

## Sermon outline notes:

### God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit

#### Introduction

Christians are committed to a belief in one God. Christians can stand with the Jews and repeat the words of Deuteronomy 6 v4 "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God the Lord is One". However as we study the New Testament we find a very much more complex picture of God emerging—the Trinity. The Father, Son and Spirit are equally God! (See Mark 1 v9; John 15 v 26; Ephesians 2 v18).

#### **1) The Holy Spirit is the person of God himself**

- For many Christians their understanding of the Spirit falls considerably short of personhood. We think of the Spirit as wind, fire, water, oil and all these are impersonal images. We therefore often refer to the Spirit as 'it'. This is wrong.
- In John's Gospel, John the writer 'goes out of his way' to emphasise the personhood of the Spirit. The Spirit is 'he' not 'it' (see John 14v16; 15v26; 16v7). In John's Gospel the Spirit is described as 'another counsellor'.
- For the New Testament writers the Spirit is personal. In dealing with the Spirit we are dealing with none other than the personal presence of God himself.

#### **2) The Holy Spirit as God's Presence**

- Absolutely central to Paul's theology of the Spirit is that the Spirit is the fulfilment of the promises found in Jeremiah and Ezekiel (See Jeremiah 31 vv31-34 and Ezekiel 36 vv 24-27).
- What is essential to Paul is that we are indwelt by the eternal God—the gathered church and the individual believer are the new locality of God's own presence. One of the key images that Paul associates with the indwelling Spirit is that of Temple (see 1Cor 3vv16-17 and 1Cor 6 v19).

#### **3) The Holy Spirit as God's Empowering Presence**

- Life in the present for the Christian is empowered by the God who dwells among us and in us. The living God is a God of power, and by the Spirit the power of the living God is present with us and for us.
- For the apostle Paul, power is not to be thought of merely in terms of the miraculous, the extraordinary. On the one hand that power was experienced in signs and wonders (Gal 3 v 5); on the other hand the Spirit also empowers for endurance in different circumstances (Col 1 v 11).

#### Conclusion

Person, Presence, Power—these three realities are what the Holy Spirit meant for the New Testament writers. And because this was so, the New Testament writers write about the Christian life in a way which makes them neither triumphalist nor defeatist.

#### Points to Ponder

- 1) Did any points speak to you in particular? Why?
- 2) What implications are there for us as a church and for us as individuals that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit?