

God in spirit

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In my church we've been exploring the idea that God is fully present in each person of the Trinity. Recently our focus has been on the Holy Spirit. On Trinity Sunday, a week after Pentecost, it might be fruitful to consider the implications of this full presence of God in the Spirit.

We could ask these questions:

- Is there any place where the Spirit of God is not present?
- Is the *ruach*/breath/spirit of God/Spirit God?
- How is the "breath of life" similar to or different from the breath or Spirit of God?
- If God the Spirit is present, how would we recognize that presence? (Does it look like a man from Nazareth?)

The creation story in Genesis 1 recounts that at the beginning of creation the "Spirit (*ruach*) of God was moving over the face of the waters." Later it's noted that God has given as food every seed-bearing plant and tree to human beings--and to "everything that has the breath (*ruach*) of life."

In Psalm 104, the psalmist says this of God's relationship to all creatures, who look to God for food:

When you take away their breath (*ruach*), they die and return to their dust.  
When you send forth your spirit (*ruach*), they are created.

This Hebrew *ruach*/breath/spirit becomes *pneuma* in the Greek, and it inhabits Jesus, too. When Jesus appears to the disciples in John 20 after his resurrection, he sends them out to forgive the world:

He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit (*pneuma hagion*). If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

When we consider the Great Commission from Matthew 28, what is the "everything that I have commanded you" that Jesus wants us to bring to all the nations? What is the Spirit that Jesus gives?