

Our Holy Spirit (Titus 3:1-7)

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[0 : 0 0] Titus chapter 3 verses 1 to 7. Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarrelling, to be gentle and to show perfect courtesy towards all people.

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, being justified by His grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Perfect, that's the Word of God, William. Thank you, Fran. If you have your Bibles with you, hold on to them.

We will be looking at that passage, but also a few others, and so be prepared for a bit of a tiki tour through the Bible. And wonderful verse, isn't it?

[1 : 1 9] In fact, it says here, this is a trustworthy saying. Let's pray into this, let's hear and learn more about our Holy Spirit. Father, we thank you that we're here not because of righteous things we've done, but because of the kindness and love of you, our Saviour.

Thank you for showing yourself to our world, Lord, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, through helping us to be born again spiritually by your Holy Spirit.

And so, we ask now the same Spirit who speaks through your life-giving Word, the ones that we have opened, the ones in our hearts, to help us to hear from you, to lean on you, to cherish your presence among us.

And we pray all these things in Jesus' precious name. Amen. Amen. I'm in. Okay.

As some of you know, I'm a bit of a book person, so it means I like to read books from time to time. So who's been to a library recently? Yeah, okay. Who was forced to go? Okay, all right. Okay, willingly. Well done, you know.

[2 : 3 5] So libraries are great. When I was a kid, my parents said, you know, you need to read more books. Please go to the library, you know, when there was a weekend after school. That's where I got sent.

It's almost like free babysitting for some of these busy parents. So that's where I hung out. And sometimes it was because, you know, I spent too much time playing computer games, of course. Go borrow some books from the library, yeah, parents said. So I was a good kid, right? Listened to my mom and dad. So I did what they said. So I'd go to the library, borrow some books.

Being a good kid I was, I would go borrow these books. Anyone recognize these books? Where's Wally? Who's read one of these books before?

Who knows the story behind Where's Wally? There's no story, right? Okay, it's just page after page where you look for Wally, this red and white shirt guy.

[3 : 3 3] And you just spend hours and hours trying to find that man. Where's Wally at the beach? Where's Wally in China? Where's Wally in outer space? I would tell myself, at least I'm reading books, you know, dad.

I'm not sure I learn so much, though. So parents, be aware what your kids are reading. I think as Christians, sometimes we can be like this, though, when it comes to the Holy Spirit.

Where's the Holy Spirit? Right? Some of us might ask this from time to time. Where's the Holy Spirit in our sermons and our teachings? Where's the Holy Spirit in our worship services?

Does he show up, you know, when we play a certain song? Do certain churches experience him more spectacularly? How should I respond when someone, you know, friend, Christian friend, maybe this church, another church, says, come and let's lean into the Holy Spirit.

Let's find out more about him. Come and join this seminar. Come and read this book. What do we do? Our brothers and sisters who founded PCBC, right, Pakaranga Chinese Baptist Church, they were not unaware of this question, I submit to you.

[4 : 45] When our church began in 1992, right, our statement of faith that our church family put together included this statement. It says this, right, we believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts man of sin, shows salvation of Christ to the unsaved, and who guides and sanctifies believers.

Brothers and sisters, we've been going through this series, right, through our statement of faith, right, not just a funny page on our website, but actually truths to live by, right, trying to get practical with each of these lines, right, summarizing the truths of the Bible, right?

It's not just a thing to read through in your baptism classes and then forget. It matters, right? Each of these lines summarize for us a core truth of what every PCBC member needs to hang on to, right, to live the Christian life well, to be able to be PCBC together well.

We believe this line about the Holy Spirit, firstly, because we believe that our God speaks, right? That's how we started off this series. We believe that our God speaks. He does so through the Bible.

He has God-breathed Word. Holy Spirit-inspired, poured out, inspiring men and women, right, to point to Jesus, and we capture their stories in Scripture.

[6 : 13] And in this page of the Scripture, we meet one God in three persons. We call this God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

How holy, Trinity. Equal in every divine essence and glory. And two weeks ago, as Pastor Albert shared previously, we believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, right?

He has the most amazing backstory of anyone that has ever set foot on this earth. Jesus Christ is the only one who should be at the center of our Christian faith.

Beloved by the Father, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, tempted without sin, humbled to death on the cross, conquered the grave to rule and reign.

Hallelujah. What a Savior. And praise God that when our Lord Jesus rose to heaven, He didn't leave us alone.

[7 : 13] We're not orphans. No. He gives His Holy Spirit to every believer. Without the Holy Spirit's presence and help, we are nothing as a people of God.

And so, I want to suggest we go through the statement of faith about the Holy Spirit. We're going to go through it in three parts, okay? All right? Three parts. So, let me just share three things, right? And hopefully you'll see why it matters for you and us today that this line is here in our statement of faith. Firstly, let's first remember that the Holy Spirit is a person, right?

That first phrase. That the Holy Spirit is a person. He's a person of the triune God. We heard Him described in Eden's reading very clearly. We see His power at work in the church, especially from the book of Acts onwards, right?

We see amazing accounts of the Holy Spirit at work. So, actually, I think a lot of Christians assume that the Holy Spirit just showed up, you know, after Jesus left this earth.

[8 : 19] As if He's like the new arrival, the new kid on the block in the Trinity. In actual fact, the whole Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit's personal and divine presence, actually right from the very first page, okay?

Anyone read Genesis chapter 1 before? Right? First page of the Bible? In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Now, this earth was formless and empty.

Darkness was over the surface of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. You see that? And Holy Spirit shows up again and again, right from the first book of the Bible, as the story of salvation history continues.

Whenever God's covenant people, we know them as Israel, whenever they needed special help, the Lord would send His Spirit to empower certain people, right?

Exodus chapter 31, there was a big project. They had to build a very special tent. How were they going to make it look nice? An artist like Bezalel was empowered by the Holy Spirit, Exodus 31 tells us, gifted to create all the intricate artwork in the tabernacle, right?

[9 : 37] So if you've got a bit of creativity, right, you want to thank people like Bezalel. They kind of walked the path before us to be creative first. Israel got into a lot of trouble as a people of God, right?

Whenever they couldn't save themselves, they got into trouble. Whenever God needed to bring change, the Holy Spirit would come. Actually, think of how the Spirit of the Lord clothed Gideon, Judges chapter 6, and Samson, Judges 14.

Think of how the Spirit, He came upon Saul, you know, at moments. 1 Samuel 10. And then empowered King David, many, many others as well.

All right? Holy Spirit's been working far longer than we appreciate. It's this divine power. Not from some random force. Not from some nameless entity.

It's from the Spirit of God. He is a loving person in our triune God. I mean, there's a Holy Spirit that actually conceived the baby Lord Jesus, right?

[10 : 39] In Mother Mary's womb. That's what Luke 1, 35 tells us. And actually, at Jesus' baptism, I'll put this slide up, right? It's familiar to us. We talked about this last Sunday.

Who was there when the Father's voice declared He was so pleased with Jesus? It's the Holy Spirit, right? In dove form, hovering over this offspring of David.

And in doing so, actually, He's fulfilling prophecies from the Old Testament. Isaiah 11, 2. It says, The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, the special servant person. That's what the Holy Spirit's doing.

He's always been thinking about doing. When Jesus speaks to His anxious disciples, you want to imagine the moment, right? We're going to celebrate the Lord's Supper in a sec. And at the Lord's Supper, there were some pretty worried people.

His anxious disciples, not sure what's going to happen next. And in that upper room, John recalls Jesus' words. All right? He says, I'm going to ask the Father.

[11 : 42] He's going to give you another advocate to help you. I've underlined the pronouns, right? It's not an it. It's Him.

He's coming. Right? The world won't accept Him, won't see Him and know Him, but you're going to know Him. He's going to live with you. He's going to be in you.

You're not an orphan anymore. Holy Spirit's here. He's going to come. How does God come to you and me personally? Right? We get to know Jesus.

We have a relationship with Him. But what does that feel like? What does it mean that God is truly present with us? He sends His Holy Spirit to dwell in every anxious believer, you and me included. He's a someone, not a something. We have to get that straight, right? So easy to confuse. Let's not ignore or diminish Holy Spirit. He's not just some kind of truth or doctrine to have debates over.

[12 : 46] He's God. He's ever-present through all of time, including right this moment here in PCBC English. He's always at work among His people.

He's worthy of our worship and our praise. And because Holy Spirit is a person of the Godhead, our statement of faith goes on to teach and remind us He's a helper who convicts people of sin and shows salvation of Christ to the unsaved.

In other words, He convicts us of sin. He helps us to believe in Jesus Christ. Listen to Titus 3, verse 4 to 6 again.

I'll put that up on the screen. It might be in front of you. He saved us not because of righteous things we've done, but because of His mercy. How did He save us? Through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

These have been the unique works of God the Spirit since the beginning of time. Rebirth, renewal. Titus, he summarizes the gospel this way.

[13 : 56] Jesus saved us by the Holy Spirit's washing, renewing work. This is the baptism that matters for all eternity, I submit to you.

To be spiritually born again, rebirth, renewed by Christ's saving work by the Holy Spirit in action.

And actually, this connection between what Jesus does and what the Holy Spirit does, we see this time and time again throughout the New Testament, especially through Paul's letters.

We kind of see it in part through the gospel accounts. The Lord Jesus, He did once say to Nicodemus, you must be born again. He's talking about the Spirit's got to be at work in your life. Later on, at the end of John's gospel, He breathed on His disciples, says, receive the Holy Spirit.

Again, Jesus, Holy Spirit, working together. The Apostle Paul, he goes even further. This is Galatians 4, verse 6. Recently read through this as my daily devotions.

And, do you see the connection, right? Because you're His sons and daughters, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, Abba, Father. Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus.

[15:08] As members of PCBC, we believe in the Holy Spirit because He helps us trust Jesus more deeply, as Julianne reminded us in the prayer earlier. Alright? And I mentioned the word helper, right, in our summary statement because that's how Jesus actually first introduces the Holy Spirit, right?

John 14, 26, He introduces the Holy Spirit as this advocate, this helper. That's the special work of God the Spirit. He helps us see Christ, follow Him.

If you want a word picture or illustration, the Holy Spirit's role is not to be in the spotlight, okay? But He's there to shine the spotlight, to shine the spotlight on Jesus.

It doesn't make Him less important than Jesus, right? He is fully God, fully God. But without Him, you and I would never see and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Speaking about spotlights, many years ago, right, I was chatting with someone about what school we went to, what house we were in, dot, dot, dot. I was not a Christian most of my high school years, yeah, so I didn't grow up in a Christian home.

[16:24] And so, I was in year 10, I was part of the tech crew. Anyone knows what a tech crew is? What do they do? Help me out? Yes, Leo? Yes, they do the lights, right, for the shows at school, right?

There's a school play, I think one year we did Oliver, the other year we did something like Alibaba and the 40 crazy people. Anyways, tech crew, we help out, we set up the lights, right, we climb up these long scaffoldings, we replace the little gels that go in front of the, yeah, the lights to get different colors.

I was part of the tech crew, right? And once I was asked to run the lights for like a kind of in-house talent show, right, so it was kind of like a house versus house, like class versus class.

So there were two groups. One group was full of my friends at the time, okay, and the other group I didn't really want to win. So, I'm sad to say it, and I'm a bit ashamed about it, what I did, as a tech crew person was, you know, when I was running the lights, I shone the spotlights really nicely for my friends, and then I kind of forgot for the other group until like the teacher looked up and went, please.

By then it was too late, and my friends won. Yeah, one of many examples where I was just living life my way, trying to impress my friends. I'd do other things in my life, right, you know, before meeting Jesus, I'd disobey my parents, right, mom, I'm going to school now, all right, next minute, I'm not at school.

[18:03] I'd set no limits, no boundaries on what I watch at home, say, swear, think, until the Holy Spirit began to show up in my life, began to nudge at me, William, is this the life you really want to live?

And he began to shine the spotlight on Jesus, yeah, to convict me of my many, many sins. I did not need convincing that I was a rebel because my life was pretty messy.

Picture perfect in some ways, but messed up. Holy Spirit guided me to his God-breathed word, right, miraculously. Why would I have a Bible in my hand as someone who did not grow up in church?

Holy Spirit helped me to repent and believe as I started to get to know the risen Lord Jesus. And at my baptism ceremony, right, wasn't as fancy as last week's, I was at a nearby swimming pool, right, GI, represent, Spirit, Holy Spirit, gave me the words to confess my faith in Jesus Christ and to experience the love and assurance of my new Father in heaven, even when it just disappointed my earthly parents.

I'm so grateful for the Holy Spirit and I hope many of you are as well. He is the one, He's the only one who can open up your life to see that you are dead in your sins, that you, you are alive only in Jesus Christ, truly, who calls you to hope in the Lord.

[19:43] Hallelujah. What a help. And if you're here and you're still wondering, you've got questions about not just the Holy Spirit, who's Jesus, who's God, why does the Bible talk so much about God in this way, I pray that God opens up your heart.

I pray He helps you realize you cannot save yourself, you can't pull yourself together, you cannot help your way into heaven before God, it's not possible.

Like every human being that lives on this earth, you and I, we have rebelled, turned away against a good and gracious Father. We are lost without Holy Spirit's help, we are doomed without Christ in us being our Savior.

and yet by the Spirit's help, even today, you could turn to Him. You could start a new life. Can I invite you to do that if you haven't done so? Turn to Jesus.

Step out of that spotlight. Give it to the Lord. Right? Let Him take center stage in your life. That's the good news. Right? When Jesus comes first in your life, everything else falls into place.

[20 : 58] As PCBC, we believe that this is what the Holy Spirit loves doing all the time with people after people after people. He's a person, yes, who convicts us of sin and helps us to believe in Christ.

Finally, briefly, we remember, actually, that His work is not done once we become a Christian, right? Once we accept Jesus because thirdly, our Holy Spirit, He's an advocate who guides and sanctifies believers to maturity.

In other words, He not only makes us alive in Christ, He keeps us alive in Christ. Now, hands up if you love babies, young children. They can be fur babies too.

Yeah, hands up. Yeah, of course. Yeah, there we go. I love babies, right? But no one can be a baby forever. Well, they could be, but it would be hard.

So, praise the Lord that the Holy Spirit guides and sanctifies, right, makes holy every believer to maturity. That's what you and I want, don't we, for our church, for our family?

[22 : 06] As past year, many of us, as we've been hinting and talking about, we grieve the loss of people who have moved on from our church for various reasons, good reasons, godly reasons.

People we've loved and cherished for years, right? Some of them, they were born into this church. Some of our friends who have stuck with you from the time you were in primary school and earlier through the ups and downs.

We get it, the shock and sadness, right, when a long-time friend leaves. The uncertainty, the grief. I want to suggest this is exactly how the 12 disciples felt, right?

The night before Jesus went to the cross. What a shock to be told by the Lord Jesus, right? He'd been hanging out with his friends for three years, right, healing, raising, you know, sick people and dead people, doing amazing things and then the Lord Jesus says, I'm sorry, sorry brothers, I'm leaving you.

What would you say there? How would you speak into that worried, tense atmosphere? Well, again, Jesus says, I'm going to ask the Father and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever, the spirit of truth.

[23 : 27] Can you see that, right? Holy Spirit, he doesn't just make disciples, he's going to grow disciples, followers of Jesus. He's going to help you to keep being a follower of Jesus.

Right? Forever. Not just for a time, forever. This word advocate, let me just kind of drill down into it a little deeper. In the original language, right, John, who wrote this gospel, he remembers how Jesus described the Holy Spirit.

He uses the word, literally, paraclete, you know, just in English. It kind of means someone who comes alongside you like a guide. Anyone like visiting new countries?

Yeah? If you've never been to that country before, you really hope you have a local to show you around, right? A friend who's lived in, say, London for more than two seconds, they can show you the best spots to get, you know, the comfort food you're looking for and so on.

You need a tour guide, right? Likewise, if you and I, you know, were in a difficult situation, let's say, you run into trouble with the law. I'm sure no one else has had that happen.

[24 : 34] I don't know. Well, I had a difficult legal situation once and I needed an advocate, someone who knew the legal system to help me navigate what was I going to do? How do I respond to this, you know, person who sued me, that sort of thing.

When you believe in Christ, you're united into God's family forever, but how are you going to keep holding on to the Lord? You need an advocate, the Holy Spirit.

Jesus, of course, we worship Him, He honor Him, He's God's Son. He dwelt among us, right? No one as present in the world as Jesus Christ in terms of God in the flesh.

Only He felt our sorrows, He tasted our joys, right? He becomes the only bridge between a holy God and a sinful people and we're going to explore that more in our next statement of faith. One thing our amazing incarnate Christ cannot do, could not do, is physically hang out with us for like the next 2,000 years of Christian history and more, right?

[25 : 35] Okay? And so praise God rather than cloning Himself because that would be awkward, right? It's like attack of the clones but, I don't know, just really weird. You don't want lots and lots of like the same Jesus person running around.

It'd be crazy. Rather than that, He offers the Holy Spirit far better, right? God who can be with you anytime, anywhere.

This is good news for us as we try to live the Christian life. Only the Christian faith actually believes that God loves us so much that He dwells with His people personally and forever, right?

That in fact His very Spirit lives in us. Why would we have a tapu? Okay? If you're a Muslim, actually God is just totally, like you'll never fully know Him. No point truly trying.

I'll show you some bits and pieces, but that's it. Certainly couldn't live in you. No way. Other religions, actually it's not even a question, right? It's not even a category to think about.

[26 : 37] Only Christianity, right? Teachers. Once, Jesus, He literally pitched His tent to live on earth and walk the sorrows we walked and then His Spirit now indwells every child of God.

Do you believe this? Then be assured. Be assured. As you and I, PCBC English, as we keep in step with the Spirit, we're going to draw closer to God. He didn't show up on an x-ray or CT scan, right?

It's not like you go to the doctor, where's your Holy Spirit today? All right, here we go, right? His readings are a bit low. No, it's not like that. But actually, the Holy Spirit, I reckon, should be, as we grow in Christ, should be unmistakably clear to people around us.

When you experience sorrow for hurtful words that you said to someone and then you decide to, you know, send a message, I'm so sorry, right? I didn't mean to come across that way. Hey, that's proof that Holy Spirit's at work in you, I reckon.

When you come to church and you're really quick to listen to people's stories, quick to forgive, quick to refrain from anger or gossip, that's proof that Holy Spirit is guiding you, making you more like Jesus.

[27 : 53] When you love your enemies, right, whether at work or at school, at home, right, even those who are persecuting you, that's Holy Spirit changing you, isn't it?

When you are just raging with passions and temptations you can't control and yet you're willing by God's grace to put away stuff like pornography, addictions, sinful desires, jealous thoughts, angry ideas, that's the fruit of the Spirit working in you, growing in you, maturing you.

And so, you know, let's come back to that question, where's the Holy Spirit? Come on, where's the Holy Spirit? He's in people. He's in you, you, you, he's in people who trust the Lord.

I love answering this question, where's the Holy Spirit? Let me introduce you. Hey, have you met Yiktai? Wow, what a testimony, you know, brave enough to come to English service, not know a single word of English, and just share how the Lord has changed their heart.

Wow, that's full of the Holy Spirit, isn't it? I'm going to rep Leo, I've been reading the Bible together with him most of this year. Wow, you know, Holy Spirit's been growing Leo, right?

[29 : 11] And others like him, yeah? Whether or not you hang out together, whether you hang out in friends group or other situations, where's the Holy Spirit? He's here. He's here. Well, sometimes we get even glimpses of what the Holy Spirit's doing across the globe, right?

Some of you have met, Siumai, that's who I'll call her, right? She comes, she shares about her heart for this particular unreached people group that she'd been working with for, you know, over a decade or more.

Wow, where's the Holy Spirit? It's amongst sisters like her, using scripture songs, helping millions of minority people's group to turn from worshipping small spirits to trusting in the Holy Spirit, looking to Jesus.

brothers and sisters, the Holy Spirit is among us. Please don't be shocked. Please don't be doubtful. This is sacred space. This is holy ground.

And so, we're invited, I think, by God's grace to keep in step with the Holy Spirit. Don't grieve Him in our thoughts and actions. Yeah? Let Him use us.

[30 : 22] Let's celebrate when He is at work and when people are using various gifts of the Holy Spirit among us. Let's not be scared. And can I leave us with one more final thought, right, before we move to the response song, Lord's Supper?

I want to ask, how are we as a church doing when it comes to delighting in the Holy Spirit, right? Delighting. You know, are we the kind of people that just want to argue about, you know, what the Holy Spirit can do, can't do?

Is He just a debate topic in our church? We want to be careful, don't we? Right? Of course, there are lots of important discussions about what Holy Spirit is doing today.

In fact, you know, even the past five years at PCBC English, I counted up all the sermons we talked about. We talked about the Holy Spirit a fair bit, right? Every time He shows up, you know, there's a particular topic, spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12.

We went through the book of Acts together and we walked through how is the Holy Spirit working. We are not ignorant of His work. It has wonderful work. These are important discussions and yet, I want to ask you, do you just delight in what Holy Spirit is doing in your life right now?

[31 : 31] Are you just celebrating it? Do you cherish what He's doing in your life and the life of others? If not, I want to suggest we think more about that. Who is it that is holding three congregations together?

That's our marvelous Holy Spirit, is it not? Who is it that comforts our hearts on a week where we have had devastating news, unimaginable grief when we are lonely or feel weak?

That's our Holy Spirit, precious comforter. Who is it that's going to guide us as we navigate, as we discern together some of the toughest decisions our church has had to face in recent times?

Holy Spirit, our God, our helper, our advocate. So I want to suggest let's pursue more of the Spirit, not less, to lean in on what the Scriptures say He can do and wants to do in our lives, to put on His full armor of God as we get into spiritual battles.

Right? And let's not lose sight of what every member at PCBC, you and I included, should believe and cherish. The Holy Spirit is a person who convicts man of sin, shows salvation Christ to the unsaved and who guides and sanctifies every believer.

[32 : 52] Let's pray. Father, we thank You. Abba, Father, delightful God.

Thank You for Jesus, the way He keeps guiding us, advocating for us at Your right hand and thank You for our Holy Spirit, comforter and friend, light and dark times.

Help us keep in step with You, Lord, as we continue to live as followers of the risen King. We thank You, especially, Holy Spirit, for all that You continue to do in our lives.

We don't understand You fully, we may never will, but help us keep in step with You, help us not grieve You. And we thank You, Lord Jesus, for all the ways that You continue to guide and equip and empower us.

So, Father, we pray that You would help us to remember all that we've heard today. We pray all these things, Father, Son, and Spirit.

[34 : 03] Amen.