

THE HOLY SPIRIT: A PERSON TO HONOUR

(Sermon Summary)

Reading: Ephesians 4:17-32.

This is the first sermon in a new series on the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit. He is the Third Person of the Trinity but there was not much that was written about Him during the days of the early church. Much of the energy of the early church was taken up with defending the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. But eventually attention turned to defending the orthodox doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

Certainly, the Holy Spirit is present in the Old Testament. The mentions are few and brief but He is present and known through special work that He does. It awaited, however, the coming of the Second Person of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus, for there to be fuller revelation about the Person of the Holy Spirit. This is very understandable. So much of the work of the Holy Spirit is bound up with glorifying the Lord Jesus, proving His power to save, aiming to reproduce Christ's character in the believer, confirming the child of God as belonging to the Lord and inspiring, for example, preaching that is Christ-centred and Christ-glorifying. In the last hundred or so years particularly, the subject of the Holy Spirit has been overshadowed by controversy surrounding gifts, like speaking in tongues and prophecy, as well as the place of 'experiences' in the Christian life. These developments have been negative and taken away attention from a proper, Biblical study of the Holy Spirit.

1. He has all the attributes of Godhead.

The Holy Spirit has all the distinguishing marks of true deity. His divinity is not created or derived from someone else. He is not a lesser deity or a junior member of the Trinity. He is not an afterthought or of lesser importance in the Trinity. We can see that He is mentioned in the same breath as the Father and the Son (See Matthew 28:19; and 2 Corinthians 12:14). He lacks nothing of what the other Persons of the Godhead possess. He knows the deep things of God, being Himself God (See 1 Corinthians 2:10-12) and knows the mind and will of God (Romans 8: 26-27). He is eternal, hence He is called the Eternal Spirit (Hebrews 9:14). To lie to the Holy Spirit is to lie to God (See Acts 5:3-4).

2. He does things only God can do.

There are things that only God can do. So if the Holy Spirit does those things, then it is evidence that the Spirit is God. We find He is involved in creation (Genesis 1:2; and Psalm 104: 30). He regenerates people, which is a work only God can do (John 3:8). He raises people from the dead (Romans 8:11). He exercises authority in the church which

only God can do (See Acts 13:2-4; and Acts 16:6-7). He is also described as building the church (Ephesians 2:22).

3. He is a Person.

He is called the Holy Spirit in respect of His role in creating holiness. But in doing this and all the other works He does, He is a Person, not a bundle of characteristics or attributes. He thinks, wills, desires, plans and loves. These are things that only a Person can do. He is self aware and self conscious. He has a particular relationship within the Trinity and has a particular relationship to believers. He is called the Comforter as One who comes alongside to plead on our behalf.

He is very personal to us for He actually indwells the Christian (John 7:37-39; John 14: 17 and 20; and Romans 8:8-11). All our coming into contact with spiritual reality is through His work. So He produces in us holiness, assurance, felt comfort, godly desires, power for Christian living, love and the fear of God. It is not a superficial relationship but a working relationship, changing us and making improvements in us. He informs the conscience better by refining and re-educating it. He speaks to the soul, not by vague feelings, but by applying the truth of His word to us. He is active in us to resist sin and to promote holiness (See Galatians 5:16-17 and James 4:4-5). He can be resisted (Acts 7:51) and He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:25-32). It is the work of the Holy Spirit to help us understand the Bible better and realise what it is saying. Things dawn upon us and we are woken up to things. He makes us resolve no longer to remain comfortable with our sins and provokes us to live more as Christians should. We have, spiritually thinking, more good ideas and fewer bad ideas. We have more relevant insights and fewer irrelevant ones. We have more reverent and fewer irreverent ideas. There is less inner turmoil and guilt, less discord and shame. There is more peace, hope, faith and love. In this, the Holy Spirit is speaking to us personally, Person-to-person. He speaks to us as a Friend and Advocate who cares for us.

So to honour the Holy Spirit, we are to be respectful of His presence in the soul. We are to be thankful and vigilant. We are to be good listeners and to be busy inquiring into how it is with our soul.