

Who Is the Holy Spirit - a.w. Tozer

by From the Pulpit & Classic Sermons

A.W. Tozer's sermon explores the nature, importance, and personal relationship with the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer and the church.

Duration: 37:41

Scripture: Psalm 139:7-10, Matthew 7:24-27, John 14:16-17, John 16:13-14, Acts 1:4-5, Ephesians 4:30, Revelation 2:7

Topics: "Radio"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. He describes the Spirit as friendly, loving, and gracious, just like Jesus Christ. The preacher explains that the Spirit can be grieved when believers ignore, resist, doubt, or sin against Him. However, he also highlights that love must be present before grief can occur. The preacher uses the example of a parent whose rebellious teenager causes them grief to illustrate this point.

Transcript

Welcome to From the Pulpit. Each week we bring you a different message from some of history's greatest speakers in the Christian faith and powerful sermons from modern preachers too. This week we have A.W. Tozer with his message, Who is the Holy Spirit and how can we know him? If ye love me, keep my commandments and I will pray the Father and he shall give you another comforter that he may abide with you forever.

Even the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, that ye know him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you. Verse 26, But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Now in this series of sermons, sometimes I will use the words the Holy Spirit, sometimes I will use the words the Holy Ghost.

They mean exactly and precisely the same thing. The old Anglo-Saxon word geist has been turned into our English ghost, and it means spirit. So when we say the Holy Ghost, we're saying in the old Elizabethan and pre-Elizabethan English the Holy Geist, the Holy Spirit.

So it makes no difference which I say. I mean the same thing. Let me start by reminding you that about a half a century ago, the liberals committed a great blunder, and that blunder was the neglect or the denial of the Deity of Jesus.

They either didn't talk about it at all, or else they explained the Deity of Jesus away. Now in more recent times, oh say within 40 years back, the evangelical Christians. I suppose you know what I mean when I say evangelical Christians.

I mean the gospel Christians, such as you and I. People who believe the Bible. A Christian down in the Convention of Doctors in Wheaton last week, and afterward a fine, distinguished-looking gentleman came down to the front. He said, I am a Methodist, and I don't know what you mean by evangelical.

Would you tell me what you mean? So I exclaimed to this good Methodist brother who didn't know the difference between an evangelical and a modernist. Now the result of this, of course, has been, it isn't important, but I just want to say it while I'm here, while I have the time, that I either want God or I don't mean to give it respectability. I either want it all or I don't.

And now the horrible part about that isn't that that is true, but the horrible part about it is that it needs to be it all. That the great woe is not the presence of religious toys and trifles, but the necessity for them that the presence of the Eternal Spirit is not in our midst. The most important one that could possibly be here tonight is the Holy Spirit.

And the tragedy and woe of the hour is that we neglect him, and then in order to make up for his absence, we have to do something to keep our own spirits up. I said in Chicago, whenever I talk this way, wherever I go, you know, I preach this way at Moody Church and everywhere I go. Some like it, some don't, but they come back.

And I said this in our church in the south side of Chicago. Suddenly, in an impulse, I said, there are churches so completely out of the hands of God that if the Holy Ghost withdrew from them, they wouldn't sign it out for three months. And then the next day or so afterward, a telephone rang, and a woman's voice said, Mr. Tozer, I am not a member of your church, I'm a member of the church.

Now I want to ask who is the Holy Spirit. That's the subject for tonight. We're on the beaten track.

You know how trouble is. A fellow came to church one time, a fine-looking fellow, but obviously wasn't too well-educated. He said, Father Tozer, he said, I'm a fundamentalist, evangelical Christian, but I confess I'm getting sick and weary of all these religious cliches that I hear.

[illegible]

And some people are startled and want to never come back, but others come to see this great sign. You can pick a thing up and bounce it around, that matters. And spirit, then, is another kind of substance.

It's different from material things, and it can penetrate personality. Your spirit can penetrate your personality. One personality can penetrate another personality.

The Holy Spirit can penetrate your personality, your spirit. The Bible talks in 1 Corinthians, yes, 1 Corinthians, about the no man knowing the things of God save the spirit of the man. No man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of the man that's in him.

No man knoweth the spirit things of God except the spirit of God which reveals them. So the spirit of God can penetrate the spirit of man. Now, I want to just say what the Holy Spirit is not.

The Holy Spirit's not enthusiasm. Some get worked up over a song until they're actually sent. You know, they get sent just by a song.

And they imagine that's the spirit. Not necessarily, because those same people, a lot of them, go out and live just like the world. And he has all the... And he has feeling, and he has knowledge, and sympathy, and ability to love.

Now, who is the Holy Spirit? I've spoken briefly on what is the Holy Spirit, and I have said he is spirit and not matters. He is personality. He is individuality.

He has intelligence, and love, and memory, and he can communicate with you, and he can love you, and he can be grieved when you grieve him. He can be quenched, as any friend can be shut up if you turn on him. And if he's in your home as a guest, and you suddenly turn on him, of course, you'll be hushed into hurt silence.

Because you've wounded him. And so we can wound the Holy Spirit. Now, that's what he is.

But who is the Holy Spirit? Well, the historic Church said that the Holy Spirit is God. Some of you who attended some of the denominations remember the Nicene Creed. That is quoted every so often.

If I recall, it runs something like this, I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, begotten of Him before all ages. God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life.

And then there is another creed that was, oh, about thirteen hundred years ago, maybe fourteen, and that's called the Athanasian Creed. That came into being way back there when a man named Arias stood up and said that Jesus was a good man and a great man, but he wasn't God, he wasn't really divine, he was not any second person of the Trinity, and there was a man named Athanasius. He said, no, the Bible teaches that Jesus is God, and they had all kinds of controversy about it there.

Well, now, not only, not only do the historic Church say that the Holy Spirit is God, but the Scriptures say that the Holy Spirit is God. The Scripture says that whither shall I go from thyself? He has given me life. There we have the breath, the breath, the ghost, the ghost, the spirit of the Almighty has given me life.

So the Holy Spirit is here, said to be creator. He issues commands, thus saith the Spirit, and only God can do that. He is called Lord, but I want to ask you, if he just wasn't God, as some people say, if I said I baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Virgin Mary, wouldn't that be a horrible thing? For you cannot attribute deity to St. Paul, you cannot attribute deity to the Virgin, though we honor her, for she was the mother of our Lord, and the mother of our Lord's body, not the mother of the Lord's deity.

For his deity had been before the foundation of the world. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and all things were made by him, and without him was anything, nothing made that was made. And the very atoms that composed the body of his mother had been made by the Holy Lord whom she bore.

But suppose that we introduced her there, or introduced Gabriel, the archangel, there, and we'd say, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the archangel Gabriel. Everybody would run for the door. They'd say, there's heresy in that church.

It would be a horrible thing to introduce an archangel, or an angel, or a man in where the Holy Spirit belongs. Never, never, my brother. The Holy Spirit is God.

And the most important thing here tonight is that the Holy Spirit is present. There is unseen deity present. Now I cannot bring him here.

I can only tell you that he is here. That is all I can tell you that he is present in our midst. A knowing, feeling personality.

He knows how you're reacting to what I'm saying. He knows why you came. He knows what you're going to say as soon as you get out on the sidewalk.

He knows how you're thinking now. He knows you're up rising and you're down sitting and understands your thought afar off. And you can't hide from him.

He's present in our midst. I will send another comforter to you, and he will abide with you. So he's here among us.

We're here met as Christians in this. Most of us are Christians here. And there's an invisible present here.

And we can't see him, but we know he's here. Now he is, as I have said, indivisible from the Father and the Son. And he is all God and exercise all the rights of God.

And he merits all worship and all love and all obedience. That's who the Holy Spirit is. And here's a beautiful thing about the Holy Spirit.

Being the spirit of Jesus, you will find him exactly like Jesus. A lot of people have been frightened, you know, by people claiming to be filled with the Spirit and acting any way else but like the Spirit. Some people, when they say they're filled with the Spirit, they are very stern and harsh and abusive.

And others do weird things. And he that hath seen me hath seen the Father, said Jesus. And I will send you another Comforter, and he will take the things of mine, and he will show them to you.

He'll demonstrate me to you. Now, what does the Holy Spirit think of babies? Well, what did Jesus think of babies? He thought of babies just like the Father did. And the Father must think wonderfully well of babies, because the Son took a baby in his arms and put his hand on his little bald head and said, God bless you, and blessed the baby.

Maybe theologians don't know why I did it, but I think I do. Because there's nothing sweeter and softer in all the world than the top of a little bald baby's head. And Jesus put his hand on that little soft head and blessed it in the name of his Father.

Well, now the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus. What does Jesus think, what does the Spirit think of babies then? Well, the Spirit thinks of people. And he acts exactly the way Jesus acts.

If Christ Jesus, our Lord, we could think him here in person, if he had that old toga on, we're walking quietly down the aisle, there wouldn't be anybody run from Jesus, nobody. They came to him. Others brought their babies.

The sick came, the weary came, the tired came, the dispossessed came. Everybody came, because he was the most magnetic person that ever lived. Even old Frederick Nietzsche, that spirit he was demonstrating, that's the way the Spirit is.

Now, he's friendly, the Holy Spirit's friendly. We try to make him something else but friendly, but he's friendly. And because he's friendly, he may be grieved, as I said before.

And we can grieve him by ignoring him, by resisting him, by doubting him or by sinning against him, by refusing to obey him, by turning our backs on him. We can grieve the Spirit. But you know there's one thing.

There must be love present before there can be grief. Let me give an example. How long can I preach, brother? Hmm? I don't want to take all your time.

It's 18 after. I should be through in another five minutes, shouldn't I? Well, I said was friendly. I suppose you had a 17-year-old son, and that son of yours began to go bad.

I pray this might never happen. Thank God it didn't happen with our six. And suppose that he joined up with some boy you didn't know, some stranger from another part of town, and they got into trouble.

And you were called down to the police station. And you went down, and you know how you'd feel about it? You'd be sorry for the other boy, for only love can grieve. And if those two boys were sent off to prison, you might pity the boy you didn't know, but you'd grieve over the boy you didn't know.

A mother can grieve because she loves. If you don't love, you can't grieve. So that when the Scripture says, Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, it is telling us that he loves us so much that when we insult him, he's grieved.

When we ignore him, he's grieved. When we resist him, he's grieved. When we doubt him, he's grieved.

But also we can please him by obeying and believing, and when we please him, he responds to us just like a pleased father responds, just like a pleased mother responds. He responds to us because he's pleased, because he loves us. Now, he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Avenue Road Church.

The Spirit saith unto the churches, and to this church, the restoration of the Spirit to his rightful place in the church, in this church, in your life, is by all means the most important thing that could possibly take place. If you were to increase the attendance until there wasn't a place to put them, if you were to get ten thousand or twenty thousand dollars given to you, if you were to have anything that they have in churches that men want and love and put value on, and you didn't have the Holy Spirit, you might as well have nothing at all, for it is not by might nor by power, but it's by my Spirit. Not by the eloquence of a man, not by good music, not by good preaching, if this might pass for some kind of preaching, but it is by the Spirit that God works his mighty work.

I said this morning that we had better throw ourselves back on God, for there'll be a day when we'll have nothing but God. I didn't know when I said that, that last night around midnight, my friend Cecil Thomas got until he takes over, then there will be life, and we can live upon a different level altogether. Do you believe that? Oh, it's so, my friends.

So I'm going to stop tonight, for all I've done is taught. I haven't given any evangelism, I've just taught tonight. What is the Spirit? Who is the Spirit? And he is in our midst, but unless he is feelingly in our midst, unless he is consciously in our midst, that is, we're conscious of it, he might as well be somewhere else, because it's possible to run a church without the Holy Spirit, that's the terrible thing.

You organize it, you get a board and a pastor and a choir and a lady's aide and a Sunday school, and you get all organized, and I believe in organization, I'm not against it, I'm for it. You get organized, and then you get a pastor to turn the crank, and that's all there is to it, you know. The Holy Ghost can leave, and the pastor goes on turning the crank, and nobody finds it out for five years.

Oh, what a tragedy, my brother. What a horrible tragedy to the Church of Christ. But we don't have to have it that way.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. Now, to this kind of preaching, having your own church is going to do one of two things. It's going to bring your action from it, in which case, as I said to somebody, I came, and I can go again.

Or, there is going to be an eager seeking, and I believe the latter will be the case. I believe that there will be an eager seeking for better things than that we now have. So we're going to seek God together these nights.

Next week, come back and tell the people about it, and we'll talk about the promise of the Father, and show how that promise which is for you has its roots way back into the early chapters of the Scriptures and on down the years. We'll go on all night after night to develop this and show finally how to do taking this down. They want to know when to start.

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