Text: I Corinthians 12:1-3
Title: "Meet the Holy Spirit"

INTRODUCTION

ILLUSTRATION – This past week Barry Bonds became the all-time homerun king of MLB when he hit home run number 756, breaking a record that Hank Aaron held for over 30 years. Of course there is a cloud over his record because of his alleged use of steroids. I'm reminded of something I read recently about Julio Franco, who used to play for the Rangers. On April 21, 2006, 47-year-old Julio Franco became the oldest player in Major League Baseball history to hit a home run. Just a week later, on April 27, he became the oldest player in 97 years to steal a base. He is also a committed follower of Jesus Christ.

> As a part of his witness Franco has chosen Twila Paris' "God is in Control," to be played by the Turner Field public address system each time he comes to the plate.
>
> Well, with a cloud of skepticism surrounding the sport, Julio Franco's longevity has been met with suspicion. Once, when a former player accused Franco of using steroids. Franco's response demonstrated the true source of his remarkable life:
>
> "Tell Andy Van Slyke he's right—I'm on the best juice there is. I'm juiced up every day, and the name of my juice is Jesus. I'm on his power, his wisdom, his understanding. Andy Van Slyke is right, but the thing he didn't mention was what kind of steroids I'm on. Next time you talk to him, tell him the steroid I'm on is Jesus of Nazareth."

Well, while the baseball world debates the use of natural vs. artificial ways of building human body. We're going to spend the next few weeks talking about God's supernatural way of building the spirit … and God's supernatural way of growing up His church … "The Spirit Way."

> The Holy Spirit is God's growth-enhancing agent in the life of the believer and the Church. And we're going to see what God's Word has to say about how the Holy Spirit produces the life of Christ in me. And how the Holy Spirit makes the church look like what it is supposed to look like … the Body of Jesus Christ.

The "Spirit Way" is the life you've always wanted. A life filled with love, joy, peace and so much more. The "Spirit Way" is also the power you've always needed. The Holy Spirit causes the power of Jesus Christ to flow in and through our lives.

Now open your Bibles to I Corinthians 12.

If we are live in the "Spirit Way," enjoying the life we've always wanted and experiencing the power we've always needed, there are two essentials…

- We must be <u>knowledgeable</u> about the ministry of the Spirit.
- We must be <u>available</u> to the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Today I want to spend some time talking about that first essential. We must knowledgeable about the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:1 (NIV) – Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.

The wording here gives us a clue that Paul is about to delve into yet another controversial matter. Remember there were questions and concerns sent to Paul about some things going on in the church. Paul writes back to set some of these matters straight. Note: The challenge for us is that we have the answer; we just don't exactly know what the question was. But it apparently revolves around the ministry and work of the Holy Spirit in the church.

Now you notice here that Paul is not speaking specifically about the Holy Spirit, but rather about "spiritual gifts." The word here means "matters of the Spirit" or "things of the Spirit." It mostly refers to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and specifically here in I Corinthians 12, the gifts of the Spirit.

And Paul says "I do not want you to be ignorant about these things." The fact is that many believers are ignorant … they're not knowledgeable about the things of the Spirit of God.

> Now the Holy Spirit is a Person. He is the third person of the Trinity. God exists in three persons; but not three persons who act independently of one another. This is difficult to comprehend. If I were to put three persons up here in front of you, you would assume that they are three individuals who live and function independently of one another. The mystery of the doctrine of the Trinity is that God exists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

So let's meet the Holy Spirit on the pages of Scripture. (And I'm going to fly through several Scripture references, but not to worry … the Scriptures are listed on your note sheet so you can go back and review them. So let's get started. The Holy Spirit is…

1. The <u>Entrance</u> into new <u>life</u> for the believer (John 3:5-6; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:16; I Cor.12:13)

Before Jesus ascended to the Father He told His disciples in
Acts 1:5 - For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Now when we speak of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we are not talking about an experience that happens to a person after they are saved … a second blessing, if you will. No, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is immersion of a person into the life of Jesus Christ and His body. **1 Corinthians 12:13 - For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body** (that is the body of Christ)…

Now Christian friend, if someone asks you if you've been baptized in the Holy Spirit, you tell them yes, and when they ask you when it happened you tell them it was the day you were saved.

It is what Jesus spoke about in **John 3:5-6 - "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.**

The Holy Spirit imparts life to you the moment you are saved. That's His glorious work and ministry.

But unfortunately this is about the extent of the knowledge of many Christians about the Holy Spirit. They know they were convicted by the Holy Spirit that they needed to get saved. And as far as they are concerned, that's about it.

> **ILLUSTRATION** – It's like going out and buying yourself a new, high-speed computer with all the latest features, and then all you know how to do is to turn it on and play solitaire on it.

<u>There is a life that you can never know apart from the ministry and work of the Holy Spirit in your life.</u>

Also, the Holy Spirit is…

2. The <u>Gift</u> of <u>God</u> to every believer (John 7:37-39; Rom.5:5)

Now often times in the NT the Holy Spirit is referred to as a gift. When we are saved, we know that eternal life is a gift. And the Holy Spirit who comes to dwell in us is also described as a gift that is received.

Now turn with me to John 7:37-39. Let me show you how Jesus described the experience of the Holy Spirit entering your life.

> **John 7:37-39 - On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." 39 By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified** (speaking of His resurrection and ascension to heaven).

Now let me combine that with another verse and show you something.

> **Romans 5:5 - And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.**

We have a pouring in and a flowing out … pouring in and flowing out … continuous activity of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer when He is allowed to do so.

<u>There is a love and life that you can never know apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life.</u> But the Holy Spirit is also …

3. The <u>Presence</u> of <u>God</u> in the believer (John 14:16-17; I Cor.3:16)

You hear believers say, "I have a relationship with God," or "I have a relationship with Jesus Christ." That means we have a personal relationship with the Lord. Do you realize that it is the Holy Spirit who makes that possible? The Holy Spirit is the Lord Jesus Christ coming to dwell in our lives. The Holy Spirit makes the presence of God <u>real</u> is us.

ILLUSTRATION – There is a scene in the movie Jurassic Park, when world-class paleontologist Allen Grant, who has devoted his life to the study of dinosaurs, suddenly comes face-to-face with real, live prehistoric dinosaurs. And he falls to the ground, dumbstruck. The reason is obvious. For his entire career he had studied dinosaurs by picking through fossils and bones. But now he encounters an actual dinosaur … it all became real for him.

> For many people, the religion is really just picking through the artifacts of faith that survive from an faraway era when some other people encountered God, heard His voice, and experienced his awesome power. But that was long ago. And it surprises them to know that they can actually experience the presence of God in their lives through the Holy Spirit.

God the Father is on the throne of heaven. And God the Son is at the right hand of the throne of God in heaven, according to the book of Revelation. But it is God the Holy Spirit who indwells us on this earth … but you see He is the Spirit of Almighty God, and the Spirit of Jesus, for they are all one.

John 14:16-17 - And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— *17* … You know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

1 Corinthians 3:16 - Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

<u>The presence of God can never be known, never be experienced apart from the ministry and the work of the Holy Spirit in your life</u>. But the Holy Spirit also is …

4. The <u>Teacher</u> of all <u>truth</u> for the believer (John 14:26; 16:13-14)

The natural person, or the person who does not know Christ, cannot understand spiritual truths because they are spiritually discerned through the revealing ministry of the Holy Spirit.

John 14:26 - But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

John 16:13-14 - But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.

<u>There are truths that you can never know apart from the revealing ministry of the Holy Spirit</u>. But the Holy Spirit also is …

5. The <u>Producer</u> of Christ-like <u>character</u> in the believer (Gal.5:22-23)

Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

The Holy Spirit's main mission in the life of a believer is make us holy. The Holy Spirit is perpetually at work to make us more like Jesus, to cleanse our lives of all sin. And when we sin we are resisting the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Note: I was thinking about this yesterday in my quiet time. I was thinking about how we so often feel we have to strive to experience this love, joy, peace, patience and more. But then the Lord reminded me that these qualities … the life that we've always wanted … are fruit. These are qualities that flow naturally through me life as I release my life to the control of the Holy Spirit.

There is a lifestyle, a character, that you will never experience apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life.

The Holy Spirit also is…

6. The Power of God for every demand in the believer's life (Zech.4:6; Luke 4:14; Acts 1:8; Eph.3:16)

Zechariah 4:6 - Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty.

ILLUSTRATION - Stephen Olford has written a book entitled The Way of Holiness. In it he tells of an experience he had while teaching at a Bible conference in England in the 1940's. God was moving in an extraordinary way. On one night Stephen Olford preached from Eph.5:18 on the filling of the Holy Spirit. At the end of the meeting that night he sat down to rest and pray and Olford said that suddenly he became aware that someone was standing by. He looked up and there was a tall, handsome young man who introduced himself as Billy Graham. Billy Graham was so moved by what he heard. He said that he needed that and that there were so many questions he had, but he had to leave quickly to preach in another part of the country. But he wanted to know more about this power of the Holy Spirit. Olford and Graham agreed to meet at a retreat at a later date. Olford says that they holed up in a hotel room for two days where they pored over the biblical teaching on the Holy Spirit. They talked about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. And Billy Graham drank it all in. They got on their knees together and wrestled in prayer until Graham had come to that place of complete surrender. Billy Graham stood up and said, "This is a turning point in my life; this will revolutionize my ministry." Well, the rest is history. Not long after that experience came the Los Angeles Crusade.

Acts 1:8 - But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Ephesians 3:16 - I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

Now I ask you, did God work by His Spirit in the early days through simple, ordinary people, giving them the ability to do the extraordinary … then say to us today, "do the best you can with your natural abilities?" Certainly not!

There is power that you will never know apart from the work of the Holy Spirit in your life. The Spirit also is…

7. The Movement of God in the heart of the believer (Ez.36:27; Acts 13:4; 16:6).

There are many ways that the Holy Spirit moves us:

- **He moves us in the sense of motivating us.**

  Ezekiel 36:27 - And <u>I will put my Spirit in you and move you</u> to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

- **He moves us in the sense of stirring us within.** Now we have to be careful because emotions can mislead us. But there are times when the Spirit moves us in our emotions; and you know it's not just sentimentalism. It is a genuine movement of God in our hearts. Sometimes it may bring us to tears, or to great elation, or to sheer humiliation before God.

- **He moves us in the sense of guiding us or prompting us to action.**

ILLUSTRATION – I learn so much about life from the world of running. The training group I run with on Saturday mornings is divided into groups according to their goals. I run with a group of men and women who want to run a marathon in a certain time. Now to reach that goal we have to train at a certain pace. And there are two ways to do that. One way is to have a stop watch and to keep your eye on the watch and on the mile markers on the trail so you can know what your pace is. And at every mile marker you look down and ask "How did I do?" But that's not the way we train. Each group has a pace coach who knows exactly what pace he is on. And the rest of the team doesn't need to look at their watches, they don't need to pay attention to the mile markers. They just keep their eyes on a person … the pace coach.

The Holy Spirit is our pace coach. He knows the mind of God as revealed in the Scriptures.

So the Christian life is not just a matter obeying the rules … keeping up the pace … it's the joy of just keeping your eye on a Person, Jesus Christ. Follow Him today.

Let's keep in step with the Spirit, and as we do we'll fulfill God's glorious will for our lives.