

How the Spirit works in our lives
Devotional for June 11, 2021

By Major Brian Coles

Long ago, my Dad was browsing in a hardware store, and came across a tin of 3in1 oil.

He looked at the tin and read: “*3-in-1 Oil, Cleans, lubricates and prevents rust. Most common household oil since 1894.*” And the label reminded him of some of the ways the Holy Spirit works in our lives.

The Holy Spirit is represented in Scripture in many ways – as a dove, as fire, as wind, and so on. Today we are looking at how the HS is represented by oil.

Oil is regarded as a symbol of the Person and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the Old Testament we see oil being used for holy purposes. Prophets and Priests were consecrated and ordained unto God as oil was poured upon their heads.

Now WE are the ones who are anointed – WE are chosen for God’s work in the world – “we are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a people belonging to God, that we may declare the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His wonderful light” – quoting from 1Peter 2:9.

Like the Christians gathered in the upper room at Pentecost, each of us who belongs to the family of God has been anointed with oil – the oil of the HS.

One way HS works in our lives is that He makes us clean. We cannot have a relationship with God when we are dirty with sin. Sin separates us from a holy God. But God chooses us anyway – loves us through our dirt – and makes us clean.

I usually don’t think about oil as a cleanser; I think about soap or detergent. But I’ve looked and there are cosmetic oils for cleansing your face; Murphy’s oil for cleaning your wood; and Remington Rem Oil for cleaning your gun. Oil cleanses. The oil of the Holy Spirit works in our lives to cleanse us.

Paul writes to remind the Corinthians of their life before Christ. Before they were saved by Christ and sanctified by His Spirit, they were a mess. Listen to this: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men^[a] ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Like the Corinthians, we who belong to Jesus have been cleansed; made holy; and made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (NIV)

God has cleaned us up.

He has given us new life.

So, we are not to go back to the dirt and grime of sin.

A second way the HS works in our lives is that He smoothes out friction between people. The HS is a holy lubricant!

We read in Proverbs 27: 17 NIV, “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” As we work together and live together, sometimes the sharp edges cause grinding pain... So, what makes things work between saints with rough or sharp edges? The lubricating oil of the HS.

When all that sharpened iron clanking together gets a bit... clanky, that's when we need the Spirit. Clanky, cantankerous Christians – what's worse? 3- in-1 Oil lubricates old nuts. As oil prevents hinges from squeaking; the HS prevents us from making those whining sounds we sometimes hear coming out of our mouth, and the gossipy things we say.

3-in-1 Oil cleans and lubricates. And the oil of the HS works in our lives by making us clean and by lubricating our clanking parts. The HS smoothes out friction between people.

A third way the HS works in our lives is that, like 3- in -1 Oil, the HS penetrates rust. To rust is to deteriorate or become impaired as through inaction or disuse; to decay and become unusable through the action of rust.

... If we don't keep using the gifts of the Spirit, we may lose them. Once upon a time I could do the splits. Oh, yes I could. And some day I hope to be able to do the splits again. But when you stop doing the splits for 40 years, you lose the ability; you become rusty... impaired through inaction and disuse.

Once upon a time I could play a nice little piece called Solfeggietto in C Minor, by CPE Bach. It was one of the few pieces I actually had memorized. But I haven't played it in a long time and I think now the only song I can play by memory is Silent Night. You know the saying – if you don't use it, you lose it.

When we sit back and let someone else do the work of the kingdom, rust starts to build up. Gradually we lose the **desire** to help. And then our soul's joints get seized up and we lose the **ability** we once had. How long since you spoke to someone about Jesus? How long since you learned a Bible verse by heart?

The HS sees our rusted joints and penetrates the sin and gunk that has piled up, then removes it all, ever so gently.

The HS works in our lives somewhat like 3-in-1 Oil. He cleans us, lubricates us, and prevents us from rusting out. Just as 3-in-1 Oil is meant for everyday household use, so the HS works in our everyday life, especially at home. You know what Mom says if your faith doesn't work at home, it doesn't work!

One little tin costs less than \$3 for 88 ml/3 oz., so pretty much anyone can afford a small bottle. But some people might not have even 2.97. However, the gift of the HS is ours for FREE – available to anyone.

God says in Acts 2:17, “I will pour out my Spirit on all people. your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on My servants, both men and women, I will pour out My Spirit in those days....”}

If you need to be clean today, the oil of the Spirit can cleanse you of your sin. If you need to have some clanking parts lubricated so that you get along with others, the oil of the Spirit is available for you. If you are starting to seize up in your serving-God joints, the oil of the Spirit can penetrate that rust and make you useful and fruitful again.

Ask to have the oil of the Spirit poured into you.