

32_ IS THE CHURCH THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

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Sharp Faith: talks on the Church

Is the Church the People of God? (May 12)

Is the Church the Body of Christ (June 2)

Is the Church the Temple of the Holy Spirit (June 16)

Is the Church the same thing as the Kingdom of God? (June 30)

Some reminders from the Sharp Faith Talks on the Holy Spirit ¹

1. Whatever we think that we 'have', 'know' of God is not God. It is like someone who puts some water from the sea in a jug and thinks she 'has' the sea. And even if instead of a jug one had a container that could hold all the water of all the oceans, the moment the water is 'contained' is not the sea any more.
2. The Son has to be God because only God can reveal God, only God can give God.
 - 2.1. But what about **receiving God**?
 - 2.2. Back to the image of the jug and the sea: no container, however big can receive the sea. Only the sea can receive the sea.
3. The Holy Spirit is the gift the Son gives us
 - 3.1. to make us 'recipients' of God,
 - 3.2. that is to enable us to become 'temples of God'
 - 3.3. and since only God can receive God, the Holy Spirit can allow us to receive God only because he is fully God himself.
4. The gift of the Holy Spirit remains a relation, a gift in the act of giving itself
5. In the Old Testament the spirit is perceived as a dynamic power and yet the image of breath and empowerment suggests the ability to become part of who human beings are, "in-spire" them, allow them to be/do *more* from within.
6. In the Trinitarian life the Holy Spirit "proceeds from the Father and the Son" and represents their communion, their relationship, their total exchange of life that exists between the Father and the Son
 - 6.1. precisely because he is the communion between the Father and the Son in the Trinity
 - 6.2. the Spirit becomes the agent of God's communion with human beings.

a. _____

¹ Links here below:
[Is the Holy Spirit a Person?](#)
[Is the Holy Spirit Really God?](#)
[What Does the Holy Spirit Do?](#)

- 6.3.** by receiving the Spirit of Christ, we are united with the Son and thus enter as children in the Trinitarian life and are united with each other - and here is where the Church comes into play.
7. For this reason, especially in Paul, the specific attribute of the Holy Spirit is communion:
- 2 Co 13:13 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God **and the communion of the Holy Spirit** be with you all.
- Phil 2:1s **1**If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, **if any fellowship of the Spirit**, if any tender mercies and compassions, **2**make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; **3**doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; **4**not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others
- 1 Jn 1:3 **3**that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, **that ye also may have fellowship with us**: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: **4**and these things we write, that our joy may be made full.
8. As we have seen, one of the ways of understanding this fellowship (or ‘communion’) is the theme of the Church as the Body of Christ
- 1 Co 11:27 Now you are Christ’s body, and individually parts of it.
9. Paul adds that we are united to the body of Christ through the Holy Spirit
- 1 Co 12 **12**For just as the body is one and *yet* has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. **13For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body**, hether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.
- Cf. Eph 4 **4**There is one body and one Spirit, just as you also were called in one hope of your calling
10. The specific role of the Holy Spirit is that through him we dwell in God and God dwells in us:
- Gal 4 **6**And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” **7**So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.
- Rom 5 Hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.
- 2 Co 1 **21**And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, **22**and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.
- Rm 8 9**You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him
- 1 Jn 3 **24**Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him.

And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

1 Jn 4 [13](#)By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

11. In the Old Testament the place where God dwelt in a unique and special way was the temple. This is why this image is taken up to talk about the way in which God dwells in Christians and in the community:

1 Co 3 [16](#)Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? [17](#)If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

1 Cor 6 [19](#)Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own

Eph 2 [18](#)For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. [19](#)So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, [20](#)**built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets**, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, [21](#)in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. [22](#)**In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.**

12. The property of the Holy Spirit, of his lordship, of his freedom, consists in the fact that he can be immanent (indwell) without ceasing to be transcendent - now, the notion of immanence is expressed in the NT above all through the image of the temple.
13. The progressive spiritualization of the theme of the Temple in the Old Testament has a double outcome
- 13.1. the authentic worship becomes the sacrifice of the heart, obedience to God, love for God
 - 13.2. the fact that the community itself becomes the temple

Cf. Is 66 [1](#)Thus says the LORD:

"Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is my footstool;
what is the house that you would build for me,
and what is the place of my rest?
[2](#)All these things my hand has made,
and so all these things came to be,
declares the LORD.

But this is the one to whom I will look:
he who is humble and contrite in spirit
and trembles at my word.

Cf. Acts 7 [47](#)But it was Solomon who built a house for him. [48](#)Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands, as the prophet says,

[49](#)"Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is my footstool.

What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord,
or what is the place of my rest?

[50](#)Did not my hand make all these things?

14. From the beginning of his ministry, Jesus announces**14.1. the advent of a new temple**

Jn 2 [19](#) Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." [20](#) The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" [21](#) But he was speaking about the temple of his body. [22](#) When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

14.2. In which a new cult "in spirit and truth" will be inaugurated:

John 4 [19](#) The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. [20](#) Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." [21](#) Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. [22](#) You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. [23](#) But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. [24](#) God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

1 P 2 [4](#) As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, [5](#) you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

14.3. Associated with this new temple there will be a new holy priesthood - the whole community becomes the temple/people of priests:

Ex 19 [4](#) 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. [5](#) Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; [6](#) and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."

Is 61 [6](#) but you shall be called the priests of the Lord;
they shall speak of you as the ministers of our God;
you shall eat the wealth of the nations,.

Pentecost: the Church new creation and new covenant**15. There is a difference between John and Luke in the way they present the outpouring of the Holy Spirit:****15.1. in John it is related to creation,****15.2. in Luke with the covenant.****16. In John 19, Jesus breaths the Spirit at the moment of expiring on the cross - water and blood flow from his side, he is the new Adam and Mary and John together constitute the new Eve, the Church born from his side (the "creation" of the church). Then there is the appearance of the Risen One:**

In 20 ¹⁹On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." ²⁰When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." ²²And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

16.1. Creation began on the first day of the week, when the Spirit of God hovered over the waters (later, through the "breath" Adam also received life).

16.2. "Breathing" is a creative gesture: the Church is born from the risen Christ.

17. In Luke, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit occurs on the occasion of the Jewish feast of Pentecost which, starting from the second century before Jesus Christ, was the anniversary of the Covenant and of the gift of the Law.

17.1. First there is the eschatological reunion of the dispersed of Israel on Mount Zion, predicted by the prophets:

Is 2 ²It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house of the LORD
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be lifted up above the hills;
and all the nations shall flow to it,
³and many peoples shall come, and say:
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths."
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

17.2. This is why in the book of Acts we find a list of the people gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost. The eschatological outpouring of the Spirit announced by the Old Testament is the moment of the constitution of the people of God

Joel 3 ¹"For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, ²I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. And I will enter into judgment with them there, on behalf of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations and have divided up my land, ³and have cast lots for my people, and have traded a boy for a prostitute, and have sold a girl for wine and have drunk it. ⁴"What are you to me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the regions of Philistia? Are you paying me back for something? If you are paying me back, I will return your payment on your own head swiftly and speedily. ⁵For you have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried my rich treasures into your temples.

Unity in diversity

18. It is the Holy Spirit who produces the extraordinary variety of charisms in the Church, listed in 1 Cor 12

1Co 12:4-27 4There are different charisms, but only one is the Spirit;

5there are different ministries, but only one is the Lord;

6there are different activities, but there is only one God, who works everything in everyone.

7To each one is given a particular manifestation of the Spirit for the common good:

- 8for one is given the language of wisdom through the Spirit;
- to another instead, from the same Spirit, the language of knowledge;
- 9a one, in the same Spirit, faith;
- to another, in the one Spirit, the gift of healing;
- 10a one the power of miracles;
- to another the gift of prophecy;
- to another the gift of discerning spirits;
- to another the variety of languages;
- to another the interpretation of languages.

11But all these things are done by one and the same Spirit, distributing them to each as he wishes.

19. The fact that at Pentecost each person understands the Apostles in their own language is an inversion of Babel, but not through the return to a single, uniform language. On the contrary, the Holy Spirit's characteristic is that it creates unity while preserving diversity - thanks to the Spirit, diversity is no longer a reason for division.

Mission and prophets (especially in Acts)

20. The Spirit is inseparable from the Word and the announcement of the Kerygma:

Acts 2 4And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 4 31And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

1 Cor 12 3Therefore 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.

21. Faith, confession, the proclamation of the kerygma are a prophetic gift.

21.1. in the OT, the gift of the Spirit was linked in a particular way to prophecy

Nm 11 29But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!"

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Joel 2 [28](#) “And it shall come to pass afterward,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.

[29](#) Even on the male and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

- 21.2.** the Spirit is especially at the origin of the mission, the apostolate and the testimony
Acts 1 [8](#) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you,
and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and
to the end of the earth.”

- 21.3.** See in particular the passages of the Acts in which the Holy Spirit

- i. guides the Church: he is the subject of divine attribution, he acts as a subject
Acts 8 [29](#) And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this
chariot.”

Acts 11 [12](#) And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no
distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we
entered the man’s house.

Acts 13 [2](#) While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the
Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work
to which I have called them.”

- ii. makes witnesses and inspires prophecies: while in Paul the Holy Spirit is a
principle of personal and interior sanctification, in Acts the Spirit is the
principle of testimony and the source of courage (this is the main result of
the coming of Jesus; before it the disciples remained closed in the cenacle),
of mission and prophecy.

- 22.** Reminder from our previous course on the Holy Spirit: what does Christianity and the
church look like with and without the Holy Spirit

Without the Holy Spirit	With the Holy Spirit
1. We believe that in Jesus God has made himself known and has acted decisively in history.	2. We believe that the revelation and action of God in history works only to the extent that, like Jesus, we let ourselves to be continuously guided, inspired, and empowered <u>and disrupted</u> by the Holy Spirit.
3. Jesus is now risen and is not physically present among us any more.	4. The Risen Jesus remains among us in the power of the Holy Spirit.
5. The continuation of God’s action is made possible in many ways:	7. The people who receive a mandate to guide and teach (whether by apostolic succession

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<p>6. We have the successors of the Apostles, Bishops and priests, who have a mandate to teach and guide in Jesus' name.</p>	<p>or in other ways) draw their ability to do so only to the extent that they constantly let themselves to be led and inspired by the Holy Spirit, as Jesus did. No power or authority in the Church works by simple appointment or ordination, or authorization.</p>
<p>8. We have the Gospels which are the written testimony of the words and actions of Jesus.</p>	<p>9. Scripture is not the Word of God. Scripture <i>can become</i> "God who speaks to us now" (the Word) only if the same Spirit who inspired the authors of Scripture also inspire those who read it.</p>
<p>10. All we have to do is join the Church guided by the successors of the Apostles, receive and confess the right teaching, and put this teaching into practice.</p>	<p>11. Structures, teaching, doctrine, and activities are powerless unless the Church becomes a sign of God's love thanks to the Holy Spirit.</p>
<p>12. Now that Jesus is gone, the coming of the Kingdom of God <u>depends on us</u>, on what we do with Jesus' legacy.</p>	<p>13. The coming of the Kingdom of God remains fully <i>God's</i> action still now. Nothing of what we do can contribute to the coming of the Kingdom unless it is inspired, led, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. This is why the main role of pastors should be to rely on the gifts (charisms) of the Holy Spirit in Christian community, acknowledge them, even when (which is often the case) they seem <i>disruptive</i>.</p>
<p>14. Baptism is seen more as a rite of initiation.</p>	<p>15. We are baptized in the Father, the Son <i>and the Holy Spirit</i>: Baptism is a new creation (this is why in the Creed we confess that the Holy Spirit is "the giver of Life"), it our 'anointment' (like Jesus' anointment): it is by the Holy Spirit that we are 'immersed' in God and we can act <i>from</i> God.</p>
<p>16. We believe that God helps us, gives us his grace – but in fact we</p>	<p>17. We believe that without the presence and action of the Holy</p>

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do everything as all depended on us.	Spirit we can do nothing. This is why the most important activity of the Church is discern where the Holy Spirit is guiding us.
18. <i>A model in which the Holy Spirit is not God, or the belief in his divinity is not operative, becomes</i>	19. <i>A model in which the Holy Spirit is God, and the belief in his divinity is operative, becomes</i>
20. Top-down	21. Bottom up (because based on recognizing and allowing the gifts or 'charisms' given by the Holy Spirit to all Christians)
22. Authority based	23. Participatory
24. Knowledge based	25. Love based
26. Anthropocentric: it is not about what God does, but about what <i>we</i> do.	27. Based on the belief that it is all about what God keeps doing and enables us to do.