

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

Series Introduction

There has been a long-standing division in American churches that I have been aware of for a long time. Maybe you have too, but haven't articulated it.

We need to talk about this first because we have to stop thinking this way. *In order to talk about it, I have to speak in some generalities. Most churches do not perfectly fit in these categories, but I am certain that these are the categories that we all tend to think in.*

Word Churches vs. Spirit Churches - Sam Storms "Convergence"

I want to talk about two kinds of churches: "Word" churches and "Spirit" churches.



A "Word Church" values:

- The Bible as the controlling factor in preaching - the point of the text is the point of the sermon. Not a diving board into the pastor's ideas.
- Honoring and preserving history - traditions are valued as a means to experience God. Great effort is given to preserving doctrinal purity from generation to generation
- Worship is traditional and formal - repetition is preferred over spontaneity
- Hymns, responsive readings, formal ceremony regarding communion and baptism, pre-fab prayer, etc.
- Cessationist in theology, or at least in practice
- The future reality of the Kingdom of God
- Tend to value foreign missions over local
- Emphasis on knowledge about God instead of experiencing God now
- Covenantal means of grace over revival
- Accuses Spirit churches of being flaky, depending on subjective experience instead of objective knowledge from Scripture, prosperity gospel, seeking revival over abiding in Christ and weakening Sola Scriptura through gift of prophecy

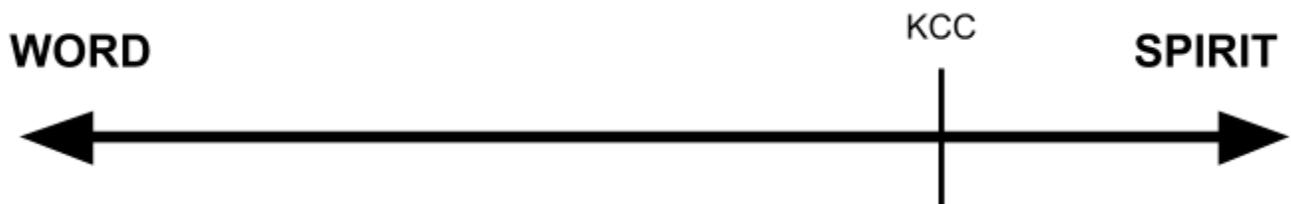
A "Spirit Church" values:

- Experiencing God physically and emotionally now
- The present reality of the Kingdom of God
- Looking to the future regarding what God will do
- Worship is informal and spontaneous
- Traditions are jettisoned as a hindrance to being led by the Spirit

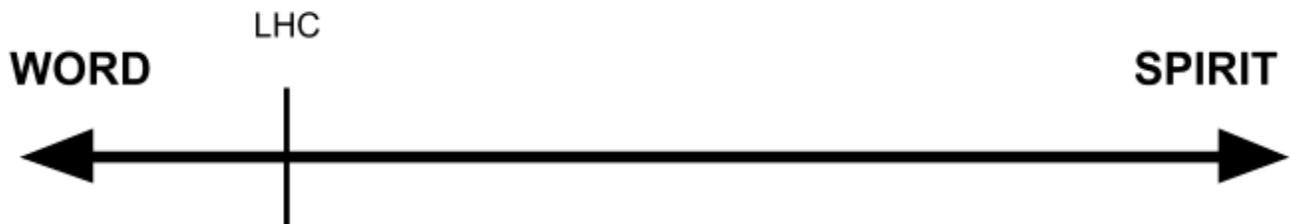
- Modern worship songs, spontaneous exhortations from the congregation (often interrupting the order of worship)
- Topical sermons using a prophetic allegorical hermeneutic - often given spontaneously
- Tend to value local missions efforts more than global
- Continuationist in theology
- Constantly seeking revival
- Accuses Word Churches of being spiritually dead, stodgy, legalistic, depending on head knowledge instead of heart transformation, Bible idolatry, lack of faith for healing, and waiting until you die to experience the presence of God, not willing to seek reform through revival

Where is Living Hope Church?

I'd say this church began over on the Spirit church side of things.



Over the past 9 years, we have shifted quite a lot.



Now you might be thinking at this point what I used to think. “What we need is to be right in the middle. We need to be balanced.”

NO. WAY.

Being balanced on this continuum would mean being not fully Word and not fully Spirit. Balance means compromising to the point that you are not causing any strain on either side.

But this isn't the Biblical way!

The Bible does not speak in such opposing categories about the Word of God vs. the Spirit of God. There is no competition between the two. The only reason this false dichotomy exists is that we have allowed the Enemy to lie to us.

In my lifetime I have seen significant healing in the Body of Christ over this, but still every few years someone comes along and widens the divide again.

Charismatic in Theology, Cessationist in Practice?

I'm going to show you over the coming weeks that scripture clearly commands us to eagerly desire the spiritual gifts and to eagerly desire the experience of the presence of God.

But from the survey results I read, our problem is that for a variety of reasons, many of us are charismatic in theology but not in practice. We are “cautiously charismatic”.

God is not so much interested in what you say you believe, but in what you show you believe. Just checking off the charismatic doctrine box doesn't make you a charismatic. It just makes you conflicted.

As Sam Storms says, “Abuse is no excuse for disuse.”

FEAR is what is keeping you from pursuing these things. Fear of the mess it might make. Fear of losing control. Fear of the unknown. Fear of looking strange. Fear of being let down by God. Fear. Fear. Fear.

II Timothy 1:6-7

6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, 7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Submit Your Fear to God, No Qualifications

We will talk about order, boundaries, governing principles, and do some self critique along the way. We are going to work out what it means to be both a Word church and a Spirit church together.

But before we can even go there, you have to be willing to lay your fear at the feet of Jesus and submit to Him in this area.

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

Whether you are an old died in the wool charismatic, or you are new to this, you need to press into this part. Some of the best teaching I've heard on the Holy Spirit came from cessationists. And some of the worst came from charismatics. **Do not assume that because you believe in speaking in tongues that you understand the Holy Spirit!**

Who Is the Spirit?

The third member of the Trinity. He stands alongside the Father and the Son as an object of worship.

NT writers often quote OT scriptures and replace the name of God with the name of Jesus. The same is true of the Holy Spirit. (**Jeremiah 31:33-34 quoted by Hebrews 10:15-17 -- also Lev. 16 and Heb. 9:8**)

Called "God" in Acts 5:4 and bears all the divine attributes.

The Spirit is a person, not an impersonal force. He is worthy of the same honor as Jesus and the Father.

He is the power of God (Acts 1:8), he is God's wisdom (Isa 11:2, Acts 6:10, 1 Cor. 2:4). He has a mind (Rom. 8:27) and he speaks in the first person (Acts 10:19-20; 13:2).

What Does the Spirit Do?

He is the *control of God*. When we say "God is in control", we are talking about the Spirit's power in the earth doing God's sovereign will.

He empowers and strengthens angels (Ezek. 1:12, 20) and humans (Sampson in Judges 13:25; 14:6; 14:19)

He gives power and authority to His prophets and representatives. (Gen 41:38, Num. 24:2, I Sam. 10:6, Isa. 61:1, Luke 1:7)

He gives wisdom in practical skills (Ex. 28:3, 31:3; Deut. 34:9)

He gives wisdom in ethical understanding (James 3:13-18)

He gives spiritual gifts (I Cor. 12:1-11)

He gives PRESENCE. He is the presence of God on the earth. (I Cor. 3:16, Gal. 4:6, 5:16-26)

He gives us what we need for our present, continuing walk with God.

He enabled Jesus to do what He did (Luke 4:1, 12, 18; John 1:32, 3:34)

He equips us to serve God, to preach, to pray effectively.

He regenerates us, gives us the new birth, sanctifies us, makes us holy in thought and deed, putting to death the sin of the body (Rom. 7:6; 8:13; Phil. 1:19).

He is grieved when we sin (Eph. 4:30)

He makes us as one body, in unity around Jesus (Rom 8:15, Gal 4:6, Phil. 2:1-2, Col. 3:14)

He inspired the Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21)

He speaks through prophets and enables us to hear. He illuminates the scriptures.

He calls us to be saved, he is the agent of regeneration our hearts, justification from sin, adoption into the family of God, and our ongoing sanctification. And he is the seal of assurance that we will persevere until the end.

The Spirit of Christ

In several places, Paul refers to the Holy Spirit as “The Spirit of Christ”.

Romans 8:9-11

“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus⁴ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.”

This name “Spirit of Christ” sums up his role and function in the Godhead. **Consider Acts 1 and 2**

READ Acts 1:1-8

Jesus is in his glorified, post-resurrection form and has been hanging out with his disciples teaching them.

Now it’s time for Him to leave so that the Holy Spirit can come. In the Great Commission at the end of Matthew, Jesus tells them to go into all the world, preaching the good news, baptising, and teaching. And then Jesus promises **“Lo, I will be with you always.”**

How can Jesus fulfill this promise if He physically leaves?

READ Acts 2:1-4

The Holy Spirit came upon them, and the first result was that they were empowered to continue the work of Jesus in the earth.

This is what Jesus meant in John 14:12 “these things and greater will you do.” Jesus has now been multiplied in these 12. And he would soon be multiplied across the planet.

The Holy Spirit didn’t come that we might have interesting meetings, and have them more abundantly. The Holy Spirit didn’t come to give us super powers so that we can do cool tricks at parties. The Holy Spirit came so that the very real presence of Christ could be in you. The Spirit of Christ is “Christ in you the hope of glory”.

All that Jesus paid for at the cross and won in His resurrection, is given to you by the Spirit of Christ who resides in you and me as the Church.

Conclusion

Do you see now how our categories of “Word” vs “Spirit” is silly? Do you see how the fighting between these two ideas has reduced the Holy Spirit to something small and reductionistic?

The Cessationist view of the HS is certainly too small. But so is the charismatic one.