

Introducing the Holy Spirit

John 14:16-31; 16:5-7

Introduction

In our last discussion of the book of John, chapter 14, we left the band of troubled disciples in the process of being encouraged by Jesus. Look again at verse 1.

Let not your heart be troubled; [keep on] believing in God, [keep on] believing also in Me.

Now skip to verse 27.

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you.

Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

Review of Jesus' Encouragement

These two statements are like the front and back covers of a book. Everything Jesus has said to them in between, are pages of encouragement and healing. Let us review the ways Jesus encouraged the disciples, in the first part of John, chapter 14.

Jesus gave the disciples the encouragement of a future home in heaven

1. First, Jesus gave the disciples encouragement by telling them about their future home in heaven.

He says, in verse 2,

In my Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

In Christ's day, a grown son found his bride and then, brought her back to his father's house. Jesus, the Son, has saved us, who have believed, and calls us His bride. He is taking us home to His father, where a wing has already been added. We are all going to live under one roof, so to speak – and that is encouraging!

Jesus gave the disciples the encouragement of a present relationship through prayer

2. Secondly, Jesus gave the disciples encouragement by telling them about their present, ongoing relationship through prayer.

He tells them, in verse 13,

And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

A child learning to color in his coloring book must learn to choose the appropriate colors and stay in the lines. In the same way, those of us who are the children of God must learn to pray. We have to learn to pray in Jesus' name; that is, not just a robotic ending to a prayer, but praying a prayer to which He would be willing to sign His name. That is the appropriate color. Then, like a child who learns to color within the lines, so we learn to pray within the guidelines of praying for God's glory and will to be accomplished on earth, not our will to be accomplished in heaven.

When we pray like that, God will never leave us empty handed, nor will we remain unchanged – and that is encouraging!

Jesus gave the disciples the encouragement of a constant companion through life

3. Finally, for our discussion today, as we complete our study of John, chapter 14, Jesus gave the disciples the encouragement of a constant companion through life.

Introducing the Holy Spirit

Let us pick our study up at verse 15.

If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

In the original tense, this could be read, “If you love Me, you will keep on keeping My commandments.”

Jesus is telling His disciples that a person who is on his way to heaven, who is praying for God’s will to be done on earth will be a disciple who strives toward obedience. Authentic disciples are revealed by active obedience.

Now, can you imagine anything more discouraging than having the memory of the Lord telling you, “If you love me, you will obey me” – knowing that, within the next twenty four hours, they will become overwhelmed with fear and panic and their response will be to defect? When the pressure of Gethsemane hit home; when the cruelty on the hill at Golgotha came into view, all but John deserted Him.

We would be no different. While we would like to picture ourselves as the apostle John, who was the only one to walk up Calvary’s hill with a weeping Mary on his arm, we are more like Peter. Peter would make a promise he could not keep, swing a sword at the enemy he never hurt, and then run for the hills. Or we would be like Thomas, who would retreat and say, “I’m going to need a little more proof about this whole thing.”

Basically, Jesus has just told them to do something that, on their own, they would never be able to do. Jesus said, “Keep My commandments,” or, “Put into action everything I’ve taught you . . . become what I want you to become.”

Impossible!

That is why the next passage is so important. and so encouraging. It offers hope to them, and to us! Look at verses 16 through 22.

“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;

that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

After a little while the world will behold Me no more; but you will behold Me; because I live, you shall live also.

In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him.”

Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world?”

In other words, “Why aren’t you going to set up Your kingdom, and rule as Sovereign Messiah now?”

Continue to verse 23.

Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.”

What kind of an answer is that? Well, it is interesting that the same word “abode” is in this verse and also in verse 2.

“In my Father’s house are many ‘mone’ – ‘abodes, rooms’.” In other words, the kingdom will come at a later time when Christ will visibly rule on earth; in the meantime, however, He will invisibly rule in you – you will be His mansion. In other words, one day you will live with Him in the kingdom, but, at the moment, He is going to live in you - your body will become His palace.

Skip to verses 25 and 26.

These things I have spoken to you, while abiding with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and

bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

Now, if you are like most people, the Holy Spirit is either neglected, ignored, misunderstood, or just overlooked. Aurthur Pink once wrote, “It isn’t that we think the wrong thoughts about the Holy Spirit, we just never think of Him at all.”

And, I would add, when we do think about Him, we are probably a little confused.

I was standing in the checkout lane doing what I love to do – reading the headlines of all the tabloids. There were headlines such as, “Miracle Diet – How To Eat More and Weigh Less,” and “Mom Has Worlds Smallest Baby” – the picture shows a woman holding a fully clothed baby between her forefinger and thumb – and, “Michael Jackson’s Marriage A Sham.” I had better not say anything more.

This time, however, my attention was caught by a booklet entitled, *Modern Ghost Stories*. I picked it up and began to leaf through it. There were stories of creaking stairs, frightening appearances, and screams from the attic.

Is it any wonder that to our naturally superstitious minds, talk of invisible ghosts, and talk of the Holy Ghost have clouded our thinking and tainted our imaginations? Is it any wonder why we are troubled?

I want to re-introduce to you today, the Holy Spirit.

How Do We Know the Holy Spirit Is a Real “Person”?

Before we go any further, one truth needs to be understood as we are introduced to the biblical description of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not a power, He is a person – to be exact, the third person of the godhead. Much of the confusion about the Holy Spirit revolves around the lack of understanding of this one axiom.

If we think of the Holy Spirit as a mysterious power, our thoughts will be, “How can I get more of the Holy Spirit.”

Part of the problem is that we have misinterpreted the passages of scripture that use the words, “filled with the Spirit”. In our minds, we think in terms of having a tank that is three quarters full of the Spirit. So, we think, “How can I get more of Him?”

What Paul meant was not that you can get a little bit more of the Spirit, he is saying we are to be filled,

“pleroo” in the Greek; that is, dominated or controlled by the Spirit. As a Christian, whether you knew it or not, whether you felt anything or not – you have all of the Spirit within you.

The question is not, “How much of the Holy Spirit do you have?”

The question is, “How much of you does the Holy Spirit have?”

Now back to this primary truth – how do we know that God the Holy Spirit is a distinct person, just as God the Father and God the Son are distinct persons within the Godhead?

The Holy Spirit can be sinned against

1. The Holy Spirit can be sinned against.

Paul commanded, in Ephesians, chapter 4, verse 30,

. . . do not grieve the Holy Spirit . . .

Now, you cannot grieve an impersonal, unfeeling force; you cannot sin against an impersonal power, but you can sin against a person. A power is not hurt or disappointed, but a person is!

The Holy Spirit is the One who selects and distributes spiritual gifts

2. The Holy Spirit is the One whose role includes the selection and distribution of spiritual gifts.

Paul wrote in I Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 4, ***Now there are a variety of gifts, but the same Spirit.***

And, in verse 11 of the same chapter, he wrote, ***But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.***

Now remember, the Holy Spirit will represent and impart the empowering of God for ministry. Let us never forget, however, that while He may impart power, He is a person.

The Holy Spirit has divine attributes ascribed to Him

3. Divine attributes are ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

John, in chapter 14, verse 26, calls Him the Holy Spirit. He is called omniscient in I Corinthians, chapter 2, omnipotent in Luke, chapter 1, and omnipresent in Psalm, chapter 139.

The Holy Spirit is no less divine than Christ or the Father – He is equally God! In fact, the name God is indirectly given to Him. The clearest example is in Acts, chapter 5, verses 3a and 4b, where Peter says to Ananias,

... Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit . . . ? . . . You have not lied to men, but to God.

The Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf

4. The Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf.

Paul writes, in Romans, chapter 8, verses 26 through 27a,

And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is . . .

A power does not speak nor does it have a mind. The Holy Spirit speaks on our behalf.

We are promised the Holy Spirit would descend

5. We are promised the Holy Spirit would descend, just as Jesus promised to ascend.

Turn to John, chapter 16, and look at verses 5 through 7.

But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, “Where are you going?” But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

If the Spirit were only a power, the promise would be, “I am going to be taken from you, but if I go, I will send ‘it,’” or “I will send ‘something,’” – but no, the promise is, “I will send *Him!*”

Jesus said, “Just as I am going to go up, the Spirit is going to come down.”

Why Is The Holy Spirit Considered the Believer’s “Advantage”?

And, Jesus said an amazing thing, in verse 7a, to some very troubled disciples,

But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away . . .

Has it ever occurred to you that Jesus Christ said it would be to our advantage that He no longer be visibly present, so that the Spirit could be invisibly present? That does not sound like an advantage to me – but it is. And, in chapter 14 of John’s gospel, Jesus tells us three reasons why.

The Holy Spirit will be our encouraging, ever present helper

1. Advantage number one is that the Holy Spirit will be our encouraging, ever present helper.

Look at John, chapter 14, verse 16.

And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever

Now, your version may use the word “comforter,” and, in our minds, we have the picture of a warm comforter on a cold winter night. We think of the *Peanuts* character Linus, with his blanket trailing along behind for security.

Our English translation, carried over from its Latin heritage, eventually lost the strength of these two Latin words “cum” and “fortis,” or “cumfortis”. “Cum” means “with,” and “fortis” means “to fortify, to strengthen”. In this light, the Holy Spirit is, as one man wrote,

. . . a ramrod down your backbone to make you stand for the truth; to make you take the right path, even though it is the minority side. The comforter gives you the strength to stand up in the face of something that is vile and evil.

The Greek word selected, in verse 16, is “parakletos,” which means, “called to one’s side,” especially, “to one’s aid”. The word not only has a strong, challenging, fortifying side, but an encouraging, uplifting side.

We have just been told to accomplish a “mission impossible” – to obey His commands, make disciples,

teach the body, use our spiritual gifts . . . Left alone, we will hide out in the hills, but with the Spirit's enabling, we will be able, through Him, to succeed!

One rather ancient lexicon adds a thought, as it defined "parakletos" this way,

One who pleads a cause before a judge; a counsel for the defense; someone who studies our case, hears our testimony, and then, expresses this, on our behalf, to Another.

Does that sound familiar?! The Holy Spirit is our Advocate, who intercedes on our behalf. Why? Because we do not even know how to communicate to the Father as we ought.

Paul said in Romans, chapter 8, the Holy Spirit communicates on our behalf. Some have wrongly suggested that Paul is referring to a special language, whereby we really get through to God. Oh no. The point of Romans, chapter 8, is that we are not even praying – instead, the Holy Spirit is communicating to the Father just what we need, in a language we never hear.

Bill Yates is a pastor in North Carolina. His father was the Chief of Police in a small town. It was the job of the policeman on duty to answer the telephone at the fire station, and then, blow the whistle to send all of the volunteers running.

One day, just as he had come on duty, the telephone rang. He picked up the phone and said, "Fire Department."

A woman, on the other end of the line, frantically said, "Send the fire truck!"

Then, the caller immediately slammed the phone down.

He stood there stunned, not knowing what to do. But, in a few minutes, the phone rang again. Quickly, he picked it up and said, "Fire Department."

Again, the woman said, "Where's the fire truck? Send the fire truck now!"

Then, she immediately hung up again.

Realizing that someone's house was possibly at stake, he ran outside and scanned the sky for smoke, so that he could send the fire trucks in that direction. While outside, he also came up with a plan to keep the lady from hanging up so quickly, if she called back.

Soon, the phone rang again and he ran inside. This time, he picked up the phone and asked, "Where's the fire?"

The lady, on the other end, yelled, "It's in the kitchen!"

And then, hung up again.

The truth is, we are often in "panic mode". We need answers; we need help; we need rescuing; we need reassurance – we need things we do not even know we need. Left alone, our prayers are about as sensible as that woman's call. We are not sure what to say, so the details come out jumbled, our feelings overwhelm us, and all we can do is say, "Oh Lord, send help!"

Then, the Holy Spirit takes over from there! Now that is quite an advantage!

The Holy Spirit will be our living, constant companion

2. Advantage number two is that the Holy Spirit will be our living, constant companion.

Look at chapter 14, verse 17.

that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.

Notice the last part of the verse is in the future tense.

It is not that the Holy Spirit is simply close to us, but He is actually in us. We do not pray a long time hoping He will finally listen, He is already waiting on every word. We do not have to have some unusual experience to get more of Him, that is a distortion of the reality that *now*, at this very moment, all of the Holy Spirit is within us.

By the way, we could make a biblical case for the fact that all three persons of the Godhead dwell within the believer. In fact, notice the interchange between Christ and the Spirit in a very precious phrase, in verse 18.

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

Then, notice the interchange of Christ and the Spirit indwelling the believer, in verses 19 and 20.

After a little while the world will behold Me no more; but you will behold Me; because I live, you shall live also. In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

Karl Barth, a rather famous theologian, was on a streetcar one day, in Basel, Switzerland, where he lectured. A tourist, in the city, climbed on and sat down next to Barth. The two men started chatting with each other.

“Are you new to the city?” Barth asked.

“Yes.” said the tourist.

“Is there anything you would particularly like to see in this city?” Barth asked.

The tourist replied, “Yes, I’d love to meet the famous theologian Karl Barth. Do you know where he lives?”

Barth answered, “Well, as a matter of fact, I do. I give him a shave every single morning.”

The tourist got the address, and then exited quickly, delighted. He went back to his hotel, thinking to himself, “I met Karl Barth’s barber today.”

He did not know the privilege that had been his – that he had been with the theologian.

The truth is, whatever you do, wherever you go, God, the Holy Spirit goes too – not just next to you, but inside of you.

That is not only encouraging, but it is a rather convicting thought as well. You, in effect, put Him through whatever you do.

What movie did you watch on television last night? Did you realize the Holy Spirit watched it with you? Young person, what did you do on your date this past weekend? Did you ever think that God went with you? Whatever you go through, God goes through too. If you ride the bus, He rides the bus within you. Whatever you watch, God watches. Whatever you say, God listens. And, whenever you sin, He must suffer through it.

Ladies and gentlemen, there is no more profound motive for purity than the fact that God, the Holy Spirit, has chosen to take up residence inside of you.

Now turn over to I Corinthians, chapter 6, and look at verses 18a and 19 through 20. This is the point Paul is making.

Flee immorality. . . . Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body.

The word translated “temple” is a unique Greek word. One Greek word for temple refers to the outer courtyard; yet another Greek word refers to the inner shrine or the holy of holies. When Paul said, “. . . your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit . . .,” he used the second word, which specifically refers to the place where God dwelt in the Old Testament tabernacle. This means that God’s presence has moved from the Old Testament holy of holies to the New Testament body of every single believer.

Now that your body is God’s holy of holies, just how and for what will you use it?

Go back to John’s gospel and notice the last part of chapter 14, verse 17, again.

. . . but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.

Before Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was with the disciples; after Pentecost, the Holy Spirit will be in the disciples. Imagine that – your body is the palace of God Himself!

Because of that very fact, the next advantage has even more meaning.

The Holy Spirit will be our amazing, illuminating teacher

3. Advantage number three is that the Holy Spirit will be our amazing, illuminating teacher.

Jesus Christ, on the eve of His departure, knew that He had so much more to say and to teach, but the disciples were not ready for it. Judging from the interruptions we have previously examined, those of Thomas, Philip, and Judas, the thrust of what Jesus had already taught to them was not even clear!

- They were not anticipating the resurrection, were they?
- They did not know anything about the nature of the church, did they?
- They certainly did not understand their worldwide mission, did they?

When you think about it, they did not really have much information to go on, did they? They were like first graders being given a college graduate’s job – they were not prepared!

So, the question remains, what advantage would there be to the fact that Jesus would not be physically present teaching His disciples, but instead the Holy

Spirit would be invisibly present teaching His disciples?

Again, initially, that does not sound advantageous to me!

Let me explain it this way – if Jesus Christ were physically present with us today, that would be exciting, would it not? In fact, I would not be preaching right now, that would really be exciting, would it not? You are not supposed to nod on that one! However, if He were physically here with us, that would mean that He could only be with us, and not at any other church, in any other location. In fact, if He were teaching in room 102, that would be exciting to that Sunday school class, but that would also mean that He could not be teaching in room 105.

But, the Spirit of God, through the written Word, can now teach every adult believer in room 102 and 105, and in our entire church, and in every church everywhere in the world, at the same time! No one is left out!

The Spirit of God, who would bring to the minds of the apostles the words and works of Jesus Christ, so that they could write them down by means of inspiration, now promises to teach us through this Word by means of illumination.

As Paul wrote, in II Timothy, chapter 3, verses 16 and 17,

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable . . .

for teaching, - that tells you what to believe,

for reproof, - that tells you where you are wrong,

for correction, - that tells you what is right,

for training in righteousness - that shows you how to do what is right,

that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

The Holy Spirit, who inspired the scriptures through the disciples, now clarifies the scriptures to our hearts and lives, so that we can be taught at any time, in any location, what to believe and how to behave.

So, what is the *net result* of all of this? Supernatural peace.

Notice how Jesus comes full circle in His encouragement, in chapter 14, verse 27.

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

To us, the word “peace” often refers to the absence of war or trouble. But, the biblical idea of peace, in this verse, refers to wholeness, completeness, security.

In the world, peace is something you hope for or work for, but to the Christian, peace is a gift. Look again at verse 27a.

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you . . .

It is His gift to us, who enjoy a relationship with the Son as His bride, a relationship with the Father through prayer, and a relationship with the Spirit who indwells us. And this peace, which eludes the world, is our wonderful reality.

Ralph Barton, a nationally syndicated cartoonist, wrote a suicide note in which he expressed his lack of peace.

I have had few difficulties, many friends, great successes; I have visited great countries of the world, gone from wife to wife, from house to house; but I am fed up with inventing devices to fill up twenty four hours of the day.

He had everything . . . but peace!

Psychologist William Marston asked three thousand people, “What have you to live for?”

He was shocked to discover that ninety four percent were simply enduring the present, while they waited for the future – waited for something to happen; waited for “next year;” waited for a “better time;” waited for “tomorrow”.

Frustrated, troubled hearts – the world is filled with them. And, nothing will satisfy, except this supernatural peace.

Are there troubling circumstances? Yes. Are there painful trials? Yes. But, in it all, there is peace.

How?! It comes from knowing our future home is in heaven; it comes from our present privilege of prayer, in the name of Jesus and for the glory of God; it comes from walking in step with our constant companion, the Holy Spirit.

This supernatural peace brings healing to our troubled hearts.

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