



The Holy Spirit: The Lord, the Giver of Life

TERM 2 2026

**NORTHLIGHT
GROWTH GROUP
GUIDES**

Six Studies

Series Introduction

And we believe in the Holy Spirit,

The Lord, the giver of life.

He proceeds from the Father and the Son,

and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.

-The Nicene Creed

This term we are doing a doctrinal series on the Holy Spirit. The basic movement of these studies to begin with the identity of the Holy Spirit¹ and then to look at the workings of the Spirit in God's Word and in the lives of Christians.

Study	TITLE	LAUNCH/ KEY PASSAGES
1	The Spirit of God	2 Cor 3:7-18
2	The Spirit and Jesus	Mark 1:9-13/John 14:15-27
3	The Spirit and New Life	John 3:1-21
4	The Spirit and Inspiration	2 Peter 1:20-32/2 Tim 3:16-17

¹ The Spirit as God, and the Spirit's relationship to the Father and Son

5	The Fruit of the Spirit	Gal 5:13-25
6	The Spirit and Future Hope	Ez 37:1-14

Each week we will go through a variety of passages to draw together some of the various threads of what scripture tells us about the Holy Spirit. The above 'launch' passages are starting places that will likely be used as the Sermon passage.

NOTE – these studies are intended to supplement the Sunday Sermons² rather than being exhaustive treatments on the Holy Spirit at every point. During the term we will host a couple Q&As at church to answer questions that spring from this series.

² The studies have been written by those preaching on that topic.

Study 1: 'The Spirit of God'

Introduction

- What have you heard others say about who the Holy Spirit is (whether true or not)?

The 39 Articles of Anglicanism say this:

"Of Faith in the Holy Trinity

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."³

What is the Trinity?

'Trinity' is not a biblical word or term but is used to designate that there is "one God in three persons."

It affirms:

1. There is but one God and one God alone.
2. F, S, H.S. are each God.
3. F, S, H.S. are distinct persons who are coequally and coeternally God.

What the Trinity is not:

³ An older English term for spirit.

1. *Tritheism* - That there are three gods. Taught by the Monophysites (esp. John Philoponus). Condemned at 3rd Council of Constantinople (680-1). Error: Loss of unity of the Godhead

2. *Modalism* - That God has taken on three successive modes of being; first as Father, then as Son and now as Holy Spirit. Also called Monarchianism and taught by Sabellius (2/3rd C). Error: Loss of distinction between the persons.

3. *Adoptionism* - The Father adopted the Son into the divine being at the incarnation. Originated in Spain in 8th C. Error: Loss of eternal unity.

Read the following passages (you might like to divvy these up between group members):

- Deut 6:4, Mark 12:29, 1 Timothy 2:5, Romans 3:3,

1. What do these passages tell us about the claim that there is one God?

2. What are the implications of the truth that God is one?

Read the following passages (you might like to divvy these up between group members):

- John 5:17-18, John 8:54-59; Colossians 2:9

3. What do these passages tell us about Jesus as God?

Furthermore, Jesus claimed to possess properties that only belong to God. He spoke of the angels of God (Lk 12:8-9, 15:10) as his angels (Matt 13:41). He regarded the kingdom of God (Matt 12:28, 19:14, 24; 21:31, 43) and the elect of God (Mk 13:20) as his own. He claimed to do what only God can do – forgive sins (Mk 2:8-10).

Read the following passages (you might like to divvy these up between group members):

- 2 Cor 3:17-18, Acts 5:3-4, John 15:26, Matthew 28:18 1 Cor 2:10, Eph 4:30, 2 Cor 13:14

4. What do these passages tell us about the Holy Spirit as God?

5. How is the Holy Spirit distinct as one of the persons of the trinity?

Optional Question

What are the limitations and flaws of the following analogies

- i) The Trinity is like a triangle; 3 sides 1 triangle - 3 persons 1 God.

- i) The Trinity is like H₂O that can exist as a solid, liquid and gas.

The unity and distinction of the trinity is important to hold together. For all the members of the trinity are at work in anything that God (whether creation or even the cross). However, within each act one of the persons of God can be distinguished in a particular way (e.g. God comes to dwell in us and unite us to Jesus in us through the Holy Spirit).

6. Which person of the Trinity is particularly revealed as being at work in the following (Can you think of bible passages to support your answer):

Creating world

Sacrifice for sins

Conviction of sin

Changing hearts

Word of God

Judgement

Sanctification

Rule of world

- 7. Consider together how would you explain to a person in one sentence who the Holy Spirit is.**

Study 2: 'Jesus and the Holy Spirit'

Introduction

In this study we are thinking about how Jesus relates to the Holy Spirit, as the one who is both the *bearer* and *bestower* of the Spirit.

In the Old Testament there were individuals whom the Holy Spirit 'came upon'.⁴ They were chosen by God, empowered by his Spirit to carry out their office for their appointed salvific and prophetic tasks.⁵ We see this in the Judges (Judges 3:10; 13:25), the Prophets (Micah 3:5-8), and the Kings (1 Samuel 16:13).⁶ Yet, it was promised that the Holy Spirit would be poured out (Joel 2:28-32; Ezekiel 36:25-27) on all of God's people. This moment would signal a new covenant age of forgiveness and transformation in believers. Alongside this hope there was the hope that spirit-bearing servant would come to save and restore God's people.

⁴ E.g. 2 Chronicles 20:14-22; 1 Samuel 10:6

⁵ It is worth noting that the Spirit could come temporarily with the office. So Saul possessed the Holy Spirit as Israel's king. Tragically it departed from him due to his unfaithfulness as a ruler. It is different to what is given to every believer as a deposit of salvation, as a permanent gift (Isaiah 59:21; John 14:16-17).

⁶ Though notably only Saul and David, unlike other kings are shown as being Spirit enabled to lead God's people. David is the model king or 'son of God' (2 Sam 7:14; Psalm 2:7) of Israel.

Read about the promised ‘Servant’ figure in Isaiah 11:1-10 and 42:1-4

1. What do we learn about the Spirit’s connection to the Servant, the future King?

Read Mark 1:1-12

2. How does the background in Isaiah help us to understand what is taking place in Mark?
3. What does Jesus’ reception of the Spirit show us about his identity and his task?
4. What does it mean for Jesus to baptise us with the Holy Spirit?

As the Spirit-bearing servant (Matthew 12:15-21) Jesus is all *‘that Israel should have been as God’s son and all that Adam should have been God’s son’* (Graham Cole).

We confess in the creeds that Jesus was not only born of the Virgin Mary but also the Holy Spirit. This comes straight from scripture (Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:35). Jesus is said to be ‘Holy’ both in sense of being set apart for God’s own purposes but also in his identity as the divine son of God.

But Jesus is not only the bearer of the Spirit but the one who bestows the Spirit upon his people.

Read John 14:15-20, 14:25, 15:26-27, 16:5-15 where Jesus prepares his disciples for his ascension to the Father.

5. What do we learn about the Holy Spirit in this section?

6. Why is it important that the Holy Spirit is sent to dwell in us?

7. What does Jesus promise his Holy Spirit will do in the world and in us?

8. How does the Holy Spirit continually point back to Jesus? What is the importance of him doing this?

Jesus' promise that he would send the Holy Spirit comes true at Pentecost, which marks the movement of the gospel to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Some say the Acts of the Apostles should be called the Acts of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does feature heavily in the book of Acts. Yet, his purpose and task is to empower the Apostles and the church to proclaim people to the good news of Jesus (Acts 2:33-39).⁷ The Spirit's work is never separated from the gospel.

⁷ Perhaps 'the Acts of Jesus Christ through his Holy Spirit in the Apostles?'

Read Acts 1:8, 11:15-18; Rom 5:5; Rom 8:9-11, Ephesians 3:16-17; Galatians 4:4-6 (you may want to split these passages up between members)

9. How is having the Holy Spirit tied to faith in Christ?

10. How do we see Christ work through the Spirit that he sends?

In these passages Christ and Spirit come together as the source of the believer's life. A simple way to express this truth is that what Jesus has *accomplished* in his redemptive acts, the Holy Spirit *applies* to Christian in whom he dwells

11. Can you think of where the above statement is expressed in scripture (what Jesus accomplishes the Holy Spirit applies). Why it is important to know?⁸

As you pray, give praise to our gracious Lord who sends the promised Holy Spirit that unites us to him and makes us children of our heavenly Father. In the Spirit we have all the benefits that Christ has won for us (Ephesians 1:13-14).

⁸ If you need help 1 John 3:23-24, Titus 3:4-6, 1 Thess 1:3-6, for some of many many examples

Study 3: 'The Spirit and New Life'

Introduction

In this study we will talk about the Holy Spirit's gift of life, not just as it applies to heaven and life after death, but the new direction of life that He offers us here in the present.

Read John 3:1-15

In John's gospel, light and darkness are central themes. Light represents life, understanding, and seeing things truly. Darkness represents ignorance, and death, and hard-heartedness. Nicodemus, a known religious leader, comes to Jesus in the night time to ask him questions in secret.

1. Why might Nicodemus, a Pharisee, be ashamed to speak with Jesus openly?
2. Nicodemus is unable to see that Jesus is the Son of God, despite the fact that he even acknowledges his miracles. Why is it that he is unable to acknowledge this reality, even when confronted with obvious proof of it?
3. Jesus talks about being "born again". Nicodemus responds by misunderstanding completely in a fairly humorous and concerningly literal way. What does Jesus mean? What does it mean to be born again?
4. Jesus mentions two components in this being born again, water and spirit. Natural birth involves the

breaking of waters, and the quickening of lungs to take our first breath. Jesus is using water and spirit (the same word as breath here) to refer to different things. What is Jesus referring to here?

5. Jesus appeals to the fact that he has been to heaven, and comes down from it, as a proof that he is able to speak of heaven with authority. If this holds true, what is required for any of us to be able to speak of and understand the things of heaven?

Jesus teaches that faith isn't merely intellectual, but spiritual. You can't simply reason your way to knowing God. Rather the obstacles to faith are in our hearts and souls as much as in our heads. Coming to faith therefore requires more than a good argument, or an act of persuasion: it takes a change of heart and the work of God's Spirit. A fundamental change of our alignment, our inner self. In other words, being born again. Being born again, in the teaching of Jesus, is taking on a new way of life. A new Father in God, a family among his children, and a new view of yourself in the light of that. This work of new life isn't something we can come up with. What comes from us is tainted inevitably by the self-same problems that got us here. We require another to be at work within us if our new life is going to be in some substantial way different than the old. We require the Spirit of God.

6. I had a friend who told me that even if Jesus appeared to him and spoke to him, he would check himself into a hospital sooner than believe because insanity was more likely than a man rising from the dead. Can you think of a time where you, or someone you know put up a barrier to believing, or held onto some doubt or other for reasons that weren't really about the facts and information?

7. What would be required to change that person's mind?

8. Once the Spirit has worked in that person, what else is changed, other than the simple fact of their finding faith in Jesus? How does their life change?

9. Think of yourself as a Christian. Have you ever had a sense that your faith was a conviction that tugged at you and wouldn't let you go, even when you ignored it? Why is it that as a Christian, choosing to deny Jesus can feel as difficult and tumultuous as accepting him is for someone who doesn't believe?

10. For yourself, can you think of one or two key things that come with faith, and the new life we have in Jesus? What has this change of heart and soul changed in your life personally?

Take time to pray together, giving thanks to God for the way in which he persists with us, and even changes our hearts so that we might see him more

**clearly. Pray for those who don't yet know Jesus,
that God would work in their lives also.**

Study 4: The Spirit and Inspiration

Introduction

When we talk about '*inspiration*' with respect to the Bible we mean something a little different to the way we understood the word in everyday language (to effect another person or to encouraged/inspired). We mean that 'all scripture has been *breathed* out by God' (2 Tim 3:16): that the words of scripture are Gods words.⁹

Look at the following Old Testament passages: Numbers 11:24–29; 2 Samuel 23:1-2; Ezekiel 11:4-6 Zechariah 7:11-12 (you might wish to split them between group members)

1. What sort of connections can we make between God's Word and the Holy Spirit?

We can speak of the Bible having dual authorship: What was written by David in Psalms can be attributed at the same time to the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:24-25).

Read 2 Peter 1:19-21

2. What does this passage tell us the nature of God's Word (both OT & NT)?

⁹ The term inspiration comes from the idea of *spiration* (breathing): the life giving breath of God.

3. What sort of balance is there between the divine and human authorship of scripture? What is the danger in neglecting either?

Read 1 Corinthians 2:9-16

4. What does this passage tell us about the Holy Spirit's work in helping us to know God? Can we understand the scriptures without him?
5. If the Holy Spirit understands the 'deep things of God' and God's 'own thoughts', how does that shape our confidence that we can genuinely know God as He is through His Word?

Read 2 Timothy 3:16¹⁰

6. What does this passage tell us it say about the authority and character of scripture?
7. How does it make scripture different to other human texts that are written by Christians (even the very best works)?
8. Given the Spirit speaks through the Word of God what sort of attitude towards the Bible should we have? Reflecting personally, how do you tend to treat it?

¹⁰ Note that the Spirit is understood as the breath of God, with the word for Spirit and breath being the same in the OT.

9. What would you say to the claim that the Bible distracts us from the Person of Jesus and/or the work of the Spirit?

Read Hebrews 4:12-13 John 20:30-31; Psalm 119:105-112

10. What does this passage say about the ongoing relevance of the scriptures for believers? Are the scriptures sufficient for us to live the Christian life?

Study 5: 'Fruit of the Spirit'

Introduction

Paul's letter to the Galatians is a passionate defence of the gospel of grace against those who insisted that the Christian life must be governed by the law of Moses. In chapters 5 and 6 he draws out the practical implications: if we have been set free in Christ, how are we to live? His answer is both simple and profound — walk by the Spirit.

At the heart of that Spirit-led life is what Paul calls 'the fruit of the Spirit': nine qualities that together form a portrait of Christlike character.

This study works through each quality one at a time, drawing on the broader sweep of Scripture to illuminate its meaning. But first we need to understand the context in which Paul plants this famous list.

Read Galatians 5:13-26

Paul opens his ethical teaching with a warning that freedom is easily corrupted. The Galatians have been called to freedom, but freedom can become an excuse for self-indulgence. The antidote is not a return to the law but something far more powerful: life lived by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-17)

1. How did the Christian get 'free'? From what? For what?
2. What is meant by the phrase 'Walk by the Spirit'?

Paul anchors the ethical life in a theological reality: those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh. The death of the sinful nature is not something we achieve through effort — it is something that has already happened in our union with Christ at the cross. We are now called to live out that reality. (Gal 5:24-25).

3. Paul says the flesh and the Spirit are in active conflict (v. 17). Where do you feel that conflict most acutely in your own life?

vv.19-21

4. What are works (acts) of the flesh? How do the examples listed shape your answer?
5. Upon reflection, are there any vices here that you gratify (16) that you need to focus on addressing?

vv.22-26

6. In your experience, what does it look like to 'walk by the Spirit' day to day? What makes it hard?

- As a group pick 3 of the 9 qualities/fruits of the Spirit that the group considers to be 'areas for personal growth'.

- i) Why are these three growth areas?
- ii) Who has experienced some growth in living out that fruit? How did that happen?
- iii) What practical steps or measures can you take to grow in those 3 areas (get practical)
- iv) How can your group help each other to grow in keeping in step with the Spirit?

Perhaps the most liberating thing about Paul's choice of the word 'fruit' is what it implies about how this character is produced. You do not manufacture fruit. A tree does not strain, effort, or achieve fruit — it bears fruit as the natural overflow of being rooted in the right soil and receiving light and water. Our role is to stay rooted, to remain in Christ (John 15), and to put ourselves in the way of the Spirit's nourishment. The character comes as a consequence, not as a cause.

Other passages to consider if there is time

11. Love (John 13:34-35), Joy (Rom 15:13), Peace (Philippians 4:7), Patience (James 5:7-8), Kindness (Ephesians 4:32), Goodness (Micah

6:8), Faithfulness (Matt 25:21), Gentleness (2 Tim 2:24-25), Self-control (1 Cor 9:25-27)

Study 6: 'The Spirit and Future Hope'

Introduction

In this study we will discuss the Spirit's role in the resurrection of the dead, heaven, and eternal life. In the Bible, the word 'spirit' is the same as the words 'wind' and 'breath'. The Spirit of God therefore is naturally connected with life itself. The breath of God which He breathes into us so that we might share his life.

Read Ezekiel 37:1-14

1. Before we get to any particular questions, what strikes you? Talk to the person next to you about what stands out as you read this chapter?
2. Why does God ask the 'son of man' to prophesy to the dry bones? Why speak to them at all prior to raising them from the dead?
3. All through the Bible we notice that God's Spirit goes out with his word, carrying it and enacting it. How would you describe the relationship between the word of God here, and the Spirit of God? Does the word 'bring' the Spirit or invite him? Or something else?
4. The life that raises God's people from the dead and fills them with breath is his breath, the breath of God. Consider the analogy of CPR. By breathing your own breath into someone else, you can sometimes open

their lungs and bring them back to life. Obviously the sense in which God does is this much more miraculous, you can't resuscitate a dry skeleton with CPR. Nonetheless, what works and what doesn't with this analogy? What is different?

5. The picture of God raising the dead back to life, shows him doing it with profound ease. It is well within his divine power to do this, and not more difficult than creating us in the first place. It seems silly to believe in God, who categorically, if he exists must be omnipotent, but then to doubt that he could do this or that thing. It's as if we assume some miracles might be harder than others. Discuss this, why do people doubt that God could raise the dead, but find it easier to believe that he has power to do other lesser miracles like heal the sick, or produce food, or create from nothing?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-49

6. This passage seems to emphasise that the Spirit of God, in raising us from the dead, will also change us in some way. My son thinks that in heaven God will give us sharper teeth and bigger muscles because that would be 'more perfect'. Assuming it's not that, what do you think Paul means when he says we will be raised in power?

7. In what way do we hope to 'bear the image of the heavenly man', Jesus, when we are raised from the dead?

8. The Spirit of God is assured to be at work within Christian people all throughout their life, and yet must be at work in a different way when they are raised from the dead, seeing as all of us must perish and die in these mortal bodies for the present. Why doesn't the Spirit of God simply prevent us from dying now, instead of waiting to raise us?

Take time to pray and give thanks to God for his promise of eternal life, and that he shares his very breath with us. Also reflect on the entire series, what stood out to you? What have you learned or been encouraged by?