



WHY THE HOLY SPIRIT SHOULD NOT BE IGNORED

SERMON 3 : BECAUSE OF HOW HE WORKS

(THE HOLY SPIRIT AS WIND) TEXT: JOHN 3:1-8

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Pastor Wayne George

Oil, dove, water, wind, fire – what do these have in common?

Well, they are all used to refer to the Holy Spirit. Not objectifying or taking away from the Holy Spirit as a person, but metaphors used to give us some insight into how the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Holy Trinity operates.

This morning, I'd like to for a few moments refocus and reconsider the Holy Spirit in light of one of these metaphors in particular – that of wind.

Hebrew – the word for Spirit = “ruach”.

Greek = “pneuma”.

It's interesting – the words “Ruach” or “pneuma” also mean “*air/breathe/wind*”.

I. WIND SPEAKS OF LIFE

We all know how vital air is to life. Without oxygen, they tell us on average we could only survive around 3 minutes. Apart from breathing it, however, there are other ways in which air/wind quite literally carries life.

- For example,
 - pollination in biology.
 - South Easter in Cape Town

Of course there many more examples we could use this morning.

Friends, the Spirit of God is the source of all life. You'll remember from a few weeks back, He was there at creation, when nothing else existed:

Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.(Genesis 1:2)

He was there when you and I were born again, regenerating us -

⁵ Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. (John 3:5-6)

Daily he walks with us,

- convicting us of sin, when we step out of line;
- bringing the healing of the gospel and forgiveness, as we repent;

He continues to renew us day by day.

Indeed, where the wind of the Holy Spirit blows, there is refreshing, renewal and restoration. There is life!

II. WIND SPEAKS OF DIRECTION

When I served as an Air Traffic Controller in South Africa, I sat in the Control Tower. When I came on duty to take over from the previous ATC, one of the first questions one would ask is – “which Runway are we using”? You see the runway has two ends – if you look closely, you’ll see big numbers on the runway. On any given day planes would be taking off and landing in either one or the other direction.

What determines which runway direction is to be used? The direction of the RWY being used is determined by the direction the wind is blowing! Under normal circumstances, aeroplanes always take off and land into the wind. If there’s a good wind the plane will need to use less runway in order to take lift off. If there’s little or no wind, the plane is going to roll almost the full length of the runway to lift off.

Throughout the day the ATC will watch his instruments and the windsock, because if the wind changes drastically, he needs to change the runway in use and advise pilots both on the ground and those inbound of this. The last thing you want on landing is a strong tailwind or cross-wind.

Reflecting on this, the thought came to me. Should this not be the case with our faith journey? Should the direction of our lives as Christians not be determined by the Holy Spirit?

²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:25)

The picture presented in this text is that of a regiment of soldiers marching in unison, side by side. Keeping in step with the Holy Spirit. When He says go, we go; when he says stay we stay

We read of a wonderful example of this in the Book of **Acts 16:**

Paul and his companions were on one of their missionary journeys, but the Bible says they were *“kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.” (v6)*

Then again in verse 7 – “⁷ *When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.*” If you read further Paul then has a vision through which they are called to go preach in Macedonia.

Friends, blessing and the peace of God rests upon us as we keep in step with him; as we listen to his voice; as we follow his direction for our lives.

I wonder if at times the problems arise when we try in our strength to run ahead of what God is doing. We GO but the Spirit says STAY.

III. WIND SPEAKS OF DIVERSITY

What do we mean by that? Well, wind could be a soft gentle whisper; a rustle in the leaves on the trees, or it could be a hurricane uprooting trees.

As diverse as the wind can be, so too is the Holy Spirit diverse in his working with us. For some of us, we were brought gently to Christ, perhaps being raised in a Christian home; and reaching a point where you would have personally confessed your faith in Christ as your Saviour. At your confirmation or some other point in your life.

(Illustration: Pastor shares his own personal testimony of coming to faith)

With others the Holy Spirit may work in more dramatic ways to bring conviction and conversion to the hardened heart. I have personally witnessed many situations where men and women’s lives were radically changed by the Holy Spirit as He worked through the Word in changing their hearts.

Read about the contrast in Acts 16. Lydia and the jailer each come to faith in very different ways.



Reflection Moment: Think about your own journey. How did the Holy Spirit work in your experience of coming to faith?

We cannot see wind – but we can see its effects. Whether it’s the ripples on the surface of a dam; or the tree branches swaying to and fro. The effects of wind are noted.

In our world today, there can be no doubt that the Holy Spirit is at work. Through various organizations – including our own ALWS, LCA Mission international, as well as other Christian organizations like Mercy Ships, Mission Aviation Fellowship, the list goes on – hope and healing is being taken to the lost and the forgotten of our world. Lives are being transformed not only spiritually, but also physically. The spirit is at work.

Consider some stats:

- 7,000 churches in just the city of Seoul, South Korea, when in 1900 Korea had no Protestant church at all.
- estimates show membership in Churches in Africa increasing by 34,000 people per day.
- more people in the Islamic world have come to Christ in the last 25 years than in the entire history of Christian missions.

(*Witness Essentials*, Dan Meyer)

Friends this is no pie in the sky, wishful thinking. This is evidence that the wind of God’s Spirit continues to blow throughout our world; we do not always understand the way He works, or Why He does what he does – but we see the effects and we know He is at work!

Friends, this morning, we’ve looked at a number of stories and stats, this morning. Which is necessary at times especially when talking about the deeper mysteries of God. But this is not where it stays. As we remember the Spirit’s working in the past, may we not view it as a mere historical event. But may our daily prayer continue to be **“Come, Holy Spirit!”**

***Breathe on me Breath of God,
Fill me with life anew;
That I may love what you love;
And do what you would do
Edwin Hatch (1835-1889)***

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