

## The Power of God's Holy Spirit

Rev. Taek Kim

Scripture: Romans 8:22-27

<sup>22</sup> We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; <sup>23</sup> and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. <sup>24</sup> For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

<sup>26</sup> Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. <sup>27</sup> And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Today we celebrate Pentecost! The word "Pentecost" means "fiftieth day." It's 50 days after celebrating Jesus' resurrection on Easter that we celebrate Pentecost. As recorded in Acts 1:4, Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the gift and baptism of the Holy Spirit. And on Pentecost, God's Holy Spirit came upon the followers of Jesus like divided tongues of flame, each flaming tongue resting and filling each one of them. Immediately they were given the gift of speaking in other languages, which astonished all who were in Jerusalem, many who were celebrating the Feast of Weeks, the Jewish holiday 50 days after the Passover, that was also known as the Feast of Pentecost which celebrates the wheat harvest and the Torah given to Moses.

The Apostle Peter told the crowd who were wondering what was going on and the Good News of Jesus Christ and his salvation. On that day, about 3,000 were baptized. Thus it is recognized as the beginning, the birth, and birthday of the Church.

The Holy Spirit of God has always existed. Throughout the Bible we read of the Holy Spirit in Genesis hovering over the waters, or like that of the wind, the power of the miraculous conception of Mary the mother of Jesus, and like a dove when Jesus was baptized, and as mentioned like flames or like tongues of flames on the day of Pentecost when the disciples received the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives us the power of God to live as the disciples did as faithful witnesses through all times and circumstances. The Holy Spirit within us the very Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead. So we to have confidence in knowing God has put in us the Holy Spirit that, as Ephesians 1:13-14 tells us, "In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory."

Among the other ways the Holy Spirit is described, we are also told the Spirit of God is like a quiet voice, gentle, and that can be ignored or missed if not paid attention to. The Holy Spirit also fills you up with tremendous peace, joy, love, hope, and all that God desires you to have and experience. We know there are the Fruit of the Spirit, gifts of the Spirit, and God's power in and through you by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit allows you to experience peace when

there is turmoil, joy in the midst of sadness, love when there is hatred, and hope when in despair. This is possible because we are not only physical and material beings, but God created us as spiritual beings too!

And in today's reading from Romans 8, we are told that during times of trials, challenges and temptations, God's Spirit helps us in our weaknesses. The Holy Spirit helps us when we do not know how to pray, as we should. In fact, when we rely on God's Spirit to help us pray when we do not know how to, through our sighs, through our groaning, and through what we express that cannot be put in words. God knows us, knows our hearts, and knows what we are going through, and prays on our behalf with the help of the Holy Spirit.

God's Spirit helps us when we are going through difficult times, when we are feeling pains of loneliness, loss, anxiety, stress, hopelessness, depression, and what words cannot describe at times. Fortunately, we do not have to wait for the presence, power and help of the Holy Spirit as the disciples did on that first Pentecost.

There are times when we feel a prompting, a nudge, or an idea come to our minds that we pursue to find that it was the Holy Spirit guiding us as we strive to follow God. It can be as simple as God putting someone on your mind that you hadn't thought of in a while. And when you reach out to that person, he says that God must have put him on your mind and heart. That has happened to me so many times, not only as a pastor but as a husband, father, son, brother, and friend. Just the other day a person who I had a conflict over 20 years ago kept coming up in my mind. And though we had few interactions over the years, and I reached out to him from time to time to see how he was doing, I had a stronger prompting by the Holy Spirit to reach out to him and revisit and have some final resolution and reconciliation in case there was anything lingering that troubled him. By God's grace, we were both at a place of having forgiven and moved on. However, the conversation was Spirit-filled and helped for us both to have the joy that we were both doing well with prayers of blessings for each other.

I'm sure you can think of many times when you experienced God's Holy Spirit moving in you and your life, that looking back you could not deny it was God working in your life, around your life, and through your life to do something for you and/or for someone else.

If you could recall all the prayers you lifted up to God, I bet you would be surprised if you could also recall how many times God answered your prayers. For me, the more surprising times are when I had not prayed for something, yet God answered and provided graciously anyway.

So take time to be in silent prayer, to pray when you have no words to express what you're praying for, whether it's for yourself or others. Do not hesitate to pray when you do not know how to pray or what to pray for. Pray through those times when it's most difficult, with moans, groans, cries and tears. God's Holy Spirit helps us pray, prays through those indiscernible sounds, that are heard with the ear and heard by God that are not heard by the human ear.

Persevere through such times of prayers because we are told in the Bible that God helps us pray what is needed to be prayed, as we ought to pray.

This reminds me of the time Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, and while praying in anguish, sweat dripping down, and him pleading with God the Father for some other way if possible, yet his Father's will be done, not his own.

Jesus, the Son of God, who could pray for anything, showed us that even he prayed for God's will to be done, not his own. In us doing the same, we find that God's will is always best for all, even if it means some pain and suffering we must journey through.

You do not have to make a prayer list for such types of prayers, the prayers that cause you to become speechless or have you at your wits end. You do not have to try and write out your prayers. And you don't even have to use words. Though those are all helpful and useful many of the times, just know they are not required for praying effectively and powerfully. That is done by the help of the Holy Spirit.

I would liken it to a good host, helper, or someone specific like a nurse or doctor. Sometimes you don't know what it is you need. But they are able to do their work to ask good questions, take an assessment, and use all the experience and equipment they have to not only diagnose but also treat and help whatever is needed.

Let us read again our scripture reading for today, from Romans 8:22-27.

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Verse 25 helps us see a key point in what we do when we pray during difficult times. And that is to pray and wait with patience. No doubt that is most difficult when you feel you need something soon or right away. Patience is necessary when we need to persevere through times, even when we pray over and over again for something. We must trust that God hears us, God knows us, God knows our true needs, and God loves us. We must also trust that the Holy Spirit prays on our behalf, interceding for us. So pray with such faith, trusting in the power of God's Holy Spirit living within you. Amen.

This Week's Prayer Requests: Keep John Rutkowski in prayer as he recovers at home from surgery. Mark & Bev Buell's sister, Mary, as she recovers from surgery. Mike & Joyce King's friend's son who is having heart issues.