

## Series: The Gift of the Holy Spirit

# Finding the Holy Spirit in Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians

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Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.



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We turn now to what we can learn about the Holy Spirit in some more of Paul's letters, namely: Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians.

Paul spoke with deep affection about the Philippian Church. Teaching errors do not seem to have troubled this church from within, but Paul gives warnings in advance. Paul notices the mixed motives of some who preached the gospel of contention and not sincerely. Then he mentions the "Spirit of Jesus Christ." Phil. 1:19. Whatever was going on would redound to the victory of Christ's cause and to Paul's highest advantage through the supply of the Spirit. The prayers of the Philippians would be an important subordinate link.

Here the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father. We have talked before about the eternal procession from both. The gift of the Holy Spirit is derived from Christ's merits. Jesus Christ in His obedience and satisfaction procured the gift of the Holy Spirit. So not only are believers restored to divine favor; they also are given this great gift, the Holy Spirit. Zechariah 12:10.

**"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication [pleading, pleas for mercy]; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn."** Zechariah 12:10 NKJV

**Revelation 1:7: Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him—even those who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. So shall it be! Amen.**

The cause of the gospel is promoted by the help of the Spirit of Christ. He helps the cause of truth to triumph over the false, over whoredoms and errors. The Holy Spirit would also give Paul the necessary courage to seal, if necessary, his testimony with his blood. Paul links the supply of the Spirit with the prayers of believing people in the church, to which he wrote. Paul consistently asked for **prayer as a means of spreading Christian truth. Unless the Holy Spirit guides and rules our actions and unless He is sought out in our prayers, we as the church cannot fulfill the cause of Christ. We pray. God answers by sending the help of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit moves. The Holy Spirit moves in us and through us, and in the world to fulfill the cause of Christ.**

So what keeps us going in times of disappointment, despondency, and/or despair?  
What kept Paul going?

Isaiah 35:5, 6: **<sup>3</sup>Strengthen the weak hands, And make firm the feeble knees.  
<sup>4</sup>Say to those *who are* fearful-hearted, “Be strong, do not fear!  
Behold, your God will come *with* vengeance, *With* the recompense of God;  
He will come and save you.”**

**<sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.**

**<sup>6</sup>Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert. Isaiah 35:5, 6 NKJV**  
(I suggest reading the entire chapter)

Philippians 1:19. **for I know [with confidence] that this will turn out for my deliverance *and* spiritual well-being, through your prayers and the [superabundant] supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ [which upholds me].**  
Amplified Bible

Fresh supplies of the Holy Spirit bring light, new strength, and comfort. The Holy Spirit preserves such that we persevere. For more, read Philippians 1:12-21, Galatians 5:5.

Our God is a covenant-keeping God. There is a unity in the covenant of grace. It is a covenant built on Promise—not, our promises to God, but His to us. The covenant is unilateral. The New Covenant in Christ’s Blood is a bond that cannot be broken. What the Living God promises, He is faithful to do. God’s hope is His confident expectation that all He promises will come to pass and be consummated. So Jesus would proclaim, Of all that the Father has given Me, I will lose NONE. Salvation is a gift, unmerited and undeserved; a gift sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise. Every true believer, chosen by God from before the foundation of the world (before anything was created), is sealed by the Holy Spirit, guaranteed. To those who think: If it is to be, it’s up to me, no; if it is to be, it’s up to **Me**. It’s up to the Living and True God, the God of all Grace. Titus 3:4-7; Ephesians 2:8, 9, 1 John; John 3, for example.

Paul exhorts believers to stand fast in One Spirit (Phil. 1:27) and to ward off the danger of disunion and mutual alienation (Phil. 4:2). The believers had received the communication of the Spirit, or the fellowship of the Spirit, which demonstrates itself in unity and love. Here we are called to be of one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel, not being terrified by adversaries in the process.

In Phil. 3:3 Paul refers to the worship of God in the Spirit. He contrasts worship in the Spirit with ritualistic tendencies. The natural man loves rituals. My cats love rituals! We like what is familiar and we like patterns, predictable patterns. We have to guard against the mind of natural man and seek to keep in step with the Holy Spirit, who is that free and most benevolent Spirit.

God is also a God of order, and not confusion; so we’re not talking about a confused mess. We are talking about us not putting God in a box of our own making. Believers are the circumcision, the spiritual, invisible church, those with circumcised hearts. We are to worship in the power of the Holy Spirit. This worship rejoices in Christ Jesus and leads to Christ, not away from Christ. This worship honors the blood of Christ, His sacrifice, the full force of the gospel, in order to cause worshippers to glory in Christ and put no confidence in the flesh.

In Colossians, Paul writes to anchor the church in sound doctrine. There is only one express allusion to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, in Col. 1:8. Paul refers to Epaphras. He says of Epaphras that he declared to Paul and Timothy the love in the Spirit demonstrated by the Colossians toward them. The love was exercised toward Paul and Timothy, who were absent and not personally known to the Colossians. This love was motivated by the Holy Spirit and produced in the Colossians by the Holy Spirit. The love to the saints is a fruit of the Spirit, as we see in Galatians 5. When Paul and Timothy heard about the faith and love of these believers, they in turn prayed for them. Colossians 1:9.

In Thessalonians we have a bit more. In 1 Thessalonians 1:5 Paul recalls the Thessalonians' first reception of the gospel. Paul's gospel came to them not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit, and much assurance. The gospel was accompanied by converting power, namely that converting power of the Holy Spirit. Others say that in addition to that the gospel came with the manifestation of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit to confirm the truth (Gal. 3:2, for example) Regardless, there was a full certainty and all doubt was removed and being removed. The Holy Spirit ratifies the covenant and removes all doubt.

The Holy Spirit does the work of salvation. He is the cause by which effectual calling is begun and carried out. The Holy Spirit sets a person apart from an ungodly world, from darkness, from a darkened mind, and works faith in him. There is a radical breach, a cutting, a dramatic change from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's dear Son, to light, to life, to truth, to love without a lie.

Again, the main intent of the Holy Spirit "sealing" is to assure, to certify, to ratify, and remove doubt. We might ask ourselves, "Is there a sense that I have a personal interest in the promises of God?" The Holy Spirit conveys an assurance of the truth of God's promises. Yes, we might doubt, but the sealing of the Holy Spirit prevails over doubting.

Referring to 1 Thessalonians 1:6, A. W. Pink in his book *The Holy Spirit* talks about the Holy Spirit first blowing down the building of human pretensions, of demolishing the walls of self-righteousness, and destroying the foundations laid in self-flattery and natural sufficiency so that someone about to be saved does not imagine himself as a great prize for God saving him but rather as one surely to be damned unless saved by God's free grace. He then exhorts his readers to render unto the Holy Spirit the praise which is His due. (A. W. Pink, page 87).

1 Thessalonians 1:2-6: **<sup>2</sup>We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, <sup>3</sup>remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, <sup>4</sup>knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. <sup>5</sup>For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. <sup>6</sup>And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, NKJV**

1 Thessalonians 4:8 speaks of **the despising of the Holy Spirit**. Some believe this refers to the despising of the inspiration and supernatural guidance given to the

apostles in revealing divine truth. So we must ask ourselves, in what ways do we despise the Holy Spirit? God breathed out His Word in a revelatory process that involved men who wrote under the superintending influence of the Holy Spirit. Do we despise that process? Do we despise the result of that process? Are we at odds with how the Holy Spirit operates? Do we have trouble with the sovereignty of God and the way the Holy Spirit does His work? Do our minds align with the mind of Christ and the heart of the Holy Spirit or do we stand in opposition? Do we reject instruction from the Word, refuse to live by the Word in disobedience to it, and choose to disregard what God says? Then we are defrauding God who gives us the Spirit of Holiness.

Remember, in Sanctification, by the divine action of God alone, we are defined as holy, blameless, and without reproach (clothed with the righteousness of Christ), but in progressive sanctification, we can choose either to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the sanctifying process or to reject, refuse, rebel against, and fight against the Holy Spirit. One way or another, the true believer born-out-of-God will be sanctified. So walk in wisdom!

In 1 Thessalonians 5:19 we are admonished not to quench the Holy Spirit. We can quench the moving of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit. We can quench the Holy Spirit by not giving the testimony of the Holy Spirit. We can quench the Holy Spirit through sinful practices, habitual sin, indifference, neglect, and by despising prophecy in particular and by stifling or choking or throwing cold water, as it were, on the supernatural operations of the Spirit.

A.W. Pink speaks of the Holy Spirit indwelling the hearts of believers like a flickering flame; “never to be extinguished, but not always bright, and needing to be guarded from rude blasts.” (A. W. Pink, page 120)

In 1 Thessalonians 5:14-24 we find **actions that can be taken along with the declaration of the faithfulness of God Himself, who also will sanctify.**

**<sup>14</sup>Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. <sup>15</sup>See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.**

**<sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**

**<sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Do not despise prophecies. <sup>21</sup>Test all things; hold fast what is good. <sup>22</sup>Abstain from every form of evil.**

**<sup>23</sup>Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.** 1 Thessalonians 5:14-24 NKJV

So we make appeals to the Father through Jesus Christ for the grace of repentance after we confess sin. And please note that He who calls the true believer (effectual calling) is the Faithful One who preserves. Never underestimate just who the Holy Spirit is.

The Holy Spirit is the life-producer, the life-maker. He is our next breath. We need to take great care in our relationship with the Lord not to offend Him, or Jesus, or the Father.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:13, we read, **“God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”**

The Holy Spirit changes someone’s heart. The Holy Spirit causes a person to believe the truth. God chose the believer from the beginning, before anything was created, as it also says in Ephesians. The believing reception of the gospel is effected by the Holy Spirit.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. 2 Corinthians 13:14.

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Mary Craig, D. Min.*

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