

## **Spirit as Life**

Sermon: Van Johnson (@APC, Feb 2018)

Opener: Everything that is good in my life, truly good, has something to do with the Spirit of God. **There is no life without the Spirit of God, not now, not later**

### **1. Spirit brings life**

Let's begin at the beginning with Creation story:

**Gen 1.2** Spirit is present when God creates / his role undefined, but the Spirit is there

**Gen 2.7** Spirit is present and role specified when humankind is created  
Spirit represented here as breath of God, animating, bringing to life humankind

Spirit as breath? In Jewish writings, both OT and wider literature—

Spirit and breath/breathing are commonly connected, and typically when creation is the topic

*No life or breath without the Spirit*

What do we learn about humanity from this story?

Creation story not as detailed as we might like, but it is a theological account, which tells us what we need to know about beginnings in relationship to God

1. humankind made up of earth / filled with chemicals common to the rest of the created order, both animate and inanimate  
similar chemicals, similar structure  
we are similar to other forms of life

e.g., 20,000 cells in both worms and human

2. what distinguishes humans from animals though is vital  
Creation of living things described differently from the way creation of Adam and Eve is described

See the intimacy here: God bends, God breathes His Spirit

*we are in the image of God, his breath is in us*

we live because his Spirit gave us life

Then the awful happens: **Gen 3.17-19 – curse enters in:**

with human rejection of God – the Fall – our breath becomes shortened

From fully human, full breath, to less than human, shortness of God's breath

One aftereffect: forgotten from where we have fallen, what we once were

Now we accept being less than human, being subhuman, **as normal**

So we resist blame/shame because we are only human – at least that is what

I hear on the radio:

A. Human league, "Human," 1986, "born to make mistakes"

B. Rag'n'Bone Man, Human, 2016:

Cause I'm only human after all / I'm only human after all / Don't put your blame on me  
Don't put your blame on me

But, being *fully human* is being what God created us to be; full of breath, full of life

## **2. Spirit draws us back to life: full life**

God's response to our loss of breath? Draw us back to life, and Spirit plays integral role

Biblical story, from Gen3 to Revelation, is how God responds to human failure  
& Spirit involved in our recovery by showing us Jesus, who models for us what it means to be human  
The gospel, the good news, is that we can get our breath back and be fully human once again

Luke 4.18-21 // Isa 61.1

The Spirit of the Lord is on me//anointed me//to **preach** good news to the poor...

The Spirit conveys the message with power

*It is the Spirit who broadcasts the words of Jesus to the breathless*

So, He draws us by what is spoken and by what is enacted by his power (in word and deed)

– those moments when God acts dramatically, and the Spirit points and says, “that was God the Father, God the Son”

Miracles were and still are indicators that God is at work

## **3. Spirit restores life (eternal life) within us**

### **Ezek 37.1-5**

valley of dry bones is a stunning visual depiction of a spiritual truth

Vision of the restoration of Israel

Note the work of the breath or the Spirit of God here 37.1-5, esp v.5

Spirit brings back to life

*We glimpse in this prophecy what God will do for us in Jesus*

Salvation story then:

It's God's love that sends Jesus /Jesus saves us through his death and resurrection/

& the Spirit applies the saving work of Jesus to us all

It is His Spirit that comes into us once again / Restoring original breath of life /

Making us [fully] human again

### **Romans 8:9-11** (read entire section)

Paul describes a believer in Rom 8.9 as one who has the Spirit

1a. realm of the flesh, just dust, subhuman, is the opposite of being in the realm of the Spirit; breath of life filling you again

1b. the presence of Jesus is the mark of every believer

when we say 'Jesus came into my heart,' we mean the Spirit who represents Jesus is in us

1c. Spirit gives life, more than life of this earth, but life that lasts – with resurrection breath that lasts forever

Closer: Everything that is truly good in my life has something to do with the Spirit of God. From my first breath to my last, and then beyond, the Spirit enables it all.

Q: Do you need that life? Got any dead bones inside? Something rattling around?