

# Inspiration: Moments of Truth

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## Introduction

- a. Inspiration is the action of the Holy Spirit.
- b. Six ways the Holy Spirit acts.

**Inspiration happens when the Holy Spirit makes something where there was nothing**

- a. From nothing
- b. Two things spark
- c. Reconfiguration
- d. Restoration

1



**Inspiration happens when the Holy Spirit reveals something that was always true**

- a. Annunciation
- b. Vocation
- c. Revelation

2

**Inspiration happens when the Holy Spirit strips away the membrane between heaven and earth**

- a. Transfiguration
- b. Prayer

3



**Inspiration happens when the Holy Spirit does unbelievable things**

- a. Resurrection
- b. Comfort
- c. Baptism
- d. Miracle

4



## Inspiration happens when the Holy Spirit empowers us with a force beyond us

- a. Pentecost
- b. Being swept up
- c. Four contrasts

# 5



## Inspiration happens when the Holy Spirit works through surprise and the stranger

- a. Out of control
- b. Beyond the church
- c. Three kinds

# 6

### Conclusion

Of course I hope that anyone could hear this lecture and be moved to reflect on the work of the Holy Spirit in the world and in their life. But I confess I've had three kinds of people in mind as I've shared these remarks. The first is charismatic Christians. If you believe the Holy Spirit came into your heart at conversion, and does signs and wonders through words of prophecy, healing and speaking in tongues, you'll have seen that I've referred to such things tonight. But I trust in setting out these six forms of inspiration I've demonstrated that the Holy Spirit is about so much more than that, and may have persuaded you that it's so much more exciting and transformative than that.

The second group I've been especially talking to is Christians who, perhaps because some charismatics talk as if the Holy Spirit belongs to them, have assumed the Holy Spirit is slightly embarrassing and best avoided. If that's you, I hope I've shown you tonight that the Holy Spirit pervades your life and is God constantly empowering, cajoling, surprising and transforming you, and I hope I've offered enough examples to encourage you to think the Holy Spirit really is God speaking to and inspiring you to move you to love and praise.

The third group I've been addressing specifically is those who aren't at all sure they'd call themselves Christians, perhaps especially because God is so often portrayed in such narrow and judgemental terms, and because Christians seem so self-absorbed and so keen to configure the world such that they appear as better than others. If that's you, what I've set out to do tonight is to demonstrate that our human notion of inspiration and the theological notion of the Holy Spirit are more or less the same thing, because inspiration names the moment when we glimpse and/or experience the way God creates, reconfigures and surprises the world. And so whenever you've had or perceived a moment of inspiration, you've had an experience of the Holy Spirit. Which means the Holy Spirit has been at work in your life since your life began. Which I hope is a rather wonderful, empowering and inspiring thing to discover.

As I close I want to recognise the significance of giving this address in St Martin-in-the-Fields. For this is a setting widely admired precisely because for many decades it's been a community of inspiration. Let me just read once more those six portrayals of the Holy Spirit. Inspiration happens when the Holy Spirit makes something where there was nothing. Inspiration happens when the Holy Spirit reveals something that was always true. Inspiration happens when the Holy Spirit strips away the membrane between heaven and earth. Inspiration happens when the Holy Spirit does unbelievable things. Inspiration happens when the Holy Spirit empowers us with a force beyond us. Inspiration happens when the Holy Spirit works through surprise and the stranger. It is my hope, and a hope that has in many ways been realised, that St Martin's be a community where all these kinds of inspiration come true every day. And by joining this series tonight, you've become part of that. Thank you for being an inspiration.