

**BACK TO NORMAL... BACK TO PNEUMA**  
***Holy Spirit, Where Have You Been All These Years?***  
April 11, 2021

**Overarching theme:** In 2021, FUMC will be SENT with the peace of Christ!

**Instructions:**

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. *The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.*

**Core Point:**

On Easter evening, the Risen Christ appears to his gathered disciples for the first time since Good Friday and speaks these words: "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I send you." Just as Jesus sent his disciples into a divided, conflicted 1<sup>st</sup> Century with his peace, so he sends us into a divided, conflicted 2021 with his peace.

**Romans:**

The Epistle to the Romans is written by Paul, who was initially an enemy of Christianity but later became a Christian himself and one of Christianity's greatest leaders as its missionary and theologian. Paul had heard of the church at Rome, but had never been there, nor had any of the other apostles. Evidently the church was begun by Jews who had come to faith during Pentecost (Acts 2). They spread the faith on their return to Rome, and the church grew. Therefore, the Roman church was mostly Jewish but also contained a great number of Gentiles. Although many barriers separated them, Paul felt a bond with these Romans. They were his brothers and sisters in Christ, and he longed to see them face to face. He had never met most of the believers there, yet he loved them. Apparently Paul had finished his work in the east, and he planned to visit Rome on his way to Spain after bringing a collection to Jerusalem for the poor Christians there (15:23-28). He sent this letter to introduce himself, to make a clear declaration of his faith, and to give a sample of his message before he arrived in Rome. Paul wrote Romans from Corinth around AD 57 when he was preparing for his visit to Jerusalem and he wrote it as an organized and carefully presented statement of his faith; it does not have the form of a typical letter. A key verse of this Epistle is: "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:1).

– Adapted from The Life Application Bible, p. 2023.

### **Reflect on this Scripture:**

Romans 8:9-17 NRSV

<sup>9</sup> But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

<sup>12</sup> So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— <sup>13</sup> for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup> For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. <sup>15</sup> For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” <sup>16</sup> it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

### **Introduction:**

To most people the Holy Spirit seems mysterious. We can't fit the Spirit into a human form. The symbols used to represent the Spirit in Scripture (oil, fire, wind, dove) don't help much. The Bible teaches us that the Holy Spirit, like God the Father and God the Son, is to be worshiped, loved and obeyed.

The average Christian's understanding of the Holy Spirit is a bit vague and not as much as that of God the Father and God the Son. Non-Trinitarian groups are confronting Christians in person and in internet articles and posts with issues like the word “Trinity” is not found in the Bible and so it is a myth or that the Holy Spirit is merely God's “active force” and not a Person. A Unitarian website tries to convincingly offer 34 “biblical and historical” reasons why the Holy Spirit is not a person.

The study of the Holy Spirit in theological terminology is called *Pneumatology*. This study raises certain basic questions: Who is the Holy Spirit? What is the biblical evidence for the Personhood of the Holy Spirit? What did the Holy Spirit do with regard to creation and revelation? What is the Holy Spirit's role in a person's conversion and sanctification? What about spiritual gifts? Over the next 7 weeks we will cover these questions and others.

### **This week:**

As we begin our new series on the Holy Spirit, it is best to start at the beginning. To understand the New Testament fully, we must know the Old Testament. A few Hebrew words to know and understand will help as we study the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit is thought by some to be an “essence” or “power”

of God rather than a person, because "RUACH" רוח the Hebrew word for Spirit also means breath. The Greek word "PNEUMA" πνεύμα also means wind or air.

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit came upon people at various times for specific purposes. The Spirit never indwelt anyone permanently. "Ruach" appears as many as 370 times in the Old Testament, and as many as 30 of these refer positively to the third person of the Trinity – The Holy Spirit. It is important to note that the Holy Spirit has been active in the world since the beginning. The Spirit came in a special way at Pentecost, which we will discuss later; but has been active from the very beginning.

How do you see the Holy Spirit working in the following Scriptures? Genesis 1:1-2; 1 Samuel 10:9-13; 1 Samuel 16:13. These are not the only ways that the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the Old Testament. Other passages show us what the Spirit does and who the Spirit is through names, titles, and symbols. What do you learn about the Holy Spirit from the following Scriptures? Job 33:4; Isaiah 4:3-4; 11:2; 61:1; Zechariah 12:10.

### **Questions to Ponder for accountability in the group:**

1. Why do we often think of the Holy Spirit as an impersonal part of the Trinity rather than a personal part, and even sometimes as lesser than God the Father and God the Son?
2. How does understanding more on the Holy Spirit help you grow in your faith and devotion to God?

### **Activity for the life of a disciple:**

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC.
2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: Romans 8:9 NRSV  
<sup>9</sup> But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.
3. Prayerfully approach God in asking for not only learning more about the Holy Spirit but also experiencing the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in your life. We cannot be Christians without the Holy Spirit, i.e. disciples of Christ and children of God.