

How many of you remember watching the TV show “The Lone Ranger”?

The Lone Ranger and his trustee horse Silver were my favourite “superheroes” growing up. I thought the Lone Ranger cool, not only because he could ride a horse, but because he was somewhat mysterious. He would appear out of nowhere to save the day and then leave before anyone could properly thank him. Those who had been rescued by the Lone Ranger’s cunning and daring would invariably ask, as he rode off into the sunset, “Who was that masked man?”

A similar question could be asked of the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. Although the Holy Spirit doesn’t literally wear a mask, he is sometimes called the forgotten person of the Trinity because we speak much about God the Father and God the Son but not as much about the Holy Spirit. Well today, we are prepared for next Sunday, Pentecost, but today we’re going to learn that the Holy Spirit is our holy helper.

Although no one seemed to know where the Lone Ranger was from, that question has an answer regarding the Holy Spirit. In our text Jesus said that the Holy Spirit, whom he calls the Counselor, comes from the Father and from him (John 15:26). But don’t think of the Holy Spirit as the Father and the Son’s messenger boy. No, he is equal to the Father and the Son in glory, majesty, and power. In other words, the Holy Spirit is God just as the Father and Son are God.

One way Bible students have tried to explain the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is to compare the Triune God to the sun in the sky. They say that God the Father is like the sun, Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity, is like the light streaming from the sun because he made the Father known to us. And then they say that the Holy Spirit is like the unseen heat generated by the sun and its light. It’s not a perfect illustration for it may give

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the impression that the Son and Holy Spirit are not as great as the Father (and they are), but it does a good job of emphasizing that the Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Holy Spirit yet they are all somehow connected, in fact are one God, not three gods.

While the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal in power and majesty they do have distinct “jobs.” For example, it was the Second Person of the Trinity, God’s Son, who took on human flesh when he was born of the Virgin Mary. And it was he, not God the Father or God the Holy Spirit who died on the cross for our sins. So, what is the “job” of the Holy Spirit? Jesus tells us: “the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father...will testify about me” (John 15:26b).

Throughout Scripture the Holy Spirit is given many names. Here, Jesus calls him the “Spirit of truth” and we’re told that he has the job of testifying. How exactly does the Holy Spirit testify, or speak? Does he whisper in our ear? Does he give us feelings and premonitions? Does he appear to us in dreams? He certainly could do those things but if you think he has, compare what you think he said to what we know he said in the Bible, for the Bible, every word of it, is the Holy Spirit’s testimony. That’s what the Apostle Peter teaches when he wrote: “Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:20, 21).

But there is so much written in the Bible! What exactly does the Holy Spirit want me to know? That’s easy; he wants you to know about Jesus. Jesus said: “When the Counselor comes...he will testify about me... He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you” (John 15:26; 16:14). In some circles of Christianity there is an overemphasis

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on the Holy Spirit - something the Holy Spirit himself would be embarrassed about because his job is not to draw attention to himself but to what God the Son did in winning our salvation. My goal on any given Sunday should not be for you to walk out of here marveling at how well crafted the sermon was or how incredible my hairdo was; it should be for you to see your sin and your saviour. That is how the Holy Spirit is our holy helper. He’s like a good pair of contact lenses. If contacts fit comfortably and do their thing, you will hardly notice them. In fact, clear contact lenses are not to be noticed, they’re to help you notice. They are not to be seen, but to be seen through.

Without the Holy Spirit as my holy helper, I would never see the seriousness of my sin. I would think, as did the builders of Babel in the Old Testament times, that working hard to make a name for myself is OK. It isn’t. God wants everything we do in our life to testify: “Glory to God in the highest!” Yet with every hammer blow the builders of Babel bellowed: “Glory to us!” Don’t we do the same? I mean, the reason we try hard to be good parents, for example, is not so much because we’re concerned about our children, it’s because we’re concerned about what others will say about us. If your child’s teacher calls you in to report that your offspring has been disruptive, you’re not sorry that your child caused others distress, you’re sorry, no you’re mad that he caused you embarrassment. Or when we do chores at home it isn’t to say thank you as much as it is to receive thanks and praise. The worst part of all this is that we don’t believe it’s so bad to think this way. That’s why we need the Holy Spirit. As our holy helper, he opens our eyes to the fact that such self-centeredness is sin, and we deserve eternal hell fire for it.

But the Holy Spirit is much better than a pair of contact lenses. For while contact lenses might help you see a golf ball better, they won’t help you fix your wicked slice. The Holy Spirit, however, doesn’t just help me see my sin,

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he helps me see and causes me to believe what Jesus has done to forgive those sins and give me eternal life. Perhaps we could describe this aspect of our holy helper's work like this. I have a jar of popcorn seeds, some butter, and salt here. That's all I need to make popcorn, right? If I just pour the butter in this jar of seeds and sprinkle some salt on top, I can mix it all together for some delicious popcorn. Would you like to try some? Of course not! What's missing? Heat! We need to add heat first so that these kernels turn into soft tasty morsels that soak up the butter and salt. Without the heat these kernels would remain hard and destructive to the teeth. In the same way, unless the Holy Spirit works through the Word, our hearts will remain closed and hard like un-popped popcorn. We would care less about the fact that God sent Jesus to pay for the sins our hard hearts produce. And without faith in Jesus, we would end up in hell. Thankfully when the good news about Jesus is proclaimed, the Holy Spirit goes to work on our hard hearts and turns them into little sponges that soak up all the goodness of forgiveness and eternal life that God wants us to enjoy in Christ.

All this might sound far-fetched but while the Lone Ranger was a fictional character on TV, the Holy Spirit is the real deal. He is our holy helper sent by the Father and the Son. So, listen when God the Holy Spirit speaks to you through the Bible or through fellow Christians who point out sin so that they can point you to your Saviour, Jesus. Listen because the Holy Spirit, our holy helper, speaks nothing but the truth so that we will forever enjoy nothing but God's love in Christ! Amen.