



**Who's Afraid of the Holy Spirit? – Part 1**  
**Various Scriptures**  
**GCSP – 02/06/2010**

Let's Pray

In general, what is it that we have a tendency to fear? Primarily it is the unknown. We desire a great measure of control in any circumstance we are in the midst of, and in order to have any measure of control you need to have all the facts.

If you fear another person it is mainly because you have no control over them and thus their actions towards you are to a great extent unknown. If you fear a disease that may have taken hold in your body it is primarily because you have no control and it is unknown how that disease is attacking your body. If you fear driving in an unfamiliar part of town or on a dark icy road it is because the unknown has removed a certain measure of the control you perceived you had.

I submit to you that the primary reason the Holy Spirit is not active in most Christian's lives, and thus most churches, is because He is by and large unknown to them. They may attribute that they believe in the Holy Spirit and they may acknowledge His presence and His gifts, but they don't know Him, and thus to a certain extent they fear Him; and I am not talking about a reverential fear. They fear the Holy Spirit as they fear the uncertain future; because He is pretty much unknown to them.

As we begin this journey tonight I trust that all of us will eventually be able to truthfully answer the question posed as the title of this series, Who's Afraid of the Holy Spirit?, with a confident and resounding, "Not me!" And I trust your answer will be because you will know Him as intimately as you can possibly know any person – for He is indeed a Person.

I also want you to know that I have no preconceived progression in this series. I haven't a clue as to what next week's sermon will be at this point other than it being on the topic of the Holy Spirit. I don't have a list of issues we need to study. I don't have a progression of Scripture to follow or even a specific resource book that I am working my way through. I have thirteen different books I am reading through and several other sermons series' I am listening to as a compliment to the Scriptures I am focusing on, but none of them is a complete or exhaustive study, and none of them are arranged in such a manner that I feel led to follow.

Also, the resources I am using come from a wide variety of Christian backgrounds. Five of the authors I am reading have long since passed from this earth. Of those who are still living, one is a Baptist, two would be considered to be Charismatic, and the rest probably fall somewhere in between.

I am not revealing names because I do not want you to bring any preconceived notions or prejudices with you into these studies – and we all have them towards certain teachers and preachers whether we will admit it or not. Regardless of their background I

am focusing on their exposition of God's Word, not their personal experiences or denominational slants.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Gospel of **John**.

### **John 14:16-17**

In His last moments with His disciples prior to the Cross, Jesus conveys a truth they did not truly comprehend. Whether their minds were preoccupied with the events of the day or this was just another one of those teachings from Jesus that perplexed them and no one had the guts or inclination to ask questions, we don't know. But we do know by their reactions and responses to the events that transpire within hours of Jesus relating this truth, they didn't understand what Jesus was saying.

And this is a good place for us to make a practical application. Your personal understanding of a passage or topic in Scripture does not make it true or false. God's Word is true regardless of your own thoughts or understanding. The disciples were clueless as to what Jesus meant by another Helper coming to them, but it didn't lessen the fact that it was true.

Hold your place in the Gospel of **John** and turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **2 Peter**.

### **2 Peter 1:20-21**

So be extremely careful as to what you are dogmatic about when it comes to God's Word. Be very sure you have God's interpretation and God's application before you take a stand on a verse of Scripture based on how you personally view it; which is why I am constantly reminding you and me alike to always believe what you read in Scripture instead of reading what you believe. Our personal interpretations and beliefs cause us to often add to or take away from what is on the printed page; and that is sin.

It is often these perversions of God's Word, these private interpretations that bring division within the church. Most Christians only know enough of their Bible to be dangerous, and even those who know their Bible well often bring their private interpretations into passages that challenge their beliefs, and thus figure out how to explain away any words that don't fit.

Going back now to what Jesus told His disciples in **John 14**, we see that Jesus is going to ask the Father and He is going to give the disciples another Helper. We won't go into the first truth found here: That Jesus is going to ask and the Father is going to give, not that Jesus is going to ask and the Father will consider giving; a topic for another day perhaps. But the first truth I want us to consider is what exactly is meant by the term, "**another Helper**"?

First, there are two Greek words translated as our English word, "another" – *allos* and *heteros*. *Allos* means another of the same kind and/or in addition to the same kind. *Heteros* means another of a different kind.

For example, if I were to take your Bible from out of your lap and tell you I was going to give you a *heteros* Bible in return, I could give you any other Bible and it would fit with

the meaning of the word. But, if I were to tell you I was going to give you an *allos* Bible in return, I would have to give you a Bible with the exact same pages, the exact same markings and notes you have recorded, the exact same binding and color and rips and dog ears, and with the exact same wear and tear, printed on the exact same printing press at the exact same moment.

Jesus tells His disciples that the Father is going to give them a *heteros* Helper when He leaves. The Holy Spirit is God. Jesus the Son is God. The Father is God. Back up a few verses and we will see this as the Lord has to explain things to Philip.

### **John 14:7-9**

In this passage Jesus plainly states that He and the Father are One in the same. In **verse 16** Jesus plainly states that He and the Holy Spirit are One in the same. When the Helper, the Holy Spirit, comes it means Jesus will be coming back to be with them, only in a different form and for a different amount of time.

That brings us to the next truth: The Helper will be with them forever. Not just when they were physically in the presence of Jesus right now, but always and forever. Not just as long as they kept their eyes on Him, but always and forever. Not just as long as they were obedient to His leading, but always and forever. And I know a few of you disagree with me on this, but not just as long as you want the Holy Spirit to be with you, but always and forever.

And the last truth I want us to consider in this passage is Jesus tells the disciples that they already know the Helper. How can that be? Again, based on how the disciples react to the arrest, crucifixion, and death of Jesus, they are clueless as to what Jesus is telling them here concerning the Holy Spirit; yet Jesus plainly states they know Him.

This goes right back to the fact that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are One in the same. Jesus tells His disciples and He tells us, if you know Me you know the Holy Spirit. The only difference is you only have Me while I am in your presence but you have the Holy Spirit always and forever because He abides with you and will be in you.

I know there is still some difficulty with this truth for most believers so we will spend the rest of time tonight developing the truth that the Holy Spirit is a Person and not just some emanation or ghost or floating mysterious entity. For as long as you cannot cement in your mind that He is a Person there will be an unhealthy fear because He will remain primarily unknown to you, and thus you will never be the Christian you are meant to be.

If you know God the Father as a Person, and you know God the Son as a Person, but you do not know God the Holy Spirit as a Person but only as an impersonal influence or power, you will be robbing Him of the worship that is due Him; you will be robbing Him of the love that is due Him; you will be robbing Him of the reverence that is due Him. Apart from knowing God the Holy Spirit as a Person you will not have the confidence or faith in Him as you should and you will not surrender to Him or obey Him as you should; you will relegate Him to a second class status in your spiritual life.

For starters we will stay in our current passage and define the word translated as Helper or Counselor or Comforter, depending on the translation you may have. The Greek word is *parakletos* and its literal translation is, "one who is called or sent for to assist." The definition is not referring to an emanation or floating spirit that is called or sent for but a person that is called or sent for.

Jesus considered Himself to be a *parakletos* in the context of saying the Father would give them a *heteros parakletos*, another Helper. So by this alone if Jesus is a Person then the Holy Spirit is also a Person. And when we do not view the Holy Spirit as a Person we are to a certain extent denying His deity. I doubt any genuine believer would say they deny the deity of the Holy Spirit, but we certainly neglect Him and His lordship within our lives and within the church.

The thing is, you either want God or you don't want Him; and by the mere fact that most churches today have degenerated into a social club with a mild religious flavor shows that most truly do not want God. The average church today could not operate with only a Bible and a songbook; and that is because the average church today does not hold the Holy Spirit as the center of attention and the main attraction. The Lord is not in charge and thus we need all of the other enticements to attract people.

The great woe of the church is not the presence of stages and bands and singers and multi-media and drama, but necessity for them because the presence of the Holy Spirit is absent. The tragedy is trying to make up for His absence by adding and doing these other things to keep our own spirits up.

Tozer says, "Some churches are so completely out of the hands of God, if the Holy Ghost withdrew from them, they would not find it out for three months" – or longer I would add.

I do not believe the Holy Spirit completely withdraws from a church as long as there are still genuine believers there, but just like Jesus was asleep in the boat while the storm raged, I believe He can in essence go to sleep, not make Himself known and let us try to get along without Him for as long as we choose.

And I believe this happens all the time. It can even happen in our worship time. I have heard people refer to certain songs as being anointed, and maybe some are, but often the song isn't necessarily anointed but your own personal enthusiasm for the song gets you worked into a frenzy and you automatically believe the Holy Spirit is present. He may well be but it could also simply be your enthusiasm for that song.

Enthusiasm is not the Holy Spirit, beloved. For most people who simply get enthusiastic over the singing or some other aspect of the church service, will also be the same people who leave the service and revert back to living like the world. The Holy Spirit does not fill a person and allow them to so easily go back to living like the world.

Incidentally, this is the exact reason most Christians do not want to be filled with the Spirit; they want to live the way they want to live and have the Holy Spirit as a little something extra when they need it. They want the Holy Spirit to be something added to their life, but beloved, the Holy Spirit will not be some add-on to your life like adding

some ketchup to your hamburger. The Holy Spirit will be the Lord of your life or He will be nothing in your life!

Beloved, the Holy Spirit is a Person. I can't show Him to you but He is here right now in this room. He is a knowing and feeling personality. He knows exactly how you are responding to this sermon. He knows why you came here tonight. He knows what you are going to say as soon as this service is over. He knows your every thought right now this very instant.

The Holy Spirit is a Person. He is exactly like Jesus just as Jesus is exactly like the Father. **Hebrews 1:3** tells us that Jesus is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His nature; which means the Holy Spirit is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His nature as well.

What does the Holy Spirit think of sick people? The answer to that is simply asking the question, what did Jesus think of sick people? We have that all throughout the Gospels. What does the Holy Spirit think of children? Just recall what Jesus thought of children and you have your answer. Beloved, it is that simple to know the Holy Spirit.

Before we look at some other verses that show us the Personhood of the Holy Spirit, let me give you another danger of only viewing Him as an influence or power. If your view is of the Holy Spirit merely being an influence or power, then your thoughts will constantly be, "How can I get hold of the Holy Spirit and use this power and influence in my life?" But if you think of Him biblically as a Person, as a Person of divine glory and majesty, your thoughts will be, "How can the Holy Spirit get hold of me and use me?"

That is a huge difference; an important difference; an all-encompassing difference. The difference between a man or a woman sold out for God and His glory, and a man or a woman warming a chair in the services each week. That's the difference between a man or a woman who is filled with the Holy Spirit and a man or a woman who is filled with themselves.

And if you think of the Holy Spirit as an influence or power you can obtain and use, and then consider yourself to have obtained it, the inevitable result will be that you will strut around as if you belong to some superior class of Christians; and we see that all the time don't we?

But if we view the Holy Spirit in the Biblical way, as a divine Person of infinite majesty, who comes to dwell in you and take possession of you and use you as He wills and not as you will, it will lead to abject humility; not a feeling of being superior to your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Holy Spirit is a Person. He has a will, intelligence, feeling, knowledge, sympathy; He loves, sees, thinks, speaks, and hears, the same as other persons do. The Holy Spirit desires to fill you with all of the characteristics and attributes of God; and I believe the reason this is so foreign to the church today is because it is not taught in the church today.

I read the account of a lady who attended a church on the other side of a city coming to this church many miles away to ask the pastor and elders to anoint her with oil and pray for her healing. When asked why she drove this great distance instead of going to her pastor and elders, she replied, "Oh, they don't teach that at my church." At the same time if you asked this other pastor and the other elders if they believed God could heal the sick, I am sure they would say, "Of course." But what is not believed strong enough will not be taught.

Most Christians and most churches will say they believe in the filling of the Holy Spirit but they do not experience it because they do not believe it strongly enough to study it out and teach it. It lies under the snow, buried under a layer of ice and forgotten. We cannot simply say we believe it and leave it buried under the ice and snow; we need to pray and beg and plead with God to melt the snow and ice, and fill us with His Holy Spirit as we yield our lives completely to Him.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Romans**.

### **Romans 15:30**

The Holy Spirit loves. Only a person can love. And I know some of you think your dogs or your cats love you but don't even go there. Genuine love as the Bible describes it only comes from a person; and in this case it is coming from the Person of the Holy Spirit.

So how often have you told the Holy Spirit that you love Him? I am sure you have told God the Father you love Him and I am sure you have told Jesus that you love Him, but how often do you express your love to the Holy Spirit?

And because the Holy Spirit loves, He also grieves according to **Ephesians 4:30**; for grieving only comes if love is present to begin with. Allow me to illustrate.

Suppose you have an 18-year old son who gets involved with the wrong crowd one evening. Through a series of circumstances he finds himself breaking the laws of the land with another young man. The police arrest them both and a jury puts them in prison for the crimes they committed. While you may feel some pity for the other boy you will grieve for your own son. The difference is love.

When you ignore the Holy Spirit or sin against the Holy Spirit or refuse to obey the Holy Spirit or turn your back on the Holy Spirit, He grieves; and He grieves because He loves you. If He didn't love you He would not grieve over you. But He loves you so much that when you ignore Him or resist Him or doubt Him, He grieves.

Oh, if we could just grasp the fact that the Holy Spirit is a Person and begin to treat Him as such. None of us will ever be filled with the Holy Spirit if we do not acknowledge Him for who He is. And this church will never be what it could be if the people who comprise the church are not Spirit-filled.

We are all familiar with **Zechariah 4:6**, which tells us, "**Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord.**" And for much too long the church and its members have been operating on its own power and might.

And beloved, we had better get used to operating by God's Spirit but a day is coming when we will have nothing but God.

And therein lies the problem; it is very possible to run a church without the Holy Spirit. You organize it, hire a pastor, get a board in place, assemble a choir, start a Sunday School, and just start turning the crank. The Holy Spirit can leave and the church can just make sure the crank is still turning and nobody misses Him.

God's Word to us tonight is to restore His Holy Spirit to His rightful place in our lives individually and in His church corporately; and that begins by recognizing Him as a divine Person, by loving Him, by honoring Him, by worshipping Him, and by obeying Him, just as much as you do all these things for God the Father and God the Son.

Let's pray.