

1) INTRO

- Everyone enjoys gifts
 - Whether we’re 1 yr old or 20 yrs old or 80 yrs old, we all enjoy gifts
 - We enjoy guessing what’s in the box or the bag we’re given
 - We enjoy the tearing of the paper
 - We enjoy the tension of whether what we really wanted is in the wrapping paper
 - It’s exciting...or disappointing depending on your personality
 - And, as my daughter’s turning 4 this month, as a father, I wanna give her gifts that she’s excited about
 - I wanna make that gift-opening time a thrilling time for her
 - I want it be a time that she remembers with joy
 - I wanna give her the gifts she’s asked for
 - I wanna give her gifts that she’ll like
 - I think we all tend to feel this way about giving gifts, don’t we?
 - Whether we’re parents or grandparents or aunts or uncles or husbands or wives, we wanna give our loved ones good gifts
 - Unless you're a sinister person
 - We wanna hear our loved ones squeal with delight over opening a good gift
 - Squealing with delight’s better than screaming in terror over a snake wrapped inside a gift box
 - We wanna hear our loved ones shout for joy rather than shriek in fear over a scorpion
 - We wanna give gifts that people are gonna enjoy and love and cherish and remember
 - And, what about you?
 - What are some of your favorite gifts you’ve been given?
- They're different depending who we are...whether we’re children or men or women
 - Maybe it was some flowers, or chocolates, or a drill, or fishing tackle, or a bike, or a toy truck, or a doll, or a framed photo or painting...
 - Wives, what about the gift of your engagement ring...and the guy that came with it
 - That's a pretty big gift...one of importance and one that's supposed to be of permanence in this life
 - Ladies, you probably remember the day you were proposed to
 - Guys, I hope you do too! You should!
 - The day you were given the gift of your husband or wife was a life-changing day
 - It's a day that determined and adjusted the way the rest of your life would be
 - The gift of children’s also a day that changes our lives, isn’t it?
 - Life’s different once we say “I do” or when God blesses us with children
 - Well, we've been given a gift of even greater importance and permanence, haven’t we?
 - We’ve been given a greater gift that changes the course of our lives for ever and ever
 - As followers of Christ, we've been given the gift of the HS...the gift of God himself
 - Kevin DeYoung – “No other possession is as precious, helpful, dynamic, strong, and loving as the Spirit who dwells in those who belong to God through Christ”
 - When we’re followers of Christ who ask God in heaven for the HS, God’ll give him to us
 - God gives us his Spirit
 - God gives us this life-changing gift of his Spirit

- And, he's delighted to give us this gift
- We just saw this in the passage we read
 - That even as sinful people, we enjoy giving good gifts
 - And, much more so does God give us good gifts...the gift of the HS...the gift of himself
- So, today we're gonna focus on the gift of the HS...this gift that God's given those of us trust in JC alone for salvation
 - I think this will be good prep for us as begin the book of Acts next week
 - We'll be spending the next few months in the book of Acts – which was also written by Luke
 - And, we'll see the HS working in great ways in the book of Acts
 - In fact, it's been said that the book of Acts could be called "The Acts of the HS through the Apostles" b/c of his work in directing and growing and influencing the church of JC
 - And, Lord willing, we'll begin to be prepared to dive into the book of Acts after looking at the HS today
- So, this is what we'll look at today...we'll focus on the gift of the HS today
- And, to focus on the best gift of all – the gift of the HS that we've been given in Christ – we'll look at these areas together:
 - Who the HS is
 - The HS in the OT
 - The HS in the NT
 - What the HS does

2) WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

- First off, the HS's a person
 - He's part of the Godhead – the Trinity – of Father, Son, and HS

- So, he's a person...just as God's a person & just as JC's a person
- He's not an "it"...he's a person
- Francis Chan – "He is not an indistinct 'power' or 'thing'."
- RC Sproul – "the HS is not simply an abstract force. He is a person who empowers the people of God for the Christian life."
- So, the HS's not a power of force to be wielded
 - He's a person who calls us to relationship with himself
 - In John 14:17, Jesus says that the Spirit "dwells with you and will be in you"
- So, the HS's a person we're called to relationship with...b/c he dwells with us and is in us when we're Christ's disciples
 - We're not to treat the HS as a power or force that we can use to bring about our own desires, but he's a person we're to have relationship with
- Second, the HS's God
 - You might say this should be first...but, we're not walking through these in order of importance
 - Just as the HS's a person – and not a power or a force or a thing – the HS's God
 - He's not lesser than God...he's an equal part of the Godhead...he's God
 - We see this in Acts 5:3-4
 - Not trying to steal the thunder of what's to come in Acts
 - We see in Acts 5 when Ananias and Sapphira without their money from God – "But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the HS and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?...Why is it that you have

contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God’.”

- We see the clear connection that the HS is God...Peter refers to the HS as God
- Sinclair Ferguson – “He [the HS] is God’s power and presence among his people”
 - The HS is God right here with us right now
 - JC is seated on the throne right now, the HS’s here with us right now
- As God, the HS’s also eternal and holy
 - He’s holy
 - Romans 1:4 refers to him as the Spirit of holiness
 - Romans 5:5 shows us that “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the HS who has been given to us”
 - As God, he’s holy...he’s unlike any other in perfection and glory and majesty
 - In addition to being holy, he’s eternal
 - In John 14:16, Jesus says that the Father will give us another Helper to be with us forever
 - And Hebrews 9:14 shows us that “through the eternal Spirit [Jesus] offered himself without blemish to God [to] purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”
 - In Genesis 1:2 we read that “the earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters”
 - So, the HS’ll not only live forever as our helper/advocate, he’ll was there at the creation of the world
 - He was there before there was time
 - He was there at the beginning...in the OT as well
 - Which lead us to look at the HS in the OT

3) THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OT

- The HS’s not a NT-only reality
- The word for “spirit” is *ruach* in HBRW and the word for “spirit” in GRK’s *pneuma*
- The HS’s referred to more than 250 times in the NT
- The HS’s referred to about 90 times in the OT
 - While seemingly more visible in the NT, the HS’s there in the OT
- The HS was there at creation (Gen 1)
- The HS filled people at times for service (Exodus 35 in the cases of Bezalel & Oholiab)
- The HS rested on people at different times
 - Balaam in Numbers 24:2
 - Gideon in Judges 6:34
 - Jephthah, Samson, and Azariah also in book of Judges
- The Spirit would come upon people and then depart
 - Like Saul in 1 Samuel 16:14
 - David feared this would happen to him in Psalm 51:11
- We see the OT also showing the coming of the HS upon all of God’s people
 - Joel 2:28-29 – the Lord says, “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.”
 - God promised in Joel 2:32 that those who God calls/those who’ll call on the name of the Lord/those who’re saved are given the HS
- God clearly expresses this in the OT in Ezekiel 36 where we see God promise the new covenant
 - Ezekiel 36:26-27 – “And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of

stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”

- God promised to give us his Spirit to dwell within us permanently so that we’d be able to live for God by obeying God

- And, in Isaiah 11:1-5 God promises to send his HS upon our Savior JC, the one who grants us salvation and gives us the ability to come before our holy and righteous God

- In JC, the day of salvation’s come...it’s here
- And, when we know JC as our Savior and Lord, we’re given the gift of the HS

4) THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NT

- This is the emphasis we see in the NT quite often...that the HS was at work in every stage of Jesus’ ministry on the earth

- Gabriel told Mary that the HS would come upon her and she’d give birth to the Savior of the world (Luke 1:35)
- The HS came to rest upon Jesus when he was baptized (Matt 3:16)
- The HS led Jesus into the wilderness where he was tempted by the Devil (Luke 4:1)
- The HS anointed JC to proclaim the good news (Luke 4:18)
- It was by the Spirit that Jesus cast out demons (Matt 12:28)
- Hebrews 9:14 shows us that through the Spirit Christ gave himself as a sacrifice for our sins to God

- Praise the HS that he was at work in great and mighty ways throughout Jesus’ earthly ministry

- And, in the NT we see the fulfillment of the new covenant as we saw in Ezekiel 36

- In the NT we see the work of the HS when he fills his people with himself and when he works to glorify and exalt JC

- And, we’ll see even more of that in the book of Acts...so wait expectantly as we walk through Acts
- But, for now, we’ll look at what the HS does/how he acts in the lives of believers now

- We’ll look at the Bible as our standard and rule for the ways God works in our lives

5) WHAT DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT DO?

- What does the HS do?
- Why do we want this gift?
- The HS gives life...he’s the life-giver
 - In John 6:63, Jesus tells us that “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all.”
- And the HS gives life by convicting and converting
 - Without the HS, we’d continue to be dead in our sin
 - As dead people, we can’t bring ourselves back to life
 - But, thankfully the HS does!
 - Thankfully he awakens our dark, sinful, dead hearts!
 - And, he awakens us by convicting us of sin
 - The HS helps us to know that our sin’s offensive to God and that it’s against God
 - This produces in us the same cry from David is Psalm 51:4 – “Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.”
 - If there’s no conviction in a person’s life when that person sins, then the HS’s not yet at work in that person’s life
 - But, the HS does convict us...conviction of sin’s a good thing
 - It’s good to feel the weight of our sin against God
 - It’s good when we know that we’re not right with God

- Jonathan Edwards – “[The HS] awakens men’s consciences, and makes them sensible of the dreadfulness of God’s anger, and causes in them a great desire and earnest care and endeavor to obtain his favor”
 - The HS convicts us in this way...praise him that he does
- And, it’s in this conviction of sin when the HS may convert us...when we’re God’s chosen ones, he’ll convert us
 - He won’t leave us in our sinful state
 - He won’t leave us to wallow in our conviction forever
 - He does for some longer than others...who are we to question God’s time-table – but he doesn’t leave us there when his desire’s to convert us
 - Titus 3:4-5 – “But when the goodness of loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the HS”
 - The HS regenerates us/converts us...it’s his work
- The HS gives life by convicting and converting
 - I pray he’s done that in your life
 - So that you’ll live in joy and peace with God forever
- The HS also sanctifies
 - Just as we talked about earlier that the HS’s not to be treated as a power or force that we can use to bring about our own desires, we’re to know and see and rest in the fact that the HS’s the one who changes our desires
 - We’re sinful people who, on our own, can only sin
 - Any good that we do’s actually God doing that in us
 - It’s the HS who helps us to grow in our walks

- Our passage on the new covenant even showed us this
- Again...Ezekiel 36:26-27 – “And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”
 - It’s God who helps us to obey
 - It’s b/c of the Spirit in us that we’re able to live for God and walk in his ways
 - This is a miraculous work
 - And, this happens in the life of the believer each and every day
 - Our dark, sinful hearts aren’t quick to love God or love others
 - We’re not quick to forgive others or show kindness to others
 - We’re not naturally generous to others or gracious to others
 - Even in our sinful state, we couldn’t care less about God himself
 - But the HS helps us in all these areas each and every day
 - One of the greatest works of the HS is his working in our hearts each and every day to love God and love others
 - It’s the HS who helps us to have the desire to obey God, to please God, and to walk in his ways when we wake up in the morning
 - It’s the HS who helps us to have hearts that wanna please him and live for him each day

6) SO WHAT

- Isn’t this a beautiful gift God’s given us?

- He's given us himself so that we can have eternal life in him and so that we can walk in his ways
- He's given us the gift of a changed heart
- And, he's changed our hearts to see Christ as our salvation
 - He's changed our hearts to see Christ as the way, the truth, and the life
- As Jesus tells us in John 16:13-14 – "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you in all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you."
 - The HS points us to Christ...the truth
 - These words from Christ in this passage don't have anything to do with what job we should take or where we should live...not that those things don't matter to God
 - But, the greatest things the gift of the HS does for us & to us is show us our sin and point us to Christ...who's the way, the truth, and the life
- The HS points us to the truth of who Christ is
 - That Jesus came to bring us – sinful people that we are – back to God
 - The HS shows that our sin's horrific before holy God and that we deserve to be punished forever...not just our sin, but we do
 - The HS gives us sight to see that Jesus took our punishment on himself
 - The HS revives our hearts to know that life's generously given to us when we trust in Christ, knowing that we're made right with God only b/c of Christ's work

- The HS helps us to surrender to him so that we can live lives that love Christ and are obedient to Christ and glorifying to God
- The HS helps us to every day look to the Word/to crave soaking in the words of Holy Scripture that point to our great God, our great Savior, and our great Helper
 - May we be in the Bible
 - Looking at what the Bible says about who the HS is and what he does how he points to Christ and magnifies God the Father
 - The HS will grow our hunger for God's Word
 - So, that we'll see Jesus

7) CONCLUSION

- How to conclude...
- By no means is this meant to be an exhaustive look at the HS
 - The Bible has so much to show us about the HS and who he is and what he does
 - That there's no way we could cover it all
 - Look for him in Holy Scripture
 - As you read the Bible, look for where he's mentioned and what he's doing
 - I guarantee that when you're aware of the HS as an equally important part of the Godhead, you'll see him everywhere in the Word
 - But, I pray we've been able to scratch the surface
 - I pray that God's given us something here today to take away and to keep in mind as we walk through every day of our lives...and as we walk through the book of Acts in the next few months
- The greatest gift we've been given – as individuals and as a church – is God himself
 - We'll see this in Acts

- And, God's given us himself in the HS by the work of JC
- When we know JC as our Lord and Savior
 - As the one who governs and guides and determines our steps
 - And, as the one who saves us of eternal punishment
- When we know this Jesus, we're filled with the HS
 - We're then given the gift of the HS...
 - We're given the person of the HS...filling us
 - And the HS's filling us with the ability to cherish Christ and live for God
 - Just ask him
 - Ask God to give you this gift of the HS
 - Just ask

Romans 15:13 blessing