

The Holy Spirit

Unwrapping the Perfect Gifts – Part IV

Romans 5:5

Introduction

If you asked the average Christian, “Just how important is Jesus Christ?” you would probably get an immediate response. If you asked the average Christian, “Just how important is it that our lives are related to God the Father?” then again, you would probably get a few answers, but perhaps not as many as to our first question about Jesus Christ.

I am convinced, if you asked the average Christian, “Just how important is the Holy Spirit day in and day out?” that most would think hard and then, perhaps, come up with one or two things.

Would you believe that what you believe about the Holy Spirit will define everything, from how you pray to what you watch on television? Did you know that without the Holy Spirit:

- you could not become a member of God’s family;
- you could not become a participant in God’s mission;
- and you could not even become a recipient of God’s love?!

For the very first time in the book of Romans, Paul mentions the Holy Spirit. In Romans, chapter 5, notice that Paul is informing us that we have received:

- the perfect gift of peace (verse 1);
- the perfect gift of grace (verse 2);
- the perfect gift of tribulation or pain (verses 3 and 4); and then,

- the perfect gift of the Holy Spirit (verse 5).

The Holy Spirit – A Perfect Gift From God Alone

Look at verse 5 of Romans, chapter 5,

... the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Ladies and gentlemen, just as you did not earn the gift of salvation, so you do not earn the gift of the Holy Spirit. Just as you did not work for your justification, so you do not work for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is not given to good people, He is given to redeemed sinners. The Holy Spirit is not given as a gift to only obedient believers, He is given to all believers.

The apostle Paul wrote to a confused, divided, frustrated church in Corinth. This was a church that was tolerating open immorality within its ranks and division among its people. Paul said, in I Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 13a,

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...

He did not say, “Whenever you get your act together, the Holy Spirit *will* baptize you into the body.” but, past tense, “You *were* baptized into the body.”

If anyone asks me, “Hey, have you been baptized by the Holy Spirit?” my answer is, “Absolutely.”

According to the word of God, it is impossible to be a believer, in the body of Christ, without

experiencing the supernatural immersion of the justified believer, into the life of Jesus Christ. In fact, according to Paul's statement in Romans, chapter 5, verse 5, without the Holy Spirit being given to us, we could never receive the gift of God's astonishing waterfall of love.

Look at verse 5 again,

. . . the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit [literally, by means of the agency or action of the Holy Spirit] who was given to us.

One of God's perfect gifts to every believer is the Holy Spirit!

Questions about the Holy Spirit

So, just who is this Spirit? What does He do? How important is He to the believer? Is He some invisible power; some life force? Is He a real person, or an emanation of God the Father?

How you answer these questions will determine how you pray; how you witness to others; what kind of gifts you hope to exercise; what kind of involvement you will have in the local church; how secure you believe you are in your salvation; what you sense your value is to God; how you make decisions, and how you relate to other believers. To put it simply, the Holy Spirit is indispensable to holy living, communion with God, service to His church, and every decision and relationship in life.

No wonder J. I. Packer said the problem in the life of the average believer is not that he thinks so little of the Holy Spirit, but rather that he does not think of the Holy Spirit at all!

The truth remains, according to even a quick study of the Bible, that without the Holy Spirit, there would be:

- no gospel;
- no faith;
- no living church;
- no Christianity;
- no conviction of sin;
- no witness for Christ;
- no illumination of scripture;
- no unity in the church;
- no operation of spiritual gifts in the body;
- no ability to effectively pray . . .

and on and on and on regarding those things that are attributed directly to the person and work of the Holy Spirit.¹

In Romans, chapter 5, Paul brings out one of the distinctive occupations of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the connecting agent between God the Father's love and the believer.

Let me give an example of this connection. On January 21, 1930, the most far-reaching radio broadcast up to that time was scheduled. It was King George's message at the opening of the session of the London Arms Conference. For the first time, the entire civilized world would be brought within the sound of the king's voice. America almost missed the message because, just seconds before the king was to speak, a member of the control room staff of CBS tripped over a wire and broke it, severing the connection. Harold Vivian, then chief control operator, quickly grasped one of the broken wires in one hand and the other wire in his other hand, thus restoring the circuit through himself. Two hundred fifty volts of electricity shot through his arms and coursed through his body, but he held on long enough for the king's message to be heard throughout America.

The King of Kings has a message for the world . . . and the Holy Spirit is the key agent in that message being heard. The Holy Spirit connects the wires so that we get the message. And, not only that, we are then able to transmit the message throughout the world. Without the Holy Spirit, we do not get the message and neither does the world, as we are told in the book of Acts, chapter 1, verse 8.

So, what do we really know about the Holy Spirit? Is He just hype? Is He some huge source of power?

As I prepared for this message, I typed into my internet explorer, www.yahoo.com, figuring the best search engine to find something to do with the Holy Spirit would be named "Yahoo". Immediately after typing in "Holy Spirit" and hitting a couple of commands, there were more than two million sites available to me. I looked some of them up.

Some of the internet sites promised a biblical overview of this third person of the Holy Spirit. Others treated the Holy Spirit as if He were some secret potion or magical power.

One site promised to remove forever the dark mystery of Spirit baptism. Another site promised to give me the seven secrets to tap into the megaton power of the Holy Spirit. Another told me that I

could harness the power of the Holy Spirit and gain the Midas touch. Forget the fact that the Midas touch ruined the person who had it – destroying all his loved ones and bringing about an the utterly empty life. Oh no, you can have the Midas touch from God’s Spirit, and it is a good thing now.

There was also a book that promises to harness the Holy Spirit’s economic secrets. The title of the book boldly promises, “You’ll never be broke another day of your life”. I ordered that one! And, the next time one of my kids comes to me and says, “Dad, I’m broke,” I’ll give them that book and say, “This’ll fix it.”

They will leave with the book and I will still have money. It works!

Is the Holy Spirit truly some great genie from God the Father? Is He some force or mystical power that we tap into in order to have our prayers answered and all our wishes granted? Is He some mysterious power who reserves His deep, dark secrets for only those who are clever enough to break the code?

The word of God removes much of the mystery.

I want to follow up on Paul’s introduction of this member of the Triune God. So much of who we are and what we do demands that we dig a little deeper into who He is and what He does.

And, by the way, since we are dealing with Deity, what you know about the Holy Spirit today will not be all there is to know about Him. The longer you know Him, the more you will learn about Him. And, the more you learn about Him, the more you will realize what you have yet to learn about Him.

How many of the men hearing this have been married for thirty years? Forty years? Fifty years? How well do you know your wife now?

Have you ever noticed that it is the guys who are dating who say they know the woman? If you ask a guy who is thinking about getting married, “How well do you know her?” he will say, “Oh, I know her really well.”

I just smile and say, “God bless you, sir.”

If you ask a man who has been married around two years, he will just be catching on. The longer you live with your husband or your wife, the more you realize there is so much you have yet to learn.

Much of it is great! Those of you who are planning to get married, trust me, there are many wonderful things to be discovered over the course of years.

When I dated my wife, of nearly twenty-two years, I did not know she would enjoy painting. My favorite painting is hanging in my office today. I did not know she remembered bits and pieces of every gospel song, hymn, and even pop song from all the way back to her teenage years. I can say something and it will trigger a phrase from a song and she will start singing it. It could be gospel, pop, or even a little Elvis Presley. Can you believe that?

I came home one day from the office and my daughter, who was three years old at the time, came running out to me, all excited. She said, “Look Daddy,” and she began shaking her leg back and forth and around and around. Then she looked up at me and, I promise you, three years old, she said, “You ain’t nufin but a hound dog.”

And I thought my wife was home schooling!

The longer you get to know each member of our Triune God, the more you realize you have so much to learn. And, the more you learn the more you love Him!

What do we know about this third member of the Trinity?

To begin with, we know that two members of the Godhead (Father and Spirit) do not have bodies but are invisible to us in this dimension. Only one member of the Godhead has a visible body; that is, Jesus Christ who, Paul wrote, in Colossians, chapter 1, verse 15,

... is the image of the invisible God ...

In other words, when you see God one day, you will be looking into the face of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote, “He is the visible expression of the Triune God.”

The invisibility or “otherness” of God the Father and God the Spirit leads to much of our confusion. In other words, since the Holy Spirit is invisible, we tend to think of Him as less of a real person than we do Jesus Christ.

Truths about the Holy Spirit

Let me give you several truths about who the Holy Spirit is.

The Holy Spirit has a mind

1. First, while the Holy Spirit does not have a physical body, He does have a mind.

Paul wrote in I Corinthians, chapter 2, verse 11,

For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

He is not some vaporous thing that has no mind or thought process; He is divinely brilliant, equally omniscient.

The Holy Spirit has a will

2. Secondly, the Holy Spirit not only has a mind, but He has a will.

In the distribution of the gifts of the Spirit, which are determined and delivered by the Holy Spirit, Paul tells us in I Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 11,

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

He is not a mindless puppet, with nothing to do on His hands. He is determining and arranging the very fabric of not only the universal church, but the specific gifts within each local church.

The Holy Spirit has emotion

3. The Spirit of God has a mind; He has a will, and thirdly, the Holy Spirit has emotion.

Paul instructed the believers in Ephesus, according to chapter 4, verse 30,

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God . . .

The word for “grieve” is “lupeo” (λυπέω), which means, “to cause sorrow or shame”.

When we disobey or ignore or sin against the Lord, the Spirit of God is filled with sorrow. He is not unemotional, passive, stoic mist; He thinks, decides, and feels.

The Holy Spirit has a place of residence

4. Fourthly, the Holy Spirit has a specific place of residence.

While He is omnipresent, in the uniqueness that only God can arrange and understand, the Holy Spirit takes up permanent residence in the believer.

Paul writes, in I Corinthians, chapter 3, verses 16 and 17b,

Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? . . . for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

As a believer, you never have to ask God to give you the Holy Spirit, you have Him already. You do not have to pray for the Spirit, you can simply praise God that you have Him. He is God’s gift to you and, at the moment of conversion, you have Him (according to I Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 13).

Wherever you go, the Holy Spirit goes. Whatever you see, the Holy Spirit sees. Whatever you do, you put the Holy Spirit through that same experience. You are a walking sanctuary of God; He literally resides within you.

May I remind you, the Holy Spirit does not fill you up like water fills up a glass. Many people, I fear, think of God as if He were gasoline in the believer’s tank. You fill up with the gas of the Spirit and drive off with wheels spinning. After enough miles, you run out of gas and so, you pull up to the divine gas station and, by means of prayer, you get a refill.

You might ask, “But doesn’t the Bible say, ‘Be filled with the Spirit’?”

Yes, it does. In Ephesians, chapter 5, verse 18, Paul writes,

. . . do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit

Paul is using parallel ideas to make a point. He says, “do not get drunk with wine”. Now to be drunk means more than to drink; it means more than to fill up. To be drunk means to be under the control of that substance; to have surrendered your mind, emotions, tongue, and your steps to the influence of wine. So, Paul is saying, “be filled with the Spirit in that way”. In other words, let the Spirit affect the way you walk, talk, and think. Surrender to the influence of the Spirit of God.

The word “filled” could be translated, “dominated or controlled”. In other words, Paul is saying not to be controlled by wine, but to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

May I emphasize again that when you received the Holy Spirit at conversion, you got all of Him. You did not get a little bit of the Spirit when you got saved, you got all of the Spirit. That is because the Spirit is a person . . . and you cannot cut Him into halves or thirds or into lots of little pieces.

In Romans, chapter 5, verse 5, Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit was given (past tense) to us! He is God’s gift that we already have!

Responses to the gift of the Holy Spirit

So, what do we do about this gift of the Holy Spirit? What do we do with the Spirit?! Let me give you three responses to this perfect gift from God.

Listen to the Holy Spirit

1. First, listen to the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit:

- speaks through the word of Christ that resonates in our minds (Colossians 3:15);
- gives the believer a sense of confidence and assurance in taking steps of obedience (Romans 14:16-18);
- is heard in our hearts as we desire to honor Him and follow Him (Galatians 4:6).

Over and over again, in Revelation, chapters 2 and 3, in the letters to the seven churches, the concluding phrase says,

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says . . .

Seven times this is repeated . . . are you listening?!

We are not being told to listen for audible sounds, but rather to written instructions and inner impressions that are directed by and consistent with the word of God. This proves to be the true Spirit's voice because it ultimately leads the believer to glorify God.

The Holy Spirit is not a power to be used, He is a person to be heard . . . and obeyed! Listen to Him!!

Learn from the Holy Spirit

2. Secondly, learn from the Holy Spirit.

John, chapter 16, verses 12 through 14, tell us, ***I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.***

You might be listening to a human pastor and teacher at this moment, but if you are truly learning anything, it is the Spirit of God who is doing the penetrating, the convicting, the encouraging, the instructing. My words are merely the vehicle upon which the Spirit of God drives into your heart the truth that He wants you to learn.

That is why, many times, I have had people come to me and say, "Man, what I learned was so powerful . . ." and then proceed to tell me something they learned that had very little to do with what I was teaching.

Learn from *Him!* Ask *Him* to teach you as you study and listen and worship and pray and sing.

Lean on the Holy spirit

3. One final response, not only listen to Him and learn from Him, but lean on the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ promised His disciples in John, chapter 16, verse 7,

But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; . . .

(Can you imagine? And hey, we always think of the disciples having the advantage, but Jesus said . . .),

. . . for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

Jesus said, "The Father is going to send another comforter, a Helper, and this One will indwell you for the entire journey."

That is a nice way of saying to His disciples, then and now, "You're gonna need help! God's going to send a Helper because you simply will need help."

I remember the very first question I was asked when I arrived in this area nearly seventeen years ago. Marsha and our infant sons were in Atlanta with her parents, and I had come alone to find a place to live and a place to rent to hold church services. I was still driving a twenty foot Ryder truck from which everything had been unloaded into a storage unit. I was driving that first evening to Goldsboro to spend the night with missionaries who worked with my father's mission. By the time it was growing dark, I was completely lost. I can remember driving down a road that suddenly became a dirt road and I knew then that I was really lost. There was a cornfield on my right and a farm house on my left. I turned into the farmer's dirt driveway so I could turn around. I backed that big truck too far and the back wheels went right into a ditch I had not noticed. The nose of that truck was pointed upward and there I sat, looking up at the stars. I remember getting out, wondering what in the world to do. The farmer came walking down that dirt lane that led from his barn. He was wearing overalls and a straw hat. He came over to

where I was, looked at the truck, looked at me and then said, “Do you need some help?”

He said “help” with two syllables, but I did not care – it sounded wonderful to me!

My answer was, “Yes . . . I need help!”

What a great question to begin with. It has come back to me time and time again as a reminder, “Do you need help?”

The Spirit of God asks throughout your day, “Do you need My help?”

The only answer for every believer, every single day is, “Yes, Holy Spirit, I need help. In fact, without You, I am utterly helpless.”

Spirit of God,

- help me to understand the word;
- help me to exalt Jesus Christ;
- help me to walk in holiness and purity;
- help me to glorify God in my occupation and duties;

- help me to love and serve the brethren;
- help me to pray as I ought;
- help me to desire what I should;
- help me to honor the Father, and adore the Son, and surrender to You.

Spirit of God,

- I will listen to You!
- I will learn from You!
- I will lean on You!

And we the redeemed, say together today, “Thank you, oh God, for this gift, the perfect gift of Your Holy Spirit.”

“We will listen to You, enthusiastically!”

“We will learn from You, expectantly!”

“We will lean on You, entirely!”

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 2/2/2003 by Stephen Davey.

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ⁱ J. I. Packer, Knowing God (Intervarsity Press, 1973), p. 61.