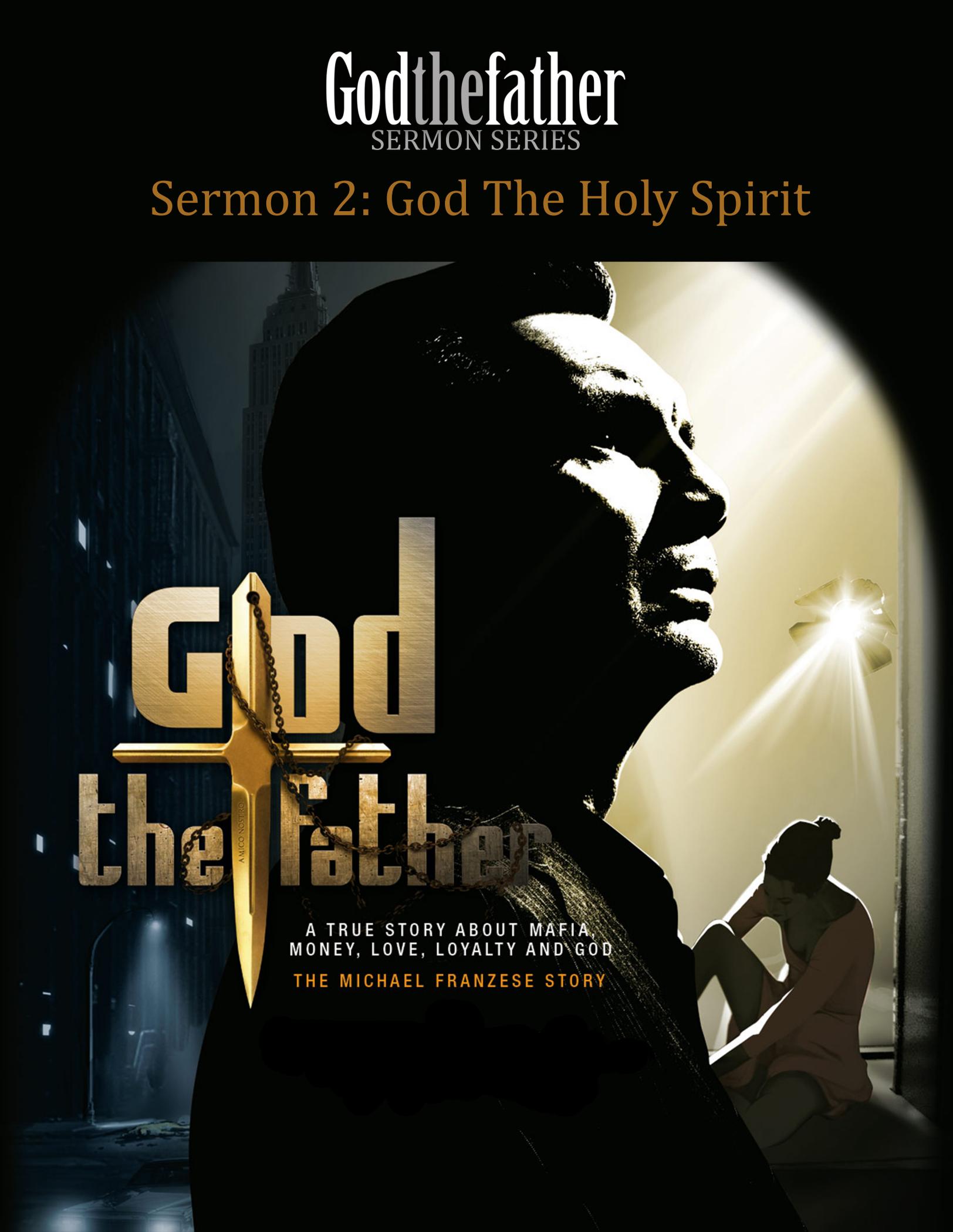


Godthefather

SERMON SERIES

Sermon 2: God The Holy Spirit



God the father

A TRUE STORY ABOUT MAFIA,
MONEY, LOVE, LOYALTY AND GOD

THE MICHAEL FRANZESE STORY

God the Father: The Holy Spirit

Good morning!

We are continuing our three-part series today on the Trinity, which can sometimes be a difficult theological concept to wrap our minds around.

We Christians, as you know, believe that God is one Being, but He is also three very distinct Persons in that One Being.

Three-in-One. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

God is by definition incomprehensible, just as a clay pot would struggle to comprehend its creator. So He is equally hard for us to comprehend when we're just "potheads," so to speak.

I admit that it's hard to fully grasp, or to even explain satisfactorily, because it is so foreign to us when we are limited to this physical three-dimensional world. But God is not three-dimensional or limited.

He is outside of our time and space. We call this Eternity. He is therefore omniscient (He knows everything) and because of that, He must be omnipresent (He is everywhere). Therefore He is beyond our 3-D limitations of understanding.

It makes sense that God would be far more "dimensional" than we are, or He wouldn't really be God...would He? He is not limited by our three dimensions, or at the very least He is multi-dimensional.

It's sort of like a two-dimensional being (who is flat like a comic strip on a piece of paper) looking at a multi-colored cube (that cube being three-dimensional). He would only see one of the six panels on the cube at a time—say a green panel—and it would be flat to him in his two-dimensional world.

If we rotated the cube to show him a new colored panel, a red panel, he would still only see a single red panel. He would not comprehend that all the panels are part of a single 3-D cube with all six sides connected to form one cube.

Just as we can see a 2-D man struggle with our 3-D cube, we struggle with the three-in-one reality.

So we also talked last week about how three things can be completely separate...and yet still be perfectly united in one form.

We mentioned some simple analogies like the chicken egg with three parts...the shell, yolk, and the white part—a three-in-one object.

We also talked about water being in the form of ice, snow, or steam, yet one element. And the tricycle, which has three separate wheels and still constitutes one bike.

Now, none of these are perfect when trying to describe the Trinity, but they broaden our three-dimensional thinking a bit more to see that it's feasible.

But my personal favorite is how one man can be a son, father, and a husband; all unique roles wrapped up in one individual.

Again, none of these answer the cosmic question of the Trinity fully, but it helps our mortal minds glimpse Who God is as revealed to us in the Bible. He is one God in three Persons. That is very clear from a myriad of verses like Matthew 28:18-20 and 2 Corinthians 13:14.

Last week, we looked at God the Father. Today we're going to look at God the Holy Spirit, who I've purposely moved into the second spot in this sermon series. God the Son is usually mentioned second when we rattle off the Trinity of "God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

Why do that? Why shake things up?

Well, I think sometimes He, the Holy Spirit, gets a bum rap by Christendom...usually He is referred to incorrectly as "It" and not as a real person who should be addressed as "He."

Would you like to be called that? **It** did this or **It** did that. Pretty rude, eh? But we all do "it" with Him, even though in the original Greek it is clear that He is a Person...and God.

The Greek is very clear in confirming the personage of the Holy Spirit. The word "spirit" (*pneuma*) is neuter and should have neuter pronouns for grammatical correctness, but many times the pronouns are masculine instead, as in John 15 and 16. There He is referred to as a person grammatically, a "He."

So this morning He will be our topic, and God the Son, Jesus Christ, will be next week's focus.

And frankly, there is a biblical precedent for Him to be the second One right out of the gate when we first meet Him in Genesis 1:1-2, where He creates, brings things to life, and maintains order (Job 23:16).

Look with me at the very first sentences in Genesis.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."

Now of course, I'm just having a little fun with the order of the Trinity because we know that one of the Holy Spirit's roles is to glorify Jesus and point us to Christ, so naturally Jesus is second in the order of Trinity that we are all used to reciting.

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Now last week, in discussing the first Person of the Trinity, God the Father, we also mentioned a new film by the same name, *God the Father*.

This movie is a true story about Michael Franzese, who climbed the organized crime ladder in the Mafia to the top, nearly becoming a Godfather in one of the most powerful crime families in New York...the Colombo Family.

Still in his early 20's, Michael Franzese concocted a criminal scheme that brought in hundreds of millions of dollars and landed him on a list of the Top 50 crime bosses in the country (at number 18, five spots behind John Gotti)!

So why bring up a mobster on Sunday morning? Well, for one thing, Michael Franzese is a trinity himself...a son, a father, and a husband.

But more than that, in his life we see the dynamic power of the Trinity when the Holy Spirit convicted him of his sin and he became a Christian! This is no small feat and demonstrates the power of the Holy Spirit to convict such a corrupt man like Michael Franzese.

Despite his utter depravity, the Holy Spirit entered this mobster's body and turned him around...and prayer made that happen! Someone was devoted to praying for him.

Let's take a moment to look at the trailer for this remarkable story, *God the Father*:

[God The Father Trailer](#)

I encourage you to go see this movie about Michael Franzese. As far as I know, he's the only example of someone that high up in La Cosa Nostra who not only escaped with his life, but got a new life in Christ Jesus.

Just amazing what the Holy Spirit can do, isn't it? Is there someone you're praying for that you've given up on? No matter what the odds, the Holy Spirit plus one prayer warrior is a majority! Don't quit praying and believing God for their soul.

So let's meet God the Holy Spirit.

His History

*“Then they gathered around him and asked him, ‘Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?’ He said to them: ‘It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But **you will receive power** when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and **you will be my witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:6-8).”*

In the recent bestseller and movie, ***Heaven Is For Real***, Pastor Todd Burpo’s young son Colton claims to have gone to Heaven. When his dad asks Colton questions about his experience, one of them is what the Holy Spirit looks like, to which Colton puzzles some and says, *“He’s hard to describe, but kinda’ blue.”*

Well, I can’t say what He looks like with Colton Burpo’s certainty, except that in the New Testament He appears as a dove at Jesus’ baptism, a flame at Pentecost, and sounds like a rushing wind (without a breeze). I can also say that He gives us power to be His witnesses.

In the Old Testament He would come on prophets, priests, and kings to empower them for service—people like Samson, Samuel, Zechariah, and David—and then leave them (Judges 14:19, 1 Samuel 16:13, 2 Chronicles 24:20, Psalm 51:11). It was not a permanent occupation.

And He was promised in Joel 2:28-29 to be poured out on us, which we know happened in the New Testament at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21), which we recognize as the birth of the Church when the Holy Spirit was given permanently.

Let me repeat that. He literally takes up residency inside of our body—a holy possession by a Holy Spirit that needs no exorcism—the minute we repent and believe the gospel. It’s permanent.

Let’s read Jesus’ words in John 14:16-17 about this indwelling Advocate.

*“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and **will be in you.**”*

And Paul says in Romans 8:9-11 the very same amazing thing:

*“You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, **if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you.** And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if **Christ is in you**, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead **is living in you**, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of **his Spirit who lives in you.**”*

Again in Ephesians 1:13-14:

“And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.”

First we listened to *“the message of truth, the gospel,”* then *“we believed,”* and finally we are *“sealed.”*

A remarkable event! God’s Spirit takes up residence inside of our body, His new temple, as he did in the Old Testament Temple in Jerusalem (Ezekiel 43). WOW!

So He gives us power to be a witness by coming inside of our body permanently. But is that it? Can we know more about Him? If He is going to live inside of you, you should know more about Him, right?

Let’s take a brief look at why He is a Person and what He is like, His attributes.

His Nature

One thing is very clear...He is not a force like in *Star Wars*, an idea, or a thing, as these verses all clearly demonstrate:

He is equal to the Father and the Son. Matthew 28:18-20

He regenerates us. John 3:5-6

He convicts us of sin. John 16:8

He guides us. John 16:13

He testifies about Christ. John 16:14

He can be lied to. Acts 5:3

He commands. Acts 8:29

He is to be obeyed. Acts 10:19-21

He has life. Romans 8:2

He leads us. Romans 8:14

He indwells us. Romans 8:9

He proves our faith. Romans 8:9

He testifies we are God’s children. Romans 8:16

He prays for believers. Romans 8:26-27

He sanctifies us. Romans 15:16

He helps us understand the Word. 1 Corinthians 2:6-16

He thinks and knows. 1 Corinthians 2:10-11

He’s omniscient. 1 Co 2:10-11

He gives gifts to believers. 1 Corinthians 12:4

He produces godly character. Galatians 5:22-23

He seals us. Ephesians 1:13

He guarantees our inheritance. Ephesians 1:14

He has emotions. Ephesians 4:30

He unites us with believers. Philippians 2:1
He predicts the future. 1 Timothy 4:1
He is eternal. Hebrews 9:1
He authored the Word. 2 Peter 1:21
He anoints us. 1 John 2:20
He is honored. Psalm 51:11
He is omnipresent. Psalm 139:7
He can be sinned against Isaiah 63:10

And finally, Paul called Him God. 2 Corinthians 3:17-18

With all of these attributes and roles, we need to ask what is His primary role in our lives. He has two essential jobs.

His Primary Role

*“He will **glorify me** because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you (John 16:14).”*

“When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment...(John 16:8)”

These are the two main roles of the Holy Spirit:

1. Glorify Jesus
2. Convict the world concerning sin and righteousness

Take a look at this clip from Michael’s movie, ***God the Father***:

Film Clip 1:21:54 to 1:23:27 (Michael meets Irma Garcia)

Enter our prayer warrior, Irma Garcia. She prayed for Michael religiously, pardon the pun, but she personified the old widow who bothered the unrighteous judge until he finally relented (Luke 18:1-8).

*“Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that **they should always pray and not give up**. He said: ‘In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’*

‘For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually come and attack me!’

And the Lord said, 'Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?''

And this is what Irma Garcia said to Michael: “*One day you will speak to millions about God.*” It took a while, and I’m sure it was not easy to pray for a mobster dating your daughter, but she was persistent.

Irma Garcia did not lose heart. She prayed Michael right into the Kingdom. You may argue the theology of that, but you cannot argue the results. Was anyone else praying for him? Maybe his wife, Cammy?

Look what Michael said about what the Holy Spirit did to him in jail.

*“For the first time in my life, I felt **convicted**, ashamed, and sorry for some of the things I had done and the people I had hurt during all my years on the street.”*

Prayer facilitated that conviction in Michael’s heart. Irma’s prayers.

And now Michael is speaking to millions, bringing glory to Jesus. Does that remind you of another murderer who turned to Christ and spoke to millions? Can you name him? That’s right, Saul of Tarsus, whom we know as the Apostle Paul.

Makes you wonder who was behind the scenes praying for Paul when he was going after Christians. Who was Paul’s Irma? We won’t know until we get to Heaven, but I bet Paul had an Irma praying for him, too.

His Desire

*“Now it is **God** who makes both us and you stand firm in **Christ**. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his **Spirit** in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).”*

At a recent funeral, a clergyman said death was a mystery. He didn’t know what was to come. He offered no real hope to the grieving family.

He was dead wrong.

The Bible is very clear that we can know for sure where we are going when we die. It was written for us to know we have eternal life.

“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life (1 John 5:13).”

And how do we know that? John tells us clearly in the same chapter, verses 11 and 12, that there are two kinds of people on this planet:

“And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

Knowing for sure that you are a Christian is not a mystery. It is clear-cut based on this one question:

For you personally, where is the Holy Spirit right this very second?

If you cannot answer that He is inside of your body, literally, right this very moment, because you asked Him to come inside of you and take possession—a holy spirit possession—then don't kid yourself any longer by being religious.

You are not a real believer. As John said, *“He who has the Son has the life. He who does not have the Son does not have the life.”*

It's real simple. That's what it means to be born again...spiritually. Look what Jesus said in John 3:

“Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.’

Jesus replied, ‘Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.’

‘How can someone be born when they are old?’ Nicodemus asked. ‘Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!’

Jesus answered, ‘Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit (John 3:1-8).’”

We are born once physically when the water breaks in our mother's womb, our arrival is imminent. But being born of the Spirit is the second birth, a spiritual birth, and one that we must all choose by believing in His Son, the gospel message, and receiving the Holy Spirit's residence into our physical body!

So what is the gospel message exactly? Here's what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:

“Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if

you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve (1 Corinthians 15:1-5)."

So before this morning, none of you had ever heard of Irma Garcia, right? And yet this woman prayed for Michael Franzese, and God answered those prayers and confirmed what she said to him in her kitchen in California, because Michael is reaching millions today for Jesus Christ.

That, my friends, is what the Holy Spirit can do with a "nobody's" prayer, someone you never heard of and may never meet this side of Heaven, who would not quit begging for Michael Franzese's soul. That is a power witness!

God wants us all to be an Irma who "*always prays*" and who did "*not give up.*" I'm not sure what "*shunky*" means, but I understand the point of this video, and so does Irma.

[The Persistent Widow](#)

Will you be an Irma? I hope so. Perhaps millions more will hear the gospel because of you pestering God on someone's behalf. And remember that your judge is a righteous judge who loves you dearly! If He can save a mobster, then He can save anybody!

Let's pray.