

Empire Church of the Brethren

Sunday Service Sermons

08 October 2023

The Holy Spirit: A Living Gift

Text: "Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you." *John 14:17*

How wonderful it is to have the very presence of the Almighty God dwelling in us.

Making his abode within our very hearts.

Taking up residence in each of us.

We are considering the Holy Spirit as God's great gift to us.

Many different options are available to us when we eagerly bestow a gift on someone we love.

Some gifts are inanimate in nature and last a long time.

Others, like cut flowers, are perishable.

There are also living gifts like puppies, kittens, and lovely growing plants.

Father God has seen fit to bestow a living gift of a different nature within the mind and heart of each of his children at the moment of their conversion, the gift of the Holy Spirit, who is the living presence of God himself.

The Holy Spirit is a living gift.

The Holy Spirit is not a mere influence that comes from God.

The Holy Spirit is more than a force, like gravity or magnetism or electricity.

Jesus uses the personal masculine pronoun in our text to describe this living gift from God.

The Holy Spirit speaks as a communicator.

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life." *Rev. 2:7*

The Holy Spirit intercedes as a divine intercessor in the interest of those who have received Jesus Christ as Savior.

"The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words." *Rom. 8:26*

The Holy Spirit testifies regarding Jesus Christ.

"The Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me." *John 15:26*

The Holy Spirit leads the servants of Christ in service; Philip is a classic illustration.

"The Spirit said to Philip, 'Go up and join the chariot.'" *Acts 8:29*

In Paul's letter to the Romans, he described the leading of the Spirit.

"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." *Rom. 8:14*

The Holy Spirit functions as a guide into an understanding of divine truth.

"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come." *John 16:13*

The Holy Spirit appoints spiritual leaders for the churches.

"The Holy Spirit has made you guardians, to feed the church of the Lord which he obtained with his own blood." *Acts 20:28*

A pastor needs something besides a majority vote of a congregation to be an effective minister.

He needs to be appointed simultaneously by the Holy Spirit.

That the Holy Spirit is a living gift can be perceived by virtue of the fact that he can be grieved by improper conduct on the part of those who are within the body of Christ.

"Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." *Eph. 4:30*

The Holy Spirit is a divine person.

When God bestows the gift of the holy Spirit within the heart of his child, he is bestowing a living gift who is at the same time a divine person.

“And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba! Father!”. *Gal. 4:6*

God is Spirit.

God is not localized in a body as man is.

God in Spirit comes to dwell within the body of each believer as a living presence.

This living gift of the divine presence comes into our lives to purify us and reproduce within us the character and the personality of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from the dead works to serve the living God”. *Heb. 9:14*

This living gift of the Holy Spirit is all-powerful.

This power was demonstrated in the miraculous conception of the Christ when the Holy Spirit came upon Mary in great power. *Luke 1:35*

This living gift of the Holy Spirit knows all of the things of God as well as the things of man.

“The Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what person knows a man’s thoughts except the spirit of man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.” *1 Cor. 2:10*

This divine person who has come to dwell within us knows all about us and, at the same time, has perfect understanding of the mind of God.

He seeks to lead us to think the thoughts of God.

The Holy Spirit, which God has given to us as a living gift, is spoken of as God in the scriptures.

For example, Peter asked Ananias, “Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? . . . You have not lied to men but to God.” *Acts 5:3-4*.

That the Holy Spirit is God is also seen in Paul’s statement to the Corinthians: “We all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit”. *2 Cor. 3:18*

The Holy Spirit of God invites each nonbeliever to put faith in Jesus Christ and to receive him as Lord and Savior.

He uses the Bible, the church, your family, your friends, and the emptiness of your heart to communicate this.

If you will receive Jesus Christ as Savior, the Holy Spirit will enter you to work God’s good work within you.

He will work for your eternal welfare.

“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, ‘Today, when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion’. *Heb. 3:7-8*

The Holy Spirit helps us fulfill the words of the Lord’s prayer.

He helps us to forgive so that God can forgive us.

Jesus says for us to bring all of our needs to God in prayer.

Part of those needs is the need of forgiveness.

We are indebted to God for his mercy unto us.

A mercy that is continuous in our failures to be God’s person.

We need his forgiveness.

This petition for forgiveness is a personal confession that grows out of a person’s taking sin seriously in his or her personal life.

The word debts is an interesting word,

In *Luke* the word is translated sin.

It is missing the mark coming up short of what is desired.

Each act of sin puts us in debt with God.

We owe God a life of complete love, service, worship, and devotion.

We owe others love, concern, and care.

We have become deeply indebted to a generous, forgiving God.

The word forgive means to cancel or dismiss or send away.

As we need forgiveness from God; others need forgiveness from us.

Forgiving others does not build up some merit on which we can base our appeal.

It is our duty to be a forgiving person.

We are in no position to receive or experience God's forgiveness as long as we have unforgiveness in our hearts.

As Jesus said, "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. *Matt. 6*"¹⁴

We are not truly repentant until we have come to the place where we can forgive.

Just as God is ready to forgive, so must we be.

We must not harbor an unforgiving and bitter spirit.

Our testimony must be pure and genuine, for God knows our hearts.

As we ask for His forgiveness we must have forgiven those who have wronged us.

This must be our daily pattern of prayer.

As we are, God is.