**October 18th, 2015**

**SERMON**

**God, the Holy Spirit, is with us!**

Living Faith, Chapter Four - God the Holy Spirit (read responsively)

4.1 & 4.2

The Holy Spirit is God with Us

**The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the triune God**

**and is One with the Father and the Son.**

The Holy Spirit is the Lord and Giver of Life,

**the Renewer and Helper of God's people.**

By the Spirit, God is present in the world,

**the source of all goodness and justice.**

By the Spirit, God convinces the world of sin

**and testifies to the truth of Christ.**

By the Spirit, Christ is with his church.

**The Holy Spirit enables people to believe**

The Spirit enables people to receive the good news of Christ,

to repent of their sins, and to be adopted as children of God.

**As we hear and respond to the Gospel we freely turn to Christ.**

When we have turned and repented, we recognize that the Spirit enabled us to believe.

**The Holy Spirit accompanies us on our journey of faith.**

We may not always be sure of this presence.

Yet God's Spirit is with us,

sometimes gently, sometimes powerfully,

guiding us in the midst of life, our comfort and our help.

**Christian life is a pilgrimage: it begins, continues, and ends in God.**

For much of church history the Holy Spirit was virtually overlooked. However, today many people are hungry to experience the Holy Spirit in their life - the Spirit of Christ, active and at work in the world since the beginning of time.

The first appearance of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament was at the creation of the world.

We read in Genesis that the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. (1:2 NIV)

Throughout the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit came to people when they were called by God for a specific task, empowering them or equipping them with extraordinary strength or abilities.

In 1 Samuel 16, Samuel was appointed and commissioned to anoint a king among the sons of Jesse at Bethlehem. Jesse brought each of his first seven sons before Samuel to see which son would be anointed as king but each time God said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one."

Jesse brought four more sons to Samuel, but none of them were chosen either.

There was one more son, David, the youngest, but Jesse had left him out in the field tending the sheep. When David was brought before Samuel, the Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.

From that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David. (1 Samuel 16:1-13)

# The Old Testament prophets prophesied by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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# We read in Isaiah:

# And now the Sovereign Lord has sent me, endowed with his Spirit

# And in Micah:

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# But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord. (3:8 (NIV)

Although the Old Testament was written by men, they didn’t write their own personal thoughts; they wrote what the Holy Spirit revealed to them.

In our reading from Living Faith today, we read that the Holy Spirit is

**God With Us**

In Matthew we read “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.”

In Jesus Christ, God Himself became a man, came to earth and lived among us.

**God with us**

Why did God come to live among us?

We are all sinners - each and every one of us!

The Bible says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

We’re human.

We’re not perfect.

We need a Saviour.

But God still loves us.

He loves us so much that He sent His only Son, Jesus, into the world so that He could pay the penalty for our sins.

Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for all of us.

He was without sin.

He lived a perfect life and died on the cross so that our sins - mine and yours - could be forgiven through faith in Him.

He took our sins upon Himself when He died on the cross.

The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, convicts us of our sin, calls us out of the darkness and sin in our lives, leads us to repentance and brings us new life, renewing our hearts and minds, making us brand new people on the inside.

We’re not the same any more. (Romans 12:20).

**God with us**

Before Jesus died on the cross, He told His disciples that He would be leaving them but He said that the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. (John 14:26)

God the Father sends the Holy Spirit to be with them.

On the day of Pentecost after Jesus’ resurrection the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages.

When the crowd gathered each one heard them speaking in their own native tongue.

From that day on, the Holy Spirit gave them great boldness in preaching about Jesus and many became believers and followed the way of Jesus.

This was the beginning of the early church and Christianity.

**God with us**

The Holy Spirit is the power of God that leads people into all truth. The Scriptures call the Holy Spirit the Spirit of Truth (John 15:26; John 16:13) The Holy Spirit opens our understanding to the meaning of the Scriptures and shows us how they apply to our everyday living.

As the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit helps believers to discern and obey the teachings of God. It’s easy to be deceived by others or even by our own hearts. When we’re open to the Holy Spirit’s leading, we won’t be deceived by lies or led astray. We may become confused at times, but God will always be with us.

About thirty five years ago, my parents started to study with the Jehovah’s Witnesses. They were very enthusiastic and tried to convince me that this was the truth. They were constantly pressuring me. I was reading their literature and feeling very confused. I couldn’t sleep at nights.

Although I had attended church regularly all of my life, I soon discovered that I didn’t really know my Bible very well. When someone becomes a Jehovah’s Witness they are quickly trained how to witness to others and how to use the Bible to support their teachings.

I’d been raised in a very strict home and it was very difficult for me to take a stand against my parents, especially my father. I continued searching and praying that God would show me the right way.

One Sunday morning I decided to go to one of their meetings and something happened that had never happened before – the speaker didn’t show up that day.

Another Sunday morning before I went to my own church I prayed to God to give me a sign that I was doing the right thing.

During the responsive reading - Psalm 27 - I read the following words:

 “Though father and mother forsake me, the Lord will not forsake me.”

What an awesome God!

He couldn’t make it any clearer than that!!

Through that experience my faith was strengthened and God never let go of me even when I almost let go of Him.

**God with us**

As we have seen, the Spirit has been moving in the lives of individuals since the world began.

The same Spirit involved in the creation of the universe and in the lives of people like Samuel and the prophets in the Old Testament is working in the lives of believers today.

The Holy Spirit

* opens our eyes and enables us to understand God's Word
* convicts us of our sins and our need for Jesus Christ
* enables us to change & become the people that God created us to be
* intercedes for us when we don’t know how to pray (Romans 8:26-27)
* produces in us the fruits of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control
* gives us spiritual gifts so that we can better serve one another and bring glory to God.
* gives us courage to tell others about Jesus

**God with us**

The presence of the Holy Spirit is the presence of God, the Spirit of Christ, living in us. God is with us everywhere and at all times.

God cares about us.

He is living and working in this world through His Holy Spirit.

We are not left alone here on earth to live our lives. Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, is our constant Companion and Guide as we make our way through life.

We can experience God’s peace through His Holy Spirit’s presence within us.

Jesus said, “… remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew [28:20](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+28%3A20&version=NRSV))

He will never leave us or forsake us.

He will never give up on us.

He will never desert us.

He will never reject us.

**God with us.**

Jesus promised believers that we would never be orphans. The moment we receive Christ as our personal Savior we belong to God. (John 1:12).

We are adopted as God’s children.

God loves us so much that He wants us to know we belong to Him.

The Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we really are God’s children. We know who He is, and we know who we are: Father and children.

Since we are his children, we will possess the blessings he keeps for his people.

God has placed his mark of ownership upon us, and has given us the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the guarantee of all that he has in store for us. (2 Cor. 1:22)

God’s Spirit says:

“You belong to God!

You are under God’s protection!”

And the Spirit’s presence in your life is God saying to you,

“This adoption is real!”

**God with us.**

I think we would all agree that the important things in life are not things at all - they are the relationships we have. God has put a desire for relationship in every one of us, a desire He intended to be met by relationships with other people, but most of all, to be met by a relationship with Him.

The Holy Spirit has lived in a loving relationship with the Father and Son from all eternity. God created us to participate in that love relationship. We are one with the Father and the Son through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Fellowship is the most important thing God wants from us. He wants us to come to know him – to spend time with him. The more time we spend with Him, the better we will know Him.

The closer we become in our relationship with God, the more important spending time with Him becomes. We look forward to being alone with him. We realize we need to listen to him for comfort and direction in our lives.

Jesus knew the importance of quiet moments spent with His Father and often went to be alone and pray to Him.

**God with us**

[Ephesians 5:18](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ephesians%205.18) says "be filled with the Spirit."

Just as Jesus' followers were all filled with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, we, too, can be filled with the Spirit. To live a Spirit-filled life means to yield ourselves to the control of the Spirit. When we're growing as Christians, we should allow the Spirit to take control over more and more areas of our lives. Each of us is encouraged to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. This is a not a one-time event but a continual, everyday event.

The Holy Spirit transforms us so that we can become more like Jesus and have a desire to live lives that are pleasing to God.

This is not something we can do in our own strength but only as the Holy Spirit leads us and guides us.

God has begun His work in our lives and He will continue to help us grow in grace until He has completed His work in each of our lives. (Phil. 1:6)

The way we live our lives and show our love for God proves the presence of the Holy Spirit.

God can do great things through us - through you, through me.

By the power at work within us, He is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine. (3:20)

**God with us**

It is the great privilege of Christians, that they have the mind of Christ revealed to them by His Spirit.

Let us continually ask the Holy Spirit to

lead us, guide us, and help us

to do the things that God calls us to do.

Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Amen.