

THE HS: FRUIT

THE LESSON: GALATIANS 4, 5

In order to begin talking about the Holy Spirit (HS), we first need to acknowledge the Spirit's role within the Trinity. Christians believe in a triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God in three distinct persons. (If this sounds confusing to you, don't worry. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is acknowledged to be one of the great mysteries of our faith.)

The Holy Spirit has been active throughout human history, revealing the Father and the Son to us. However, before that first Pentecost, this relationship was different. Israel had been given the law and the prophets to help guide them in knowing and doing God's will. But this was never enough. So God promised that he would make a new covenant with his people, when he would put his Spirit *within* them, helping them to walk in his ways. In the book of Jeremiah, God says: "I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbour and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest..."

So on that first Pentecost, something important changed: the Holy Spirit was sent to *indwell* believers, to reside within us and to reveal God to us. More than this, scripture tells us that the Spirit is active in a variety of ways in our lives – comforting us, guiding us, teaching us, advocating for us, and equipping us to do God's will. We're going to look at two ways in which the Holy Spirit equips us: the first one is through cultivating his fruit in our lives, and the second is through spiritual gifts (next lesson).

+++

The epistle to the Galatians expresses the Apostle Paul's deep concern about a church that was going in reverse. Instead of moving forward into the life of the Spirit, the Galatians were returning to empty legalism. In the passage that we're about to look at Paul explains that observing the law is not what is going to keep Christians from sin, but rather it is the Spirit at work in our lives, cultivating virtue and showing us the heart of God.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow the rule of prayer that you created for yourself.

(If you didn't make one, try saying the morning and evening prayers from the "Forms of Prayer to be used in Families," which begins on page 728 of the BCP. If you don't have a copy, you can look it up here: <http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer>.)

Spend some time reflecting on the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control) and asking God to make these things more evident in your life.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

God, who as at this time didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit: Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen. (COLLECT FOR PENTECOST, BCP PAGE 205)

THE HS: FRUIT

GALATIANS 4, 5: **FLESH, LAW, AND THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**

4⁴But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” ⁷So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God...

5¹⁶But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.