



Jesus has talked a lot about the coming of the Spirit during the Upper Room Discourse. In chapter 14 Jesus described how the Spirit will empower us to be obedient; he will help us; teach us; remind us of the Truth; dwell with us and in us.

Last week in John 15 we learned that the Spirit will also bear witness about Jesus. In other words, the Spirit will testify to people's hearts that Jesus is real. Jesus is teaching them something new with all of this talk about the Spirit. In the early parts of John Jesus talked about the Spirit in mysterious ways. But now He's clearly talking about the role of the Spirit. Take for example these two verses. *"Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'"* (John 3:5). This is mysterious. So much so, Nicodemus said, "How can these things be?"

But later in John, chapters 14–16, Jesus is much clearer about the Spirit. *"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth"* (John 16:13).

Add to this Jesus' four uses of the word **Helper** in John 14–16. **Helper** is another name for the Spirit. So we should expect that if Jesus is talking more about the Spirit in these chapters, He should use the word **Helper** more often too. Does He? Yes. Surprisingly, **Helper** only appears in John chapters 14–16.

Why is there more talk and explanation about the role of the Spirit and what does this mean for us? The answer to these questions is found in our passage of scripture today, John 16:5–22.

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. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you (verses 5–7).

Jesus has to GO for the Holy Spirit to COME

Some of this should sound familiar. In John 14 Jesus said *"I go to prepare a place for you."* The idea of leaving is not new. Jesus is simply reiterating it. Keep in mind this is one conversation that we are reading here. So, yes, 15 minutes ago, Jesus said I'm going to prepare a place for you. But the disciples were profoundly confused by that news.

Jesus is saying it again. You know how it is when you're trying to tell someone something that they don't want to hear, you have

to repeat yourself and say it in different ways. Jesus is doing that. He's saying, "I'm going and it will be better for you that I do."

That's a concept the disciples cannot understand. How can their lives be better when Jesus leaves? Their entire lives have been wrapped up in following Jesus for three years. This is bad news.

The reason it will be better for them is that the Spirit will come. That's why Jesus is talking more and more about the Spirit. *"Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified"* (John 7:39).

This marks a significant shift in redemptive history and the work of the Spirit. The disciples had no idea that the Spirit would live inside of them, all of the time. God's Spirit dwelt in the most holy part of the temple: the Holy of Holies. A place so holy that the high priest entered it only once a year. It's ridiculous that the Spirit of God would dwell inside regular people, like the disciples and us. But this is exactly what Jesus is telling them.

The Spirit in the Old Testament

Up to this point, the Spirit, although Omnipresent, for the most part rested upon people. If God wanted to empower a person in the Old Testament to do an extraordinary task, the Spirit would rest upon them. *"Then Saul sent messengers to take David, and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied"* (1 Samuel 19:20). *"And I have filled him (Bezalel the son of Uri) with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship"* (Exodus 31:3).

This filling was given in order to build the tent of meeting and all of the furniture inside of it: the Ark of Testimony, Mercy Seat, the utensils, holy garments for Aaron; a very special and specific task.

Jesus is telling His disciples something new and better is coming and it's going to blow you away! The Spirit is going to live inside of them, all of the time.

The improvement from the Old Testament to the New Testament, with regard to the role of the Spirit, is like the improvement from a black and white TV to an iPad. A black and white TV shows the picture. Yet you know that the picture isn't all there is. With an iPad, you have vivid colors, full interactivity.

“And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged” (verses 8-11).

What does **convict** mean? To pronounce guilty of an offense. This is fair since everyone who's living according to the world system is guilty of rebellion against God.

This is different than **condemn**. Condemn means to express complete disapproval of. The Spirit, when He convicts, lovingly, truthfully points out the truth. Yet He is not mean-spirited or insulting when He does it. This is very different from the way Satan, the prince of the world system, will insult, criticize and condemn a person.

To understand these verses, let me show a schematic of their structure. When He comes, He will convict the world...

Of its sin

Its righteousness

Its judgment

Sin—Good deeds versus Bad deeds scale

The Spirit when He convicts will say, “You shouldn't do that. There's a better way. Repent.” “You were wrong. That's why you got so angry. Repent.” “You are living a completely self indulgent life. Repent.” It's righteousness versus self-righteousness. The verse says that the Spirit will convict the world concerning its righteousness. Since the world doesn't have righteousness, John must be using sarcasm here. Like he's saying you're “so-called” righteousness. Said another way: Self-righteousness. **“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death”** (Prov. 14:12).

It's morally flawed judgment. The verse says that the Spirit will convict the world concerning its judgment. Again, John must be using sarcasm here because the judgment of the world is morally flawed.

To boost our confidence Jesus just told us to bear witness. And He told us that the Spirit will bear witness too. Now Jesus is telling us exactly what the Spirit does when He bears witness. We should expect and be prepared for the Spirit to convict people of their sin, their self-righteousness and flawed judgment.

Jesus' description of the work of the Spirit shifts from the unbeliever to the believer in the following verses.

“A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me.” So some of his disciples said to one another, **“What is this that he says to us, ‘A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me’; and, ‘because I am going to the Father?’”** So they were saying, **“What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We do not know what he is talking about.”** Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, **“Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, ‘A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me’? Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you”** (verses 16-22).

Sorrow is not simply displaced by joy; rather their sorrow turns into joy. We naturally think that sorrow is something to escape. It's not. Sorrow is our response to our sinful world when the world breaks our heart. In these verses, Jesus instructs us not to escape the sorrow but to focus on His joy. When we do that, we will be filled with hope and He will carry us through.

Jesus replies to their need rather than their question. Instead of responding to the questions and confusion of the disciples, Jesus tells them that they will weep and lament. But their sorrow will turn to joy. They need to know how to cope with their sorrow. He gives them that. **“Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God”** (Heb. 12:2).

Conclusion

If you are a believer, recognize the power within you. The Holy Spirit of God lives inside of you.

He will enable you to bear witness; then He'll convict.

He will enable you to get through your suffering.

This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.

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