

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 2, Paragraph 3 – “Of God and the Holy Trinity”,
Message # 74 – “Peter & John with the Spirit”, Presented in the Adult
Sunday School Class by Pastor Paul Rendall, on May 2nd, 2021.**

Paragraph 3 – In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, d) the Father, the Word or Son, and Holy Spirit, of one substance, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine essence, e) yet the essence undivided: the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is f) eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit g) proceeding from the Father and the Son; all infinite, without beginning, therefore but one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties and personal relations; which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on him.

d) 1st John 5: 7; Matthew 28: 19; 2nd Corinthians 13: 14; e) Exodus 3: 14; John 14: 11;

1st Corinthians 8:6; f) John 1:14,18; g) John 15:26; Gal 4: 6)

1. Christ Personally breathed the Holy Spirit upon the apostles in order that they might fulfill their commission personally, and have communion with the Holy Spirit.

John 20: 19-23 – “Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ‘Peace be with you’.” “When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side.” “Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.” “So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you!’ “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” “And when He said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’ “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

This “breathing” upon the disciples by Christ was His giving them the Holy Spirit to commune with them as apostles who needed His ministry to them in order that they would be able to fulfill their ministries to God and to Christ. In receiving the Spirit at that time, they were receiving from Christ the ability to commune with the Holy Spirit. They would need the Spirit’s wisdom and His discernment on what to do in many situations, in order to accomplish their part in the building of the New Testament Church. In this receiving of the Holy Spirit, Christ was renewing and strengthening their Commission, and they were told that if they forgave the sins of any they would be forgiven.

That is, in connection with the gospel they could personally assure those who had believed their message, which they preached by the power of the Holy Spirit, that they were Christians. As the young Church was being built, she was going to need great wisdom and direction in relation to matters of doctrine, righteousness, and holy living. She would need to learn the importance of sound doctrine and a pure worship, and how the brethren should lovingly use their gifts and interact with each other to the glory of God. This would all come through the apostles communing with the Holy Spirit and then writing down what the Spirit would have them to write which formed the New Testament Scriptures.

1. Communion with the Holy Spirit was seen in the writing of the Scriptures by the apostles and by other men selectively appointed by the Spirit.

Acts 1: 1-5 – “The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented himself alive after His sufferings by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which He said, you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

And Acts 1: 8 – “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

So, you see here that what we have studying concerning the breathing of the Lord Jesus upon the apostles on the day that He rose from dead, set the stage for the sending and giving of the Spirit to the apostles and to the church; the apostles and the Church being baptized with the Spirit, so that they would have power to preach and be His witnesses, and to hold communion with Him over every matter of concern to the church in relation to doctrine and practice.

1st Peter 1: 10-12 – “Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.” “To them it was revealed that not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven – things which angels desire to look into.”

So, the apostles preached the gospel by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven would tell all the people that they were sent to, the truth about Jesus’ life and ministry; that the Father had sent Him to accomplish redemption, and that if they would repent and believe this gospel, they would most certainly be forgiven, justified, and they would be given the Holy Spirit to teach them and lead them into all the truth as well. The apostles ability to do these things was because of their communion with the Holy Spirit. Our ability to fulfill our own particular ministry according to the gift that is given to us is to take notice of the fact that the Scriptures were written down by the apostles for our instruction. And we should also take notice of their life; the way that they lived, and what they went through in their preaching the gospel and teaching people in the churches what they should be doing to glorify God and how they should be doing it. You see this in the following Scripture.

2nd Timothy 3: 10-16 – “But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Lystra what persecutions I endured.” “And out of them all the Lord delivered me.” “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” “But evil men will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

The doctrine which Paul preached and taught and passed on to Timothy was not his own; it was something which he received from God, through communion with the Holy Spirit. So Timothy was to take notice of this and the manner of his his life, his faith, his patience, his love, his perseverance, his persecutions and afflictions which he endured. The Lord, by the Holy Spirit was in him and with him in these things. He commends to Timothy the Scriptures which were able to make him wise unto salvation. And he reminds Timothy that all and every Scripture is given by inspiration, it is θεοπνευστος (theopneustos), it is breathed by God and profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. The Cambridge Commentary says on “given by inspiration” – “One word in the original, a passive verbal, occurring only here in N.T., and meaning ‘filled with the breath of God’ so as to be ‘living oracles,’ Act_7:38. Cf. 2Pe_1:21, ‘holy men of God moved by the Holy Spirit.’”

So, the Scriptures “given by inspiration” are intended in the same way to equip all of the saints by their communion with the Holy Spirit over them. The saints who receive the Scriptures believe that they were inspired, God-breathed to the apostles as they wrote them down, and they receive them as the living oracles of God to their minds and hearts so that they might hold sweet communion with the Holy Spirit

on a regular, ongoing basis. The Scriptures were given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that is, the Spirit communing with of the soul of the apostles, breathing out the truth to them, so that what they wrote down would be written in the exact way that the Spirit would have it written. Thus, their communion with the Holy Spirit was established in relation to their gifts, and thus our communion with the Holy Spirit is also established in relation to our gifts which are not revelatory. The Scriptures equip us.

2. Communion with the Holy Spirit was seen in the apostle Peter's action of bringing corrective discipline in the church at Jerusalem.

If the apostles thought that any professed Christian needed to have corrective discipline placed upon them, because they were unwilling to repent, then they could tell them that their sins would be retained if they did not repent. And sometimes this was confirmed in acts of power, done by the power of the Holy Spirit.

An incident like this happened to the apostle Peter when he encountered the duplicity and hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira in days of the early church.

Acts chapter 4, verse 36, 37 – chapter 5, verses 1-11 – “And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and bought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.” “But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.” “And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostle's feet.” “But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?’ “While it remained, was it not your own?” “and after it was sold, was it not in your own control?” “Why have you conceived this thing in your heart.” “You have not lied to men but to God.” “Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last.” “So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.” “The the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried him out, and buried him.” “Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.” “And Peter answered her, ‘Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?’ “She said, ‘Yes, for so much.’ “Then Peter said to her, ‘How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?’ “Look, the feet of those who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.” “Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last.” “And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband.” “So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

Here we have a man and his wife who were very impressed with the spirit of giving that existed in the church in Jerusalem. They were very impressed that the believers were so much of one heart and one soul that they were helping many needy saints with their material needs. They saw Barnabas, who had land, sell it and bring the money and lay it at the feet of the Apostles, and they were impressed. They themselves were pretty wealthy people. They sold a possession of land which was theirs, and then they secretly decided together that they would come to the Apostles, saying that they were giving it all, when instead they were really only giving a part of it. Their taking this strategy would make them appear to be very spiritually-minded to all the church. They would be spoken about as being very generous people, when actually they were acting in a very covetous way. The love of money and their ambition to be seen as great philanthropists, and their desire to be applauded for it, these were their motives.

The Holy Spirit saw all this perfectly, and He knew that He could not let this supposed gift of generosity stand as a witness to the grace of Christ. There was no grace of Christ in it at all. It exalted this couple, but not Christ. No, the Holy Spirit would come against them through Peter because they were deceiving the Church. But even more, He would come against them because they were lying to Him and testing Him to see if He would do anything about it. I want you to see that the Holy Spirit is the Divine Person of the Holy Trinity, sent to you as a gift from God the Father and from Jesus Christ Himself. You and I must come to see that the Holy Spirit has been given to us in order that we might be holy in all of our

behavior; that we might be sincere and straightforward in our heart. We must be able to have communion with Him which is straightforward.

We can also see the communion of the Holy Spirit which was taking place in Peter's heart and mind. He was given this supernatural discernment by the Holy Spirit, to understand what was going on in Ananias and Sapphira's hearts. The Holy Spirit deliberately brought this sin to the attention of the Apostle Peter, so that it would be addressed and dealt with by the church. Peter did not guess at the sin in Ananias and Sapphira's hearts; he knew it perfectly because it was communicated to him by the Holy Spirit perfectly. It was a part of His communion with the Holy Spirit.

See what a powerful ministry the Holy Spirit exercises in the lives of all believers, and even exercising it sovereignly over false believers. We as Christians are called to have communion with the Holy Spirit. His ministry is to convince us as believers to separate the precious from the vile in everything in our life. In this particular case he used the Apostle Peter to do so. O the things which the Lord the Holy Spirit sometimes must see in our hearts, while His precious ministry to sanctify us is taking place! O how sensitive we should be, not to grieve the Holy Spirit who has been "sealed unto us" until the Day of our Redemption"! We know that we are true Christians because of the Holy Spirit's work in us, bringing us to the place where we will deal with all of the remaining corruption of our hearts.

3. Communion of the apostles with the Holy Spirit was seen in the lives of the apostles Peter and John, in their ministry of conveying the Spirit to believers in Samaria.

Acts chapter 8: 14-25 – "Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit." "For as yet He had fallen upon none of them." "They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." "Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit." "And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostle's hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, 'Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.'" "But Peter said to him – "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!" "You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God." "Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you." "For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity."

So the apostles Peter and John were sent to Samaria by the church at Jerusalem, and they came down and prayed for those folks to receive the Holy Spirit. Now, they had received Christ. They had received salvation in and through His name and they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. What did they have? Well, in connection with what it says in Acts chapter 2, verse 38, they had received the gift of the Holy Spirit, for it says there; Peter said there – "Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Spirit." "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

That is – They had received Christ, they had been baptized with believer's baptism, and they had also been spiritually baptized by the Spirit and placed into the Universal body of Christ. But they had not yet received any of the greater gifts of the Spirit which would give them the power to minister in the church that was forming there. These gifts for usefulness to Christ in service to His Church and the furtherance of His kingdom were thus, at that time, by apostles, bestowed upon them. The Holy Spirit fell upon them, in this holy and wonderful way.

But Simon wanted the power that the apostles had, when he saw it, and he offered the apostles money to be given that power. And you will notice what
You see, Peter was using his apostolic authority, given to him by Christ, when Christ breathed on him, and said – Receive the Holy Spirit. He already had the gift of salvation, the gift of regeneration, and had been commissioned as an apostle. But he needed the greater power, wisdom, and discernment that the

Spirit would bring to him, as he would hold constant communion with Him in relation to every situation of concern to him as an apostle. This communion of the Holy Spirit which He now had, would equip him in every way to fulfill his ministry to Christ. And the same will be true for us as well, not as apostles, but as those who have received a gift from the Holy Spirit to minister in the body of Christ, His church in this place, and also when it comes to fulfilling our particular ministry that the Lord has given to us in relation to His Church, and sharing the gospel with others around us.

4. Communion with the Holy Spirit for all of Christ's saints flows out of the Spirit's Sanctifying work in our hearts and lives.

2nd Thessalonians 2: 13-17 – “But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.” “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.”

Paul is here compelled to give thanks to God the Father, always, for all the brethren at the church of Thessalonica. These were brethren who he knew were beloved by the Lord. He knew that God had from the beginning, that is from the beginning of the world, and before that in the counsels of eternity past with the Son and Spirit, chosen a people to be His particular people, considering them all as fallen, and not finding any reason in any of them for His choosing them; simply to show mercy and demonstrate undeserved love. He chose them for salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit (here the distinction in the Godhead in terms of role is clearly seen, even though the Persons of the Godhead are of one essence. Sanctification is by the Spirit in relation to belief in the truth of the gospel. And what is the purpose? It is for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

5. This Communion is experienced by us when we believe in the Love between the Father and the Son; which love is communicated to us by the Holy Spirit.

John 17: 20-26 – “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.” “The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.” “Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” “O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

1st John 4: 9-16 – “By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.” “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” “No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.” “By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.” “We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.” “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.” “We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”