

Ps 104; Acts 2:1-21; 1 Cor 12:3b-13; Jn 7:37-39

Pentecost

We humans don't completely understand the working of the Holy Spirit. First, we think the Spirit came on the scene after Jesus ascended to His heavenly home. The Spirit did make a dramatic appearance on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. And the Spirit has been with us ever since in a special way, as Jesus promised. But this Person has been around forever – literally. God has no beginning and no end – has no gender – has no limitations except those that are self-imposed. That is, the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Creator God has given you and me a measure of freedom and agency in the world. This is not freedom like God's, but we have been given freedom to choose.

The writer of the Book of Job is believed to have lived somewhere in the 2nd millennium BC – around the time of Abraham. Hear this word from the 28th chapter:

“God understands its way (*of wisdom*), And He knows its place. “For He looks to the ends of the earth And sees everything under the heavens.” (vv 23-24 italics mine)

The Holy Spirit moves across the earth always searching for willing hearts – willing spirits. God the Spirit knows where Wisdom dwells. The Holy Spirit was present at the creation of the cosmos. Pentecost was not His first gig. To the human mind, the Holy Spirit seems ever moving. I imagine He doesn't hang out in the courts of heaven much. He is always about the work of seeking and giving evidence of God's love. Yet He lives with or abides with all who believe in God.

Second, we think of Him as a ghostly and maybe a spooky being. He is a Person, like the Father and like Jesus. The Holy Spirit is faithful and genuine and when you and I get acquainted with Him, we know when He is present and when He is not.

Calling the third Person of the Trinity a ghost doesn't help our understanding. The Holy Spirit is not derived – not a partial entity – not a left-over or a fragment. The Holy Spirit is God. He is divine and He is always in touch with the Father and the Son. He was there on that day that Peter preached outside the temple in Jerusalem. He has faithfully guided the people of God ever since the day of Pentecost – and is with us until the end of time.

The Holy Spirit enters in with manifestations or signs of power. The Spirit produced the sign of prophesying in Old Testament times – with loud declarations of praise and glory to God – some- times with dancing and singing. Prophesying revealed that the Spirit of God was there. We have seen Him appear as a dove at Jesus' baptism. He has appeared as visible flames settling on those who were being anointed. The Holy Spirit brings gifts not to individuals – but to the body of Jesus-followers – the church. His gifts are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. In the Spirit's presence there is an outpouring of gifts.

The most prominent and important gift of the Spirit is our repentance – calling out to God. The Holy Spirit urges and prompts us to confess our sin and turn back to God – and to ask forgiveness for the wrong we have done, and the good we have left undone. Then to make amends to the extent we can. Once you have confessed, turned back to God and corrected your words and actions, God's forgiveness settles the matter. Peace and joy and thanksgiving rush into your spirit at that moment. Sin is cleansed, though scars remain. God hates sin, but He loves us more than we can fathom. God loves you so much He sent His one and only Son to pay the penalty for sin. The Holy Spirit has the power to work on our conscience – with justice and compassion. This is the greatest gift. It leads to abundant and eternal life immediately.

The third and last thing I want to mention about the blessed Holy Spirit is the amazing power He brings to the body of Christ. We may think our corporate strength comes from a big budget, or a great talent pool or our good reputation in the community. All those things are meaningless without the Holy Spirit living in us. When we seek His presence and His guidance, the Spirit brings more gifts into the midst of His church: words of wisdom, words of knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, speaking various languages and interpreting other languages (1 Cor 12:8-10).

(Continued on next page.)

These gifts are poured out by the Holy Spirit for the benefit of Christ's Kingdom. All the glory is His. All we do is in the Name of Jesus and for His sake. The Spirit brings Life.

Jesus spoke about this, though few understood what He meant. "He cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Rivers of living water will brim and spill out of the depths of anyone who believes in me this way, just as the Scripture says." (Jn 7:37-38)

Christ is the source – the fountain of Living Water – and His body, His Bride, the Church offers Him to everyone by the power of the Holy Spirit. We proclaim Jesus is Lord!

"The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!'

Everyone who hears this must also say, 'Come!'

Come, whoever is thirsty; accept the water of life as a gift, whoever wants it." (Rev 22:17 TLB) The Holy Spirit enables us to proclaim "Jesus Is Lord!" Amen.