

(Featured Audio Sermon) The Holy Spirit

by Charles Stanley

This sermon emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers, focusing on the Trinity and the promise of the Father. It explores the essential role of the Holy Spirit in empowering believers for supernatural work and living out the Christian life. The message highlights the need for believers to surrender to the Holy Spirit, confess sins, and rely on His guidance for a fruitful and powerful Christian walk.

Scripture: Acts 1:4, John 14:16, Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 5:18, 1 John 1:9, Romans 8:26, James 4:7, Isaiah 64:8, Psalm 139:23, Proverbs 3:5

Topics: "Empowerment by the Holy Spirit", "Surrender and Guidance"

Description

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Transcript

If I should give you a piece of paper today and say, will you write down on this piece of paper everything you know about the Holy Spirit? I wonder how many of you rather could fill a whole page, half a page, third of a page. I mean what you really and truly know about the Holy Spirit. Well, the Bible says a great deal about the importance of the Holy Spirit in your life and my life as believers.

And so I want us to look at that very idea today. And I want you to turn, if you will, to Acts chapter 1. And let's look for just a moment at what is happening here. Jesus has shown himself for about 40 days to his followers, and now he's about ready to ascend.

And listen to what he says. And gathering them together, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, which he said, You heard from me. For John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

And so when they had come together, they were asking him, saying, Lord, is it at this time you're restoring the kingdom to Israel? He said to them, It is not for you to know the times or epochs which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the remotest parts of

the earth. And after he had said these things, he was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received him out of their sight.

And as they were gazing intently into the sky while he was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood before them. And they also said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched him go into heaven. To ignore the Holy Spirit in your life is to guarantee fruitlessness and a lack of real Christian experience when it comes to sharing your faith and making an impression and bearing a testimony that has weight among those about you.

So I want to ask several questions about the Holy Spirit, and the first one is this, and that is who is the Holy Spirit? If you should ask some people, because the King James Version calls him the Holy Ghost, they have the idea that he's something out yonder somewhere floating around in space because they've heard something about the Holy Ghost. But what does the Bible say as to the identity of the Holy Spirit? Who is he? And the Bible says that the Holy Spirit is a person of the Trinity. And so I want you to look, if you will, in the first chapter of the Bible, Genesis chapter 1, and let's look, if you will, in verse 2. He says, And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the water.

So the Holy Spirit is involved in the creation of the world. Then in verse 26, he says, Then God said, Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. Now, when the Bible says, Let us make man in our image, who is he referring to? God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.

The 14th chapter of John, verse 16, And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another helper or comforter, that he may be with you forever. That is, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold him or know him, but you know him, because he abides with you and will be in you. Now, when somebody says to you, I don't believe in the Trinity, you're going to have to cut out of the John chapter 14 in these verses, because now look, verse 16, And I will ask the Father, who's doing the speaking? Jesus.

He's going to ask whom? The Father. That's God the Father. He will give you another helper, that he may be with you forever.

That is, and he identifies him, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold him or know him, but you know him, because he abides with you and will be in you. Now, how in the world can you not believe in the Trinity, when there it is all in those verses, Jesus speaking of the Father and the Holy Spirit? Who is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is a person of the Trinity. Now, I want you to learn about five things this morning, so let's start with number one.

Who is the Holy Spirit? He is what? He is a person of the Trinity. The Bible says he also, he is not only a person of the Trinity, but he's the promise of the Father. If you go back to Acts chapter 1 for a moment, and you'll notice what the Lord said, verse 4, And gathering them together, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, which he said, You heard from me.

John baptized with water, but you're going to be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence. In the 24th chapter of Luke, again, another account, he says to them, having told his apostles that they must

preach repentance and forgiveness of sin, he said to them, Behold, I'm sending forth the promise of my Father upon you. Now, he says, Therefore, sit down, wait in the city of Jerusalem until he comes, speaking of Pentecost.

So, according to the scriptures, the Holy Spirit is, first of all, a person of the Trinity and the promise of the Father. Let's say it together, a person of the Trinity and the promise of the Father. He promised that he would send the Holy Spirit.

We read those verses there in John 14. He says, I will not leave you as orphans, I will not leave you as comfortless, but he says, Rather, I will come to you. And through the work of the Holy Spirit and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus Christ comes to indwell the life of the believer.

And through the Holy Spirit, we live the Christian life and carry out the work that he's called us to do. So, first of all, the Holy Spirit is a person of the Trinity and the promise of the Father. The second question is this, why did he come? Why did the Father send the Holy Spirit? Why did Jesus ascend to the Father, sit at his right hand and then send the Holy Spirit in return? Well, he sent him for two reasons.

First of all, his coming was essential to the work God has called us to do. Let's say together, essential to the work God has called us to do. One more time, essential to the work God has called us to do.

Now, think about what that work is for a moment. That work is supernatural work. All of us have been commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ to share our faith.

That is, our responsibility is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ, to proclaim the truth, that is, to tell the people what Jesus Christ means to us, what he's done to us, what he's doing for us, and what the word of God says about him. So, that is our work. That is the work of every single believer.

That's supernatural work. When you confront somebody with the gospel of Jesus Christ, here's what's happening. The Spirit of God is speaking through you, taking the word of God which you know, and the Spirit of God is taking that word off the page, illuminating their minds to understand the truth, convicting them of their sin, convicting them that the death of Jesus Christ was for their forgiveness, and showing them how they could be saved, and granting them in that moment the gift of faith whereby they may receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

Apart from the Holy Spirit, nobody has ever been saved. And apart from the Holy Spirit, no one can be saved. God does not work apart from the Holy Spirit.

So, that all of God's work is supernatural work. So, how in the world could God call us and give us a commission to serve him without giving us the Holy Spirit who would work in and through our life the supernatural work of God, which is exactly who he is, the supernatural person of the Trinity, even as God the Father and God the Son are supernatural persons. Now, his coming was essential to the work God has called us to do.

If you recall in John chapter 14, we read these scriptures a few moments ago, but notice what he said. He said, The Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it does not behold him or know him, you know him because he abides with you, and he will be, future tense, he will be in you, referring to Pentecost. I will not leave you as orphans.

I will come to you. So, he said, I'm leaving, but I'm going to send the comfort of the Holy Spirit. He'll be in you.

He'll be upon you. He will abide with you forever. The Holy Spirit in your life and my life is essential to the work God has called us to do.

How can we serve the Lord with supernatural work if we do it in the work of the flesh? Now, whether it is preaching the gospel, playing an instrument, or singing in the choir, teaching a Sunday school lesson, sharing your faith, being a godly mother, being a godly father, being a godly employee, you and I are to function. We are to live. We are to express our gifts and our talents through the minister of the Holy Spirit.

You and I are not just natural beings. We are supernatural persons because we are indwelt by the supernatural presence of the Holy Spirit of God who indwells every single believer. He came because it was essential to the work God has called us to do.

Now, let's see how much you remember. If someone should ask you, who is the Holy Spirit? Who is he? First of all, he is what? A person of the trinity and promise of the Father. And first of all, it was essential for him to come.

What? For the work God has called us to do. Let's say it together. Essential to the work God has called us to do.

And the second reason he came was essential to the life God has called us to live. Essential to the life God has called us to live. Now, it's very evident that Jesus could tell by his apostles they could live the Christian life apart from the Holy Spirit.

He had already seen them in action, denying him, leaving him. They had watched him be crucified, rise from the dead, had seen him off and on for 40 days. And yet he said to them, you're not ready.

You're not ready for the work that I've called you to do. You're not ready for the life that I've called you to live. That's why the Holy Spirit, he says, I will not leave you as orphans.

I will not leave you alone. I'm coming back. When I come back, I'm going to be in you with you and upon you.

He says, I will abide in you and you will abide in me. Now, Jesus is seated at the Father's right hand today, making a session for us. So who is it that it's abiding in us? Jesus is abiding in us through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit so that every single believer is indwelt by the Spirit of God.

Why? Because God knows you and I can't live the Christian life. You share the gospel with somebody and they say, well, I would. And one of these days I plan on it.

When I think I can live it, then I'm going to do it. Well, my friend, you tell them, hey, there's no way if you'd live the Christian life. I can't live it.

You can't live it. Nobody can live it. That's why he sent the Holy Spirit to live through us the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, because he knew we couldn't do it.

Now, let me ask you a question. When you get up in the morning and you get dressed and you head out, do you ever think about the Holy Spirit? Do you ever think about the fact that you're absolutely dependent

upon him to equip you today for whatever he's called you to do? Do you ever think about getting on your knees by the bed before you start the day and ask him to fill you afresh and anew and that you commit yourself, surrender yourself to him afresh and anew this morning so that all that you want to do through me today, I'm trusting you, that through the Holy Spirit, you have absolute and total reign in my life to do whatever you choose? Or do you get up and get dressed and take off? Why would he go to such a design for the Christian life if you and I could get along without it and succeed in the Christian life or whatever he's called us to do? We can't. The reason we get defeated over and over and over again is because we do it in the flesh.

We think because we did well yesterday, well, today I'm just going to drift. And sure enough, what happens? You drift right into a calamity. The Spirit of the living God is indwelling us in order that moment by moment, day by day, we have an assistant.

We have a helper. He says we have a comforter. We have someone who is there to do for us what we cannot do.

But I must be aware of that. I must rely upon him, yield to him and allow him to do it. And when we talk about being full of the Holy Spirit, how in the world is the person filled with the Holy Spirit? It begins with confession of sin and repentance of sin.

There is a direct connection between purity and power. They go together. Where there is lack of purity, there is lack of power.

You cannot force power with no purity. Now, listen to me carefully. My friend, if you want to find out what God can really do in your life, if you will face up to your sin, repent of it, turn away from it and tell God you are asking him to fill you with the Holy Spirit, which means you are surrendering all rights and authority to yourself.

You want him to control you, to guide you, to lead you, to exercise his will in your life. And you're willing for him to do that moment by moment, day by day. And when you falter, you're going to confess it and reclaim his fullness in that moment.

You'll be absolutely amazed what God will do. Let me ask you a question. What is it that you cherish in life more than you cherish to know God in his fullness? What is it that you cherish in life more than you cherish God's supernatural expression of his power in your life? That is available to every single believer.

You've got to be willing to tell God, Lord, I take all my rights away. I lay them down before you. I want what you want, God, no matter whether I like it or not, I want you to have your way in my life.

What is it in your life you cherish more than you cherish the fullness of the Spirit of God and the maximum of your potential to the glory of God? What is it in life you cherish more than that? I can't tell you what it is, but I can put my finger on it. Whatever in your life is standing between you and complete obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, my friend, you cherish that more than you do. God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit.

You cherish that more than you cherish God having his way in your life. You cherish that more than you want to know what God could possibly do in your life. You cherish that more than you cherish to know God in all of his fullness and all of his power and all the expression of who he is in your life.

You cherish that more than you cherish to see what God could do in the lives of other people if you would commit your life to him. What is your potential as a man or a woman? You don't know what that is. None of us know what our full potential is, but I want to ask you a simple question.

Is what you're cherishing worth the price you're paying? Think about it. Just think about it. What in the world could God do in your life if you said, Lord, I wipe my hands of my own desires and my own will and my own pleasure and I humble myself before you in the spirit of meekness and patience and total commitment to your will? God, I want to see what you can do in my life.

I just have a crying out in my spirit this morning to say to you, please don't keep waiting. Please don't keep holding on. Lay it down.

See what God will replace in your life. Father, I know that you would not so burden my heart this morning if you did not want to do a great work among these, your people. I plead with you, Father, because that's all I know to do, is to plead with you that the Holy Spirit would send great conviction, deep, abiding, unavoidable, irresistible conviction into the hearts of our children, your sons and daughters.

These are your people, God, and you love them, everyone. And I know that it's your heart's desire that each one of us come before you with empty hands and a pure heart, willing to receive and willing to yield and willing to give ourselves to you unreservedly. God, I pray today in Jesus' name, let there be confession and repentance right here and now, and the surrender of that whatever it is, dying to it at this very moment, and the willingness to say, Lord Jesus, here am I. I pray, Father, for somebody here who is unsaved, help them to understand what a waste, oh God, to live all of their life apart from you, what a waste.

Lord, you see the struggle going on in some people's lives when they look at what they're holding to and look at what you've promised and what they're holding to seems to promise so much, oh God, help them to see they're being deceived by the devil. It promises much but offers and provides nothing. Give freedom today, Father, give freedom today is my prayer, freedom to step out to say, yes, Lord, here am I, and I thank you for what you're about to do in Jesus' name.

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