

GRACE BIBLE TRAINING CENTRE (GBTC)
SCHOOL OF MINISTRY
ARUSHA - TANZANIA

SUBJECT: BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

LESSON 3: THE HOLY SPIRIT

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3.1 - The Holy Spirit : A Wise Administrator

When Jesus Christ was on earth, He was limited by His humanity because He could be in only one place at a time. He made a promise of the Holy Spirit who would replace Him and would have no limitations on the time He could stay or in the work that He could do.

Through the Holy Spirit, God not only commissions us with a job, He also stays with us and enables us to get the job done.

God also, through the Holy Spirit, takes up residence in us and gives us personal guidance, fellowship, comfort, and enablement for all of our spiritual needs.

3.1.1 - The deity of the Holy Spirit

In our previous studies of God, we discussed the six essences of God which also refer equally to the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

The three persons in the Godhead are equal in glory and majesty.

The Holy Spirit is truly God and His deity is established by His characteristics, His relationship with the other persons in the Trinity, the divine names given to Him, and the works which He performs.

(a) His characteristics of Divine nature

The characteristics of the divine nature of the Holy Spirit are as follows:

- (i) He is eternal (Hebrews 9:14)
- (ii) He is Omnipresent (Psalms 139:7-10)
- (iii) He is Omniscient (all-knowing) - 1Corinthians 2:10-11; Romans 8:26-27
- (iv) He is Omnipotent (all-powerful) - Luke 1:35; Acts 1:8, that is, He has the power and ability to bring about everything God wills, without any limitations.

(b) His titles of divine nature

Apostle Peter recognized the deity of the Holy Spirit when He addressed the deceitful Ananias (Acts 5:1-4).

Apostle Paul also affirms this fact when he stated that the Holy Spirit is Lord (2Corinthians 3:17-19). Only deity can be addressed as Lord in Paul's time.

(c) His association of divine nature

The deity of the Holy Spirit can also be assumed through His association with the other Persons of the Trinity, e.g.

(i) Baptismal formula (Matthew 28:19) - Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

(ii) The Apostolic benediction (2Corinthians 13:14) - the grace of our Lord Jesus, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

(iii) 1Corinthians 12, we can see the inter-relationship between the three Persons and can only be explained on the basis of the full equality of each Person in the Trinity:

e.g. (a) The church is the Body of Christ - vs. 27

(b) God appoint ministries to help in its development - verse 28

(c) The Holy Spirit distributes gifts sovereignly as He wills - verses 4-6, 11

(iv) The Holy Spirit is the representative or agent of God the Father, and acts on His behalf on earth:

e.g. (a) He draws men to Christ - John 6:44

(b) He reveals truth - John 14:26; 16:13

(c) He guides - Romans 8:14.

(d) He spoke to Isaiah the Prophet (Isaiah 6:9-10) on behalf of God (Acts 28:25-28).

(v) All three Persons were active in creation. E.g. "Let us make man in our image" - Genesis 1:26

All the above references demonstrate scripturally that the Holy Spirit is God equally with the Father and the Son.

3.1.2 - The Personality of the Holy Spirit

(a) Essential component of Personality

There are three essential components of personality which are intellect (the ability to think), sensibility (the ability to feel) and will (the ability to make decisions).

- Romans 8:27 identifies the intellectual faculty of the Spirit

- Romans 15:30 describes the sensibility of the Spirit

- 1Corinthians 12:11 demonstrates the faculty of will as the Holy Spirit gives gifts to believers as He determines or wills.

(b) Other Elements of Personality

Other elements exist in addition to the essential components which contribute to our understanding of personality, and they are as follows:-

(i) Personal association

- The personality of the Holy Spirit is clearly implied by His association with other Persons through the baptismal formula and the apostolic benedictions.
- The Holy Spirit cannot be associated with impersonal things such as 'force' 'breath', 'power' or 'mind'.

(ii) Personal acts

- The Holy Spirit reveals.
- He searches (1Corinthians 2:10)
- He speaks, calling people into service (Acts 13; Revelations 2:7)
- He testifies (John 15:26)
- He directs His people in service, often forbidding or restraining them from some action (Acts 16:6-7)
- He intercedes for us (Romans 8:26)
- He teaches (John 14:26)
- He reproves (John 16:8-11)
- He guides us (John 16:13)
- Glorifies Christ (John 16:14)
- He regenerates (John 3:5)

(iii) Personal names

He was identified as the Counsellor who was going to replace Jesus Christ at His departure from earth (John 14:16, 26)

He was to act on behalf of Jesus Christ in performing Christ's ministry (John 15:26; 16:13-15)

He is called the Spirit of truth (John 14:17)

He is called the Spirit of life (Romans 8:2)

He is called the Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:29)

He is called the Spirit of adoption (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5-7)

He is called the Spirit of promise (Acts 1:5)

He is called the Spirit of holiness (Romans 1:4)

He is called the Spirit of Counsel (John 14:16, 26)

(iv) Personal Treatment

The Holy Spirit can be tested (Acts 5:9)

He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30)

He can be lied to (Acts 5:3)

He can be blasphemed and spoken against (Matthew 12:31,32)

He can be resisted (Acts 7:51)

He can be insulted (Hebrews 10:29)

The above qualities also prove the personality of the Holy Spirit.

3.1.3 - The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

It is difficult to understand much about the Holy Spirit, but we can be touched, blessed and directed by His Presence and enabled by His Power.

We can see the effects of His ministry (like that of the wind) but we don't understand its mysteries (John 3:8).

The ministry of the Holy Spirit can be considered in relation to

- (a) the non-believing world
- (b) the individual believer
- (c) the church as a whole.

(a) His Ministry to the Non-believing world

The Holy Spirit convicts men of the sinfulness of not believing in Jesus Christ (John 16:8-9).

The Holy Spirit reveals to men the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ and the unrighteousness of others. He reminds them that it is because of Jesus' triumph over sin that God now declares sinners righteous and enables them to become righteous through faith in Him (John 16:10).

The Holy Spirit convicts unbelievers of judgement by showing the relation between Christ's death and resurrection and the judgement of the world. The cross signifies the payment of a debt: the penalty for sin (John 16:11).

The Holy Spirit witnesses to the unbeliever, convicts him of sin, and draws him to Christ (John 6:44). He then enlightens the believer concerning his spiritual responsibilities (1John 1:9)

(b) His Ministry to Individual believers

The Holy Spirit's ministry to believers can be placed under two categories:

(i) His help, (ii) His baptism

(i) His help (6 ways)

- We become believers through the work of the Holy Spirit. As unbelievers we were spiritually dead but became born spiritually when we came to God in repentance and faith. We became a new creation (2Corinthians 5:17), became born again by the Spirit and received a new nature (John 3:5-7; Eph 2:5; Titus 3:5). This experience is called regeneration.

- We receive power for witnessing from the Spirit (Acts 1:8). Circumstance, people, and evil spirits try to hinder us from sharing the gospel but the Spirit of God is the power source we need to draw upon for effective witnessing.

- The Holy Spirit ministers to us as a teacher (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13) He reveals God's truth to us (1Corinthians 2:12-14).

- We receive the Spirit's help through His intercession on our behalf.

In moments when we feel we cannot pray at all, we can count on the Holy Spirit's prayer (Romans 8:26)

- The Spirit guides us day by day towards a victorious, Christ like life. His rule in the life of the Christian is the secret of victory over sin. He is committed to our spiritual development. He wants to show us how to overcome our selfish nature (Romans 8:1-14) (A believer has two natures - the natural and the spiritual - Rom 7). The character of the natural man who lives only to satisfy his body is disgusting while the character of a spiritual man who allows the Holy Spirit to guide his life is beautiful. The solution to deal with the natural man is to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16)

- The Holy Spirit produces the blessed fruit of the Christian life (Galatians 5:22-23). Walking by the Spirit implies that one depends on Him constantly and believes in His ability to provide deliverance in area of a person's life. We can be transformed as we are filled with and controlled by the Spirit. The fruit or qualities of the Spirit are the characteristics of the Holy Spirit.

(ii) His Baptism

The intimate relationship of the Holy Spirit with the believer can be illustrated with several descriptive terms:-

- Baptism means 'an immersion' (Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5). When something is immersed in water, it is thoroughly met. We can equally be saturated or completely filled with God.

- Being filled describes the capacity to receive no more when full (Acts 2:4; 4:31). We remain filled to new levels with His divine fullness (His power and glory) as our capacity grows (Ephesians 5:18).

- Being poured upon by the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-29) can be seen in the light of the autumn rains required for crops to develop fully in time for harvest.

(iii) His Symbols

There are some biblical symbols which describe some aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit:

- Fire (Matthew 3:11) - Fire burns away what is not pure

- Dove (Matthew 3:16) - A dove represents gentleness or peace

- Anointing oil or Anointing by the Holy Spirit (1 Kings 19:16; 1 John 2:20) - Old Testament kings and prophets were often anointed with oil as a sign of the Lord's approval of their service.

- Gift (Luke 11:13) - The Holy Spirit is the Father's gift to us

- Streams of Living water (John 7:37-39) - The Holy Spirit fills us to overflowing with new life.

- Seal or deposit (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13-14) - The Holy Spirit is given as a guarantee of our eternal life with the Father.

- Breath or wind (John 20:22; Ezekiel 37:9-14) - The Holy Spirit is the breath of God which gives us life.

(c) His Ministry to the Church

Unlike the special anointing for a specific task of Old Testament times, the baptism in the Holy Spirit was to be the believers basic enablement for consistent and effective spiritual life and service (John 7:38-39; 14:17)

The result of this new indwelling and powerful presence is the dramatic growth of the church as believers share their faith and experience with others.

As the Spirit indwells the members of the church and directs their corporate activities, they have the ability to carry out the work and will of God on earth.

Not only were followers of Jesus enabled to be effective witnesses, but they were also empowered successfully to defend the gospel (Mark 13:9-11, Matthew 26:69-75; Acts 2; 4:8-20)

The Holy Spirit controls the evangelistic mission of the church, directing His servants where to go and where not to go (Acts 13:2; 16:6-7; 13:2).

The Holy Spirit also directs in the proper administration of the church which enabled the church to grow rapidly and develop a spirit of unity (Acts 15:28-29)

Through His continual direction, the Spirit led Paul and others to give encouragement, comfort, doctrinal teaching, warning, and to prescribe discipline to the church through the inspired epistles e.g. 1Corinthians 7:40; Hebrews 12:4-11

In the maturing process, the Holy Spirit, as the all-wise administrator, equips each believer with the gifts that are necessary to carry His function in the world and in the church, the Body of Christ (Romans 12:4-8; 1Corinthians 12:1-25; Ephesians 4:11-16)

In summary, the Holy Spirit provides the church with:-

- (1) Power to evangelize;
- (2) Wisdom and courage necessary to defend the faith;
- (3) Appropriate gifts for ministry to the entire body of Christ as well as to individual members;
- (4) Human leadership to direct the work;
- (5) The vision and inspiration necessary to fulfil the Great Commission