

## Journeying with John 18 The Work of the Holy Spirit

John 16:5-16

Already in chapter 14 John has reminded us of the promised Holy Spirit. Unlike the other gospels, John from his mature perspective sees the Holy Spirit as utterly essential for life, growth and fruitfulness as a disciple. In Chapter 14 we are encouraged to encounter Him as

1. Counsellor(v16): No expensive counselling fees, no unnecessary visit to some spiritual guru. You can hear God for yourself! Wow! This was the revolution of the Gospel in the 1<sup>st</sup> /16<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Other versions translate this as Helper. He is the Gift of the Father and will take the place of Jesus when He returns to Father. So, none of us need be Orphans: we are family and as John has reminded us: friends who share in and know the Fathers business! Of course, we need to test what we are hearing: Does it accord with scripture, does it sound like Jesus, does it check out with mature brothers and sisters!
2. Truth (v17): Just as Jesus is Truth, so is the Holy Spirit and so is the Father. We can trust Him as He has no agenda of His own, only the agenda of Heaven (Glory sharing to Son to Father). Hey and remember what Jesus said: the truth will set you free (8:36).

So, with these as a backdrop lets plunge into John 16 and what Jesus says about the work of the Holy Spirit, a crucial bit of foundational teaching which will serve us well as we experience the fulness of the Spirit and allow Him to produce the fruit of Jesus' character and give us the gifts and grace to continue His Ministry.

**When He Comes** (we remind ourselves that He has already come and continues to do so into every humble and seeking heart), He, not it, (this is God in person) **will convict the world (all of us) of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgement.** In other words, you and I might think we have the world's best defence lawyer but

we have lost before we start! We are guilty in all three areas but we also have a saviour and redeemer in all three and more too!

He then unpacks all three areas and in doing so gives us a unique glimpse into the breadth and depth of the Holy Spirit's work:

**In regard to Sin: because men do not believe in me.** If there was a number one task of the Holy Spirit this must be it. The work of Salvation: as John has shown us, is one which is divine from start to finish. "You must be born again" (3:6). Only when you and I know we have truly messed up our lives (and probably of many other lives too around us) can we truly see our need for the saving Grace of the Cross. You should not be surprised Nick, that I tell you that you must be born again, but many are surprised because they see themselves as okay, even perfect. So, can I suggest that we need to be much more committed and fervent in prayer for the Salvation of others: Holy Spirit will you bring conviction of sin to their lives. Oh, and you can't avoid the obvious implication that unbelief in itself is sin, even if you are otherwise perfect!!

**In regard to Righteousness: because I am going to the Father where you can see me no longer.** Okay so Jesus is saying that the visual aid of His life will no longer be seen (although we can benefit hugely from bringing all our actions, words and attitudes to the test of the midrash of Jesus: Matthew 11:29). Instead we will have the Holy Spirit (emphasis here on Holy!!!): He will show us the Father, He will help us to bring all to the midrash of Jesus. He will convict us when we stray, or fall, and He will bring us to the throne of Grace for pardon, forgiveness, and clear counsel as to how we need to change and become more Jesus Shaped, living Jesus' love.

**Finally, in regard to Judgement: because the prince of this world now stands condemned.** How often does the enemy of our soul condemn us and deprive us of our joy and sentence us to live in dungeons of legalism? This is probably the most important work of all for Christians: once we have made our commitment to Jesus and

yielded to the Holy Spirit, our lives can achieve so much fruit for the King of Kings unless we allow the enemy to steal it away. So here Jesus makes it clear, even before the cross. Satan is a defeated creature, once and for all, and although he might try and knock you off course he cannot unless you let him. The only judgement that matters is that of Jesus (see Revelation). The agenda of the prince of this world (terror, Syria, Sudan, North Korea...) will always rear its head - how sad then that we fail to deploy the weapons we have to thwart him - e.g. prayer Ephesians 6:12, 1 Corinthians 10:4.

Jesus finishes with more reassurance for you and me: **When He, the Spirit of Truth comes, He will guide you into all Truth, He will not speak on His own, He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. (v13).** Put simply yet profoundly: He is a person (the third person of the Trinity, God himself!!), He is Truth (and therefore totally trustworthy!), and He will reveal the future to you. That's our God and let me say that He only shares with you the parts of the future you can bear: so, we can testify that we don't know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future!!

Finally, Jesus tells us something beautiful that the Holy Spirit exists to bring glory to Him: how **by taking what from what is mine and making it known to you. V14-15.** And Jesus adds that All that belongs to the Father is His as well. All three, Father, Son and Holy Spirit draw from the same well of Salvation and Heavens treasure store.

John Stott said: "the desperate need of the church today is the Holy Spirit. We need individual Christians filled with the Spirit. More than that, we need revival, a mighty supernatural visitation of the Holy Spirit in the community. Nothing else will save the church from its spiritual torpor or our country from lapsing into complete paganism".

I for one agree.

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