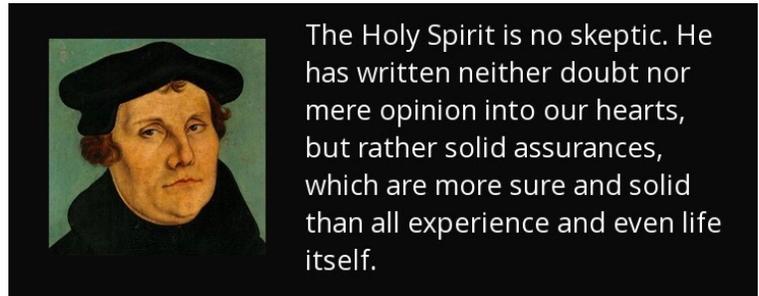


## Orthodoxy: The Holy Spirit

New City Catechism Question 36 What do we believe about the Holy Spirit?

Answer: That he is God, coeternal with the Father and the Son, and that God grants him irrevocably to all who believe.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. - John 14:16–17



John Owen wrote, “Clearly the Holy Spirit is not merely a quality to be found in the divine nature ... He is a holy intelligent person.” The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Triune God, who is given to God’s children by the Father and the Son. He is like our Lord Jesus, a Helper. While Jesus came into the world to help us come into the salvation of God by his life, death, and resurrection, the Holy Spirit helps us to be united by faith to all that Jesus is for us in the love, wisdom, and power of that salvation. And while Jesus helps us from heaven, the Holy Spirit is with us and in us to help us in the earth, never leaving us until we reach heaven and see Jesus face to face and be made like him.

We are to believe that God the Spirit is not less than the Father and the Son. He is coeternal. He has always been and there has never been a time he was not. He was with God the Father and the Son in the beginning, creating, hovering over the face of the deep, giving shape to what was formless and void, and breathing life into the first creatures that he made (Gen.1&2). He has been with the Father and the Son through the history of redemption. He gave the prophets their voice and he breathed out the words they wrote (2Pe.1:21). He gave the craftsman his skill for the work of the Tabernacle and Temple (Ex.31). He led kings and moved nations. He filled the life of John the Baptist in the womb of Elizabeth (Lk.1:41), and by Him the babe Jesus was conceived in the womb of the Virgin (Lk.1:35). He descended upon Jesus at his baptism (Mt.3:16) and was with him throughout his ministry. He has always been and will always be with those who believe.

The Holy Spirit is God with us and in us personally. He is not ethereal. He is real. He can really be grieved by us (Eph.4:30). He fellowships with us (2Cor.13:14). He helps us in our weaknesses (Rom.8:26). He leads us into all truth (Jn.16:12). He glorifies Jesus to us (Jn.16:14). He is not a spirit that enables us to be spiritual. He is God the Spirit who brings us from death and gives us new life (Jn.1:13; 3:8) by faith in Jesus Christ.

Let us give thanks to the Spirit of God for he has given us himself continually and always as we live in fellowship with him who fixes the eyes of our hearts on Christ and enables us to cry, “Abba Father”, to him who loves us. Thomas Torrance, reminds us that “the Spirit is not just something divine or something akin to God emanating from him, not some sort of action at a distance or some kind of gift detachable from himself, for in the Holy Spirit God acts directly upon us himself, and in giving us his Holy Spirit God gives us nothing less than himself.”

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## Why a Change in the Sermon Series?

If you haven't noticed we took a detour on Sunday morning from James to the Psalms. The series in James is a 10 week series on The Practical Christian Life. We have covered James 1:1 - 2:13 looking at Life in Trials, Living by God's Word, and A Community of Justice and Mercy. When we resume we will pick up James 2:14-26 taking a look at Faith and Works. However, we're taking a slight 3 week detour into the Psalms to talk about Praying our Emotions. Last week we looked at Praying Our Fears. This coming Sunday May 17th we'll be looking at Praying Our Grief. On the 24th we'll be talking about Praying Our Anger. So for three weeks we're looking at handling our emotions of fear, grief, and anger in the presence of God through prayer.

We are living in the midst of great change and we do not know what lies ahead for us. The crisis of living in a fallen world of sickness, death, and uncertainties heightens our emotions. Our emotions can handle us or we can learn to handle them by abiding in the presence of God as we're taught in the Psalms. Our emotions, good or bad, remind us of the countless ways we need God. He meets us with countless mercies, transforming our hearts and character, which always influences our emotions. God does not instruct us in his Word on how to handle our emotions, or give us a manual to transform our emotional lives so that we become the best version of ourselves. He patiently and tenderly invites us into his presence with our feelings, affections, and emotions. The psalms instruct us that our emotions are an opportunity to grow in our intimate relationship with God.

Why is it important for us to learn to pray our emotions? The psalms teach us to bring our feelings to God in expressed words. We are emotional, feeling, affectionate image bearers of God. God has joys and sorrows, anger and peace, hate and love. Therefore it is right for us to experience emotions like fear, grief, and anger. But it is also important that we learn how to experience these emotions in the presence of God in prayer so that we live for his glory as emotional people. Christians are children of God the Father living in an abiding union with God the Son, and being filled and walking in step with God the Spirit. Yet we're humans experiencing human emotions as we encounter a fallen world. We're not created and redeemed to stuff our emotions and live a stoic unfeeling life. We cannot experience our God this way. We cannot live with an imagination and experience beauty, goodness, and truth unless we feel, and feel deeply. But neither are we made and redeemed to vent our emotions. God has not made us to be an emotional people apart from a relationship with himself. Our humanity is not truly expressed emotionally outside of our fellowship with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in words. We cry to God the Father, we abide in the Son, and we walk with the Spirit. Therefore, he knows and hears our fears, our griefs, and our anger. He is with us in uncertainty, loss, and the harshness of this life, and our emotions can find their fullest expressions in his presence as we live by faith in him. We're experiencing fear in the uncertainties. We're experiencing grief in loss. And we're going to experience anger amidst changes. Let us learn to handle those emotions through prayer so that with those emotions we can learn to love God and our neighbors as ourselves. On Sunday May 17th we'll be looking at Praying our Grief from Psalm 13. On May 24th we'll be looking at Praying Our Anger from Psalm 4.

## Property Report



We continue to put our trust in the Lord for the Sale of the Barnwell St. property and the revitalization of the Covenant Road property. We have had some recent interest in the sale but at this time we do not have a contract. We have recently re-opened the bid process on the renovations to be done at Covenant Rd. We have received two bids and are awaiting two more by the end of May. It is still our goal to sell the property at Barnwell before we move forward with the renovations and relocation to Covenant Rd. We're still raising funds for Building Fund. Our goal is \$500,000. We have around \$85,000 at this time. We encourage you to give a specified gift to the Christ Covenant Building Fund. Thank you for praying for this work.

