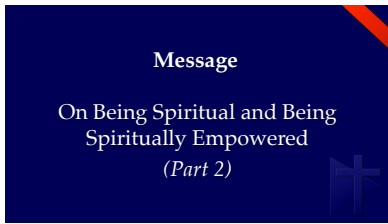


# God Is Spirit And He Imparts His Life In Humanity

Pentecost Sunday  
20 May 2018

## Introduction:



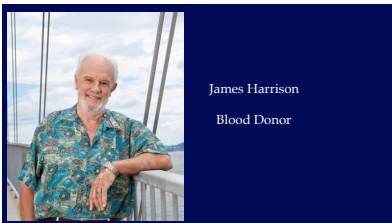
Around Pentecost this month I am speaking about the Holy Spirit to encourage us all to be open in receiving Him both for ourselves and to be empowered in our ministry to others.

This is the second Sunday in this flow. Last time I got us to consider just what we understand by the word 'spirit' and used the clumsy term of 'animating principle' or that-which-makes-us-live. To illustrate this I had a rock to illustrate that the substance and form without spirit is dead while substance and form with spirit makes a living being.

I noted how the Bible describes God as being spirit as God's essence. God is spiritual being and all spiritual existence comes from him.

What I want to reflect on today is how God gives life away. How does God share or impart his essential being, his animating principle, his life in others?

## Opening illustration:



To get us started and inspired I'll share something from this week's news about an 81 year old man in Sydney, Australia <sup>1</sup>

*When he was 14, James Harrison needed surgery. And as he would come to find out, he would also need a significant amount of blood from strangers to survive it.*

*After he had recovered and as soon as he became an adult, he felt compelled to pay it forward, he said. For the next 60 years he suppressed his strong distaste for needles and gave blood every few weeks at locations across Australia.*

*Mr. Harrison had been donating blood for more than a decade when in the 1960s medical professionals made a stunning discovery: his blood contained a rare antibody necessary to make a pioneering medication. His blood was exactly what they were looking for. His body naturally produces the antibody that prevents the hemolytic disease. Without the injections, babies with certain blood types that are different from their mothers' can develop hemolytic disease of the fetus and newborn, a potentially fatal condition.*

*Officials at the Australian Red Cross Blood Service say more than three million doses of Anti-D, as the medication containing his blood is called, have been issued to mothers since 1967. Mr. Harrison was asked to become the first donor in what would eventually come to be known as the 'Anti-D program'. This has helped save more than two million babies from a potentially fatal disease.*

*The Red Cross estimates that around 17 percent of Australian women who become pregnant need Anti-D injections to keep their babies healthy, and the injections can be made only from donated*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/14/world/australia/australian-blood-donor.html>

*plasma, which, in Australia, comes from what officials describe as “a tiny pool” of around 160 donors who have the special antibody in their blood.*

*Officials estimated that as of last month, Mr. Harrison’s blood had helped more than 2.4 million babies.*

*On Friday, he took his seat at Town Hall Blood Donor Center in Sydney for what would be his last donation. Medical officials at the Red Cross decided that at 81, their valued donor should stop giving to protect his own health.*

*Mr. Harrison — known to some as “the man with the golden arm” sat as four silver balloons danced above him. The balloons were shaped in the numerals 1 1 7 3 — representing the total number of times he had given blood.*

*The value of his contributions is hard to overstate. Mr. Harrison has been widely praised and has received the Medal of the Order of Australia for his longtime support of the Australian Red Cross Blood Service and the Anti-D program.*

That is a remarkable illustration of giving one’s life to another where some aspect of our life secures the life of another. Something like that may be part of your life story?

## Development

When we consider spiritual life being shared or imparted it’s more essential and deeper than special blood or organ transplants. They save life and enable healing but at the level of spirit it’s about what makes us to live as we do and to be who we are.

Our interest here is in how God, who exists as spirit that is love, shares his life with us, mere human beings.

I hear the Psalmist pondering this in Psalm 8 vv.4-5 (NRSV)

*Psalm 8 (NRSV)*

<sup>4</sup> What are human beings that you are mindful of them,  
mortals that you care for them?  
<sup>5</sup> Yet you have made them a little lower than  
God,  
and crowned them with glory and honour.

<sup>4</sup> What are human beings that you are mindful of them,  
mortals that you care for them?  
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and crowned them with glory and honor.

How is it in the grand scheme of creation that God honours humanity with a quality of spiritual being that is relatable to God’s own spiritual being? Why are we so honoured in the grand order of things?

So how does God share his life and spirit with us?

Let’s look at God’s CV as set out in the Bible.

At the very beginning we read:

*Genesis 1*

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

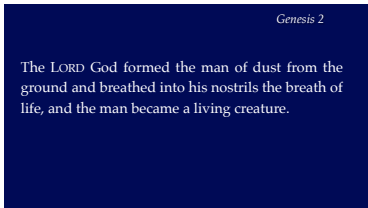
**1** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

In beginning creation the Spirit of God, what made God to be God, engaged the deep dark, nothingness. The outset of everything thing beyond God was an engagement between God as spirit and nothing.

From here we can read on and trace the development of God's creative engagement with nothing.

Then in Genesis 2 we come to the creation of humanity and again God's Spirit is central. In the first creation story humanity is formed from the stuff of the earth – or what ne now consider as common cosmic dust - and is shaped as like a piece of pottery. Today we might consider that the common process by which all life came to be on earth until at some point God breathed his breath into the human form.

We read in Genesis 2:7



The LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

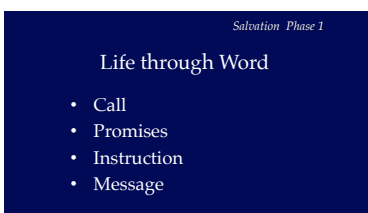
This verse is celebrating what the Psalmist marveled at. The very essence of human being is established by God doing what we might term as 'mouth-to-mouth resuscitation', inspiring His breath or 'spirit' and is unique to humanity. Humanity is sparked by the life of the creator so we may bear something of his image.

This is the first transfer of God's life to us and what makes us all children of God whether people acknowledge that or not. In our creation, God uniquely imparted his breath, his spirit in the human being.

It was meant to be so good but you know what happened. The spiritual impartation to enable relationship and fellowship between God and humanity living in innocence and dignity was despised. Adam and Eve fell and all humanity with them. The fall went from bad to worse and beyond.

How was God going to repair this?

How could God now impart his life, his spirit to redeem, restore, reconcile, recover and repair what was lost and damaged within humanity and between God in heaven and humanity on earth?



The first phase of salvation history was about words. God gave words to enable transforming relationship. God spoke words of call and promise to Abraham creating a life giving relationship of faith.

God spoke words of call and instruction to Moses building that life-giving relationship of faith with a people. The Law came as God's instruction to his people. He called them to choose life in faithful obedience. The prophets repeatedly called people back to this.

These were opportunities to receive life from God but it did not go well.

Then, but as always intended, God gave his life in Jesus Christ designating him as his Son and filling him with his Spirit making him a god-man, a human form filled with the same life as God.

## Life through a Son given - Jesus

- Teaching as a model human
- A life in the Spirit given
- New resurrection life shared

This is a mystery and a wonder and the heart of our faith in Jesus Christ. After many centuries of giving himself through his words spoken by the prophets, God gave himself and his life to the world through Jesus. This is the essential glory of the gospel as St John wrote: (John 3:16)

<sup>16</sup>“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

And later St Paul: (Ephesians 1:3)

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

The response of the world and the human family in that place and time was largely to reject this gift of life. That rejection led to the cross. But God’s determination to give life and the depth of his love overcame the death this sinful revolt had brought about. By the power of his Spirit God raised his Son - the dead god-man - and created a new Adam, a new human being capable of being even more filled with the fullness of God without the legacy of sin. His Son was now a human being with eternal life prepared for heaven.

So God had given himself to the world in word, in personal presence and was now present in new life raised from the grave. But the God was done giving life yet. There was more to come.

Jesus would now return to the Father as the new human being to represent all humanity before him and from there pour out his new life on all who would receive it. While teaching and demonstrating his Father’s Kingdom, Jesus had been working up to this new mode for imparting God’s life. He was going to send the Holy Spirit of God in his name and to the Father’s glory on all people who accepted him as their Lord and Saviour.

That was the grand salvation plan of God. God so loved the world that he gave himself for it and overcame its hatred to take humanity to himself in Christ the new human. As happened once before, the new human, God’s Son, would breath or inspire the life of God into humanity by pouring out his Spirit on all who would receive it from him.

## Life through the Holy Spirit

- Jesus Christ - God’s Son - Word made flesh - manifest among his people by The Holy Spirit

That is what we are celebrating today at Pentecost!

The plan of God to directly pour out his Spirit, something of God’s quality of life, into people who accept Jesus’s words, his teaching and most importantly - Jesus himself - as the Son of God.

The purpose of Jesus in doing this is to continue his mission to the world until he returns. His purpose is to empower his church, the sheep of his pasture, to live his life and provide the world a witness of his love and lordship until he returns.

### Application.

It is impossible to be a human being without God’s impartation of his life. Through creation all people are in-filled with something of God’s spirit which they either nurture, even in ignorance with divided minds, or reject to degenerate into something less than human.

Being human is one thing but being a child of God through Jesus totally depends on the Spirit of God. St Paul provided a very simple test as to the spirit in a person when he wrote to the

Corinthians: (1.12:3)

<sup>3</sup>Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.

Without the Spirit of God we are spiritually blind and worse.

But now here’s our issue.

Are we open to receiving the life of God as our life by his Spirit?

One of my psalms in prayer is Psalm 63 when it begins:

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you;  
my soul thirsts for you;  
my flesh faints for you,  
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

I suspect many people can relate to the thirst for God – not just God’s words but deep spiritual contact.

We may even be dead weary and desperate for God.

I want to encourage you to welcome God

- not only by his gifts in creation,
- not only by his words and revelations as set out in the Bible,
- not only in the fruits of his Spirit as they are enjoyed in the fellowship of the church,
  - but by direct impartation of his spirit to be our very life.

This is what Jesus promised to a nameless woman at a well in rustic Samaria in John 4:

<sup>13</sup>Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup>but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” <sup>15</sup>The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”

Pentecost is when that water started flowing and became available to the thirsty as the Lord Jesus gave it. This is now how God gives his life, his Spirit to all who receive it through Jesus.

The thing we need to do is open our selves like a bottle with the lid taken off.

We need to be filled and only then can we give.

Holy Spirit of the living God, come fill us anew.