

DEVOTIONAL AID FOR 14 SEPTEMBER 2020 – 20 SEPTEMBER 2020



**UPPER
HUNTER**
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Dear church family,

The Holy Spirit. In older times, English speakers said, the Holy Ghost. That was weird to me when I first came across it, and it may be strange to others today as well. It all sounded like spooky and unreal. An evil spirit once said to seven sorcerer brothers, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?” (Acts 19:15) Some people today might say, “Jesus I know, and God I know about, but who is the Holy Spirit?”

The fact is, without the Holy Spirit and His work, we would know neither Jesus or the Father. It is through the Holy Spirit’s work that we get to know God and His Son. It is true that Jesus Christ is at the forefront of our confessions and even in the New Testament. But we ought not to forget the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity. I quote Kevin DeYoung here again:

The focus of most of our churches (like the Creed and the Catechism) is on Christ and not the Spirit, because that’s the focus of the apostolic gospel, the New Testament, and the Holy Spirit Himself! Of course, this is not to suggest that singing to the Holy Spirit or worshiping Him is inappropriate. Far from it. Every person of the Trinity is equally glorious and deserving of praise. But Spirit-led worship has at its heart not an emotive experience (though emotions are good), nor a spontaneous feel (though spontaneity isn’t bad), but rather a Christ-exalting, cross-focused, Word-centered event where the name of Jesus is praised in the power of the Spirit to the glory of God the Father.¹

He further explains the Catechism’s answer to the question 53 where it says, “by true faith, He makes me share in Christ and all His blessings”:

... The words “by faith” in the Catechism are important. The spirit does not work to make anonymous Christians who have blessings of Christ apart from belief in Christ. The benefits are only ours by faith. It is by trusting in Christ, resting in Christ, and depending solely on Christ that the Holy Spirit works in us. ... we share in Christ and all His blessings. Surely if anyone is blessed of God, it is His Son. And by the Spirit, we too now share in all His blessings. We too are looked on with favor. Everything Christ accomplished is ours. All He won is ours. The promised inheritance of Abraham is ours (Gal. 3:14). All this and more because we belong to Christ and Christ’s blessings belong to us through ministration of the Spirit.²

Did you catch the last phrase there? Through ministration (work) of the Spirit! All blessings we have in Christ, calling, forgiveness, adoption as sons of God, eternal life, all these and more are only given to us because of the work of the Spirit. It is right and proper to thank the Holy Spirit! Praise Him!

Yours in Christ,

Timothy Lee

<https://www.upperhunterpc.com>

¹ Kevin DeYoung, *The Good News We Almost Forgot*, p103–104.

² DeYoung, p104–105.

THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM³

Lord's Day 20

Q53) What do you believe concerning "the Holy Spirit"?

A) First, He, as well as the Father and the Son, is eternal God.

Second, He has been given to me personally, so that, by true faith, He makes me share in Christ and all His blessings, comforts me, and remains with me forever.

ACTS 5:3–4

Acts 5:3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God."

Some Christians find it hard to point to a bible passage where the Holy Spirit is shown to be God. Acts 5:3–4 is one of the bible passages you should remember and point people to about the Holy Spirit. This tragic event of Ananias's death (read around this passage in your bible!) challenges in many ways, but an important theological lesson we learn here is that the Holy Spirit is not a force or an influence as some people imagine. The Holy Spirit is God, and He is a Person. We cannot and do not lie to a force like gravity or magnetism. We do not lie to some concepts, like humanity or honesty. We lie to personal beings, like when we tell our friends how big my catch was in the last fishing trip. The Holy Spirit is God and He is a Person, not a force or a concept or an influence. Just like God the Father and God the Son, the Holy Spirit is a member of the Holy Trinity, eternally three Persons in one God.

JOHN 15:26

John 15:26 "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

When we think of the Holy Spirit, we often associate Him with spiritual gifts, some extraordinary, some more ordinary. It is true that the Holy Spirit give us these gifts to build up the church, but when we so quickly focus on these, we can be misled to think that the Spirit's primary work is giving us various spiritual abilities or gifts. But Jesus's teaching in John 15:26 shows us that He will send the Spirit (Helper) so that He would bear witness about Jesus. That is to say, the Spirit's primary work, the work He is sent by the Father and the Son is to reveal Christ, to make Christ known, so people may believe in Him and have eternal life. This will help us think about other various gifts from the Spirit and how we use them. Through uses of gifts we received, are we bearing witness about Jesus Christ? Are we making Him known so others may put their faith in Him and grow in the faith? If not, we might be in danger of misusing the gifts we received.

³ The text of the Catechism is usually from <https://threeforms.org/heidelberg-catechism/>, but time to time, for the sake of clarity, I have also adopted the translation used in *The Good News We Almost Forgot* by Kevin DeYoung.