin has been paid for. God's gospel, his good news, not only tells us what Jesus did for us. This living Word of God actually heals us. We also include here the healing and

strength the Holy Spirit gives through Baptism and the Lord's Supper, where God's Word is connected with all its power and blessings.

Someone might say: What about times I don't feel anything changed after coming to Sunday worship or after I've done Bible Study?

Know: God's blessings of forgiveness and healing aren't based on whether we feel a difference afterwards. Emotions can be fickle. They aren't trustworthy. They can mislead. God's Word – you can trust.

“My peace I give you,” Jesus says. It's not the world's kind of peace. Think about the world's peace. It is based on feelings or conditions that easily and often change. And so it lacks certainty. The peace Jesus gives us is different. It is based on the facts of his saving work for us. Those are unchanging truths. And so the peace he gives to us, believers, is certain.

Hear the word of the Lord. He who has ears, let him hear what the Spirit says: “The peace that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus!” – Philippians 4. Amen.