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#81

## "The Coming of the Holy Spirit"

John 14:16-31

### Introduction

It seems like we are prone to extremes in the Christian life. When it comes to the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, Christians tend to be either fixated upon Him or mostly ignorant who He is and what He does. I received an email from Scott this week wondering how to respond to a strong movement in his Middle Eastern country promoting the power of the Holy Spirit. He just received an email about an upcoming two day event throughout the country that referenced such things as Fresh Fire Ministries, the New Mystics, the Sons of Thunder, and the Wonderworkers. Here's how they are billing the revival: *Our heart is to see workers in the AP moving in more and more of God's power. We believe that in these meetings firstly people will encounter God and see Kingdom miracles (healings, prophetic ministry, deliverance). Secondly, we know that people will see an increase in their own gifts and the releasing of new gifts through impartation. If you are longing for more of God, if you want to see the tools God has given you sharpened and new ones being given, you might want to pray about coming. One final comment: these meetings will be wild, just so anybody coming is prepared.*" That's quite a build up. Such promises are hard for some to resist. The hope of great and mighty things without any fuss or trouble. It holds out hope that there is a short-cut to both sanctification and effective, fruitful ministry.

Too often the Holy Spirit is viewed a little bit like a dimmer switch on a light. You can activate more power if you do certain things, or shut down the power if you don't. This morning my hope is that we will see something of who the Holy Spirit is and what He does. Knowing the Holy Spirit and His presence with us will give us comfort, hope and power in our lives here on earth. If we don't rightly see these things, we will be misunderstanding something very important and in the process creating wrong desires, wrong expectations and pursuits.

### [John 14:16-31]

We still very much live in the cultural shadow of Star Wars. If you say, *may the force be with you*, everyone knows what you're talking about. Unfortunately, that's the view a lot of Christians have about the Holy Spirit. We view *it*, as some kind of energy or influence or power source to be plugged into. Consequently we think more in terms of *getting Him* than we do of *knowing Him*. So let's start by talking about:

#### I. The Identity of the Holy Spirit.

##### 1. He is a Person Not a Power.

All you have to do is look at what the Bible tells us about Him. Remember how the Holy Spirit relates to us? In various places in the Bible the Spirit of God is said to hear, to speak, to teach, to remind, to know, to search. We are told that He grieves and that He makes decisions. The Holy Spirit is a person. Indeed, the Holy Spirit is referred to with the pronoun **He**, not **it**.

Most Christians struggle to think of the Holy Spirit as Someone with personality. This can lead to

real practical problems. James Boice gives this warning. *If we think of the Holy Spirit as a mysterious power, our thought will continually be, how can I get more of the Holy Spirit?*” *If we think of the Holy Spirit as a person, our thought will be, “How can the Holy Spirit have more of me?” The first thought is entirely pagan. The second is New Testament Christianity.*

So we need to start by affirming that the Holy Spirit is a person. {Woman at conference to speaker: *Before your messages I never thought of it as a person.*}

## 2. He is God Not a Creation of God.

The difference has everything to do with identity, origin, His response to the Father and our response to Him. Admittedly the doctrine of the Trinity is beyond our ability to reason. The Scriptures teach the personhood of the Holy Spirit while at the same time affirming that *God is One*. The truth, as we studied in the Larger Catechism, is that *there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; although distinguished by their personal properties.*

But how do we know He is God? There are two things that make it very clear:

### 1. He has divine attributes.

\* He is called Holy. In its highest form and application holiness is something that resides in and comes from God.

\* He is omnipotent – Just ponder the power of the Holy Spirit in the incarnation of Christ. Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35)

\* He is omniscient – I Corinthians 2:10.11 says this: *For to us God revealed them through*

*the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.*

\* He is omnipresent. – In a little bit we will sing Psalm 139. *Where shall I from Thy Spirit flee, or from Thy presence hidden be? In heaven Thou art, if there I fly, in death's abode, if there I lie.*

## 2. He does the works of God.

We won't look at these in detail this morning, but I'll just remind you. It was the Spirit of God that hovered over the waters and was involved with the Father and the Son in Creation. It is the Spirit of God that gives life and works the work of regeneration of new birth. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit . . . The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.* And of course, it is the Spirit that gives us the very Word of God. *Men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (II Peter 1).*

So this is where we start in our study of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is leaving His disciples. But God is not leaving them. Jesus will ask the Father to send the third person of the Godhead to be with us. This very Spirit is not some wild, untamed, unpredictable power that we try to ride for joy and use for our pleasure and purpose. The Holy Spirit is God.

## II. The Ministry of the Holy Spirit.

I hope you are getting the picture that the Holy Spirit is not something we try to capture or control. He does what He wants and what the

Father and the Son want. He delights in bringing glory to Jesus Christ. He has work that He does that is beyond His work in Christians. For instance, He restrains evil. He brings conviction to the unrighteous. He moves unbelievers to take actions according to God's plans. But in John 14, Jesus focuses our attention particularly on the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the believer. And there are three things in particular that Jesus promises us about the coming of the Holy Spirit.

### **1. The Holy Spirit is Christ's Presence with us.**

Look at verses 16-18 (read). The greatest concern of the disciples at this point was losing Christ. This was the cause of their troubled hearts. They had grown to love Christ. He had given Himself to these men. He was their teacher. He was their strength and comfort. He was their leader and guide. He prayed for them and encouraged them. He was always there for them. Over the course of the three years they had come to realize that no matter what happened they could turn to Jesus and He would be there with whatever help and wisdom and answer they needed.

So what was about to happen was monumental in terms of their ability to live – and to live for God. So Jesus tells them in verse 20, *in that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in me, and I in you.* It's not uncommon for us as Christians today to talk about Christ living in us. Little children will say, *Jesus is in my heart.* And this is not bad theology. Listen to Romans 8:9-11. *"However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the **Spirit of Christ**, he does not belong to Him. If **Christ is in you**, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the*

*Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.* The Scriptures, at time use these two ideas interchangeably, so closely are Christ and the Spirit linked.

The Holy Spirit in you does the same things Jesus did when He walked with the disciples. He gives Himself to you. He is your teacher. He is your strength and comfort. He is your leader and guide. He prays for you and encourages you and comforts you. He is always there for you. Over the course of your Christian experience you should come to realize that no matter what happens He will be there with whatever help and wisdom and answer you need.

This is why Jesus calls Him the Comforter, Counselor or Helper – depending on your translation (vs. 16). The word is *paracletos*. Para meaning *alongside* and *kletos* *to call*. Hence, *to call alongside to help*. The word can also be translated *advocate* or *intercessor*. But certainly we can see that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is one of being with us to carry on the companionship and help that Jesus gave to His disciples while here on earth.

Have you understood what a great gift this is? God has made His home in you. You are the temple of God. This is at the heart of our union with Christ which will be our great focus in John 15.

## **2. The Holy Spirit Produces Christ's Character in us.**

Because of this abiding presence of Christ in us through the Holy Spirit, something marvelous happens to us. We begin to love and cherish Christ more and more. When we sin, we find an uneasiness and conviction that settles upon our

souls. Why? Because the Holy Spirit lives there. The Spirit begins to give us new desires and new ability to overcome sin and obey God. Verse 21, which many of you have memorize, has this important context then. It is not an isolated verse that demands our mustering up love and obedience in order to know God. It is a response that comes from within us because of the presence of the Holy Spirit applying His love and grace to us. *He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him. And 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.*

This truth should give you great hope. If the Holy Spirit dwells in you and is so committed to you, you should expect to see the fruit of the Spirit growing in you. You should expect to see victory over the flesh. You should expect *with unveiled face, to behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, (and to be transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.* We become like Christ.

1. The Holy Spirit is Christ's Presence with us.
2. The Holy Spirit Produces Christ's Character in us.

### **3. The Holy Spirit Empowers us for God's Work.**

This is really a follow up to what we looked at in the previous passage. Jesus promised in verse 12, *Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.*

In verse 28 Jesus tells us that we should rejoice that He is going away but also coming to us

in the Holy Spirit. And the reason is, the divine plan of Jesus sitting and ruling at the right hand of the Father and the Holy Spirit living and working in us is the perfect way that God determined to redeem the world. So just consider the wonder of this.

1. God has determined to powerfully complete the work of redemption. He is doing His work.

2. He has surprising put us right in the middle of the action. He in us, to accomplish all He has planned. That translates into the possibilities for you to be involved in wonderful, life changing ministry to other people. You don't need more power, or more Spirit, or additional gifts, or anything beyond what you already have in Christ. But you do need to give yourself to Him. You need to believe that He can and will use you.

And so, I urge you to lay aside the urge to think that you are missing something before you can walk intimately with God, or overcome your sin, or be used powerfully by God. If you know Jesus Christ by faith, the Holy Spirit is your friend. He has made His home in your life. And knowing Him will give you strength and comfort. Knowing this will give you hope. And knowing this will help you realize that He possesses all the power necessary to make you useful to Him.