

“The Dove”

Matthew 3:13-17

Introduction

The person and work of the Holy Spirit are reflected in the nature of the dove. When Jesus was baptized, a dove descended from Heaven and rested on Him (Luke 3:22). The dove was the Holy Spirit, and His presence with Jesus meant that He, the Son of God, was filled with holiness and peace—both of which are gifts to mankind.

A dove is pure and perceptive. This sensitive creature can detect things very quickly. The Holy Spirit, often revealed as a dove, is also pure and sensitive in nature, retracting from sin. His presence fades quickly when He is uncomfortable. He is peaceful and calming. But He will remove himself swiftly in response to what’s happening around him.

We are not to grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30). Like a sensitive person who becomes emotional and cries easily, the Holy Spirit can become very sad at a moment’s notice. Because He is sensitive, we ought to be aware of our potential to quench the Spirit’s power in our lives (1 Thess 5:19).

The Holy Spirit is like a fire, and when we operate in ways that are displeasing to God, we are in effect pouring water on the fire, putting it out. We quench the Spirit when we ignore His voice in our circumstances. He is insulted when we disregard Jesus Christ, the cross, and what God has accomplished through the resurrection (Isa 63:10). Quenching the Holy Spirit ultimately hinders His full work and power in our lives.

How do you pursue the Holy Spirit and fully enjoy a personal relationship with Jesus Christ? We pursue him prayerfully, exclusively and submissively. The Holy Spirit knows He is welcomed in our lives when we intentionally draw near to Him (Jas 4:8), prioritizing time with Him. We place the Spirit first by not being double-minded (Jas 1:8), wavering between our pursuit of God and our pursuit of the temporal and ungodly things in life. Humility before the Spirit is so important because it allows Him to freely work on our behalf.

Getting Started

1. Many people struggle to think of God as a person because we cannot see Him. Is it hard for you to think of the Holy Spirit as a person? Why or why not?
2. How does this week’s sermon help you to better understand the purpose and work of the Holy Spirit? What part of the sermon resonated most with you?

Let’s Get Personal

1. What did the Holy Spirit’s presence at Jesus’ baptism say about Jesus? What does the presence of the Holy Spirit’s (or lack thereof) say about you?
2. Have you ever experienced the Holy Spirit’s similarity to a dove? What has it looked like for the Holy Spirit’s presence to rest in your life or to quickly depart? Share that experience with your group.
3. Take a moment to think about this question and be honest. Are there any ways in which you are currently resisting the Holy Spirit? If so, tell your group about the areas in which you are struggling to yield. If you are not currently in a struggle, share what you’ve learned about yielding to the Spirit’s presence in your life.

Take the Next Step

1. What will you do differently to help cultivate a closer relationship with the Holy Spirit? Sharing your ideas and thoughts with your group will help everyone to see the wonderful opportunities we all have to connect with the Spirit.
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2. What changes do you need to make to fully experience the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life?
3. Want to go deeper? Take a look at the following passages: James 4:1-10; Ephesians 4:25-32; Isaiah 38:14; 63:10; 1 Thessalonian 5:19; Hebrews 10:29; Psalm 55:6; Matthew 5:8; 10:16; Genesis 8:9-12; Luke 3:22; Acts 3:19.

Renew Your Mind

*“Do not quench the Spirit;”
1 Thessalonians 5:19*