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#87

"The Holy Spirit and You"

John 15:26-27

Introduction

Last week we tried to figure out why the world hates us. We examined the radically different starting points a Christian and a non-Christian have when it comes to understanding the big questions in life. We saw how willing the world is to accept us and grant us love and friendship *if* we meet certain criteria. Classic example of conditional love. But perhaps the most difficult thing we saw last week is that we are called to live in a world of hatred with a kind of supernatural love, that while uncompromising when it comes to the Word of God, nonetheless understands that the ministry of the gospel and purpose of Christ's coming to earth was to redeem and save people out of the world. So we have to throw off even the shackles of the world's influence when it comes to dealing with our enemies. We are *to love our enemies and do good to those who hate us . . . expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.*

But how hard is that to do? Maybe we have been given no greater assignment. For in the face of hatred our natural response is to return the same thing. We don't have to think about it; we don't have to be trained to do it; we don't have to discipline ourselves to strike back with hatred. But we don't have to. We can live differently. But we can't do it naturally. Today we are going to see that the Holy Spirit is the One who gives us everything we need to

withstand the onslaughts of the world. The fury of the world is met by the ministry of the Spirit with in us.

[John 15:26-27]

This is the middle of three sermons on the Holy Spirit.

1. John 14:16-31 – The Coming of the H.S.
 His Identity – a person not a power
 - God not a Creation
 His General Purpose
 - Christ's presence
 - Produce X's character
 - Power for X's work
2. Today – Ministry of H.S. to believers
3. Next week – The H.S. and the World

So here at the end of chapter 15 after warning us about what to expect from living in the world, Jesus gives us these words of hope and the application that flows from them. *When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.*

There are two things about the Holy Spirit that we need to understand from this text.

I. He is the Paracletos

As we have seen before the literal translation of the Word is the One who is called alongside. And from the context here you can understand the idea of One being called to come alongside us. In verse 26 we see that Jesus both sent the Holy Spirit to us and the Father, by implication sent Him as well, since He is said to have come forth from the Father.

Here is one of those great passages where we see the distinction and the unity of the Triune God. The Holy Spirit is at the same time one with the Father and Son and distinct from them. As God, the Holy Spirit is fully involved in the redemption of the world, while carrying out His own specific functions.

If ever there was an answer to modelism – that heresy that says God sometimes in history functioned as the Father, then later as the Son and finally now as the Holy Spirit – this text demonstrates the working together and the unity of the Three in One. By the way, there are five times this Greek noun is used, (all by John), but the fifth and final use of the word in I John 2:1 speaks not of the Holy Spirit, but of Jesus Himself. *If anyone sins, we have an Advocate (a paracleton) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

This word gets translated in several different ways, partly because its verb form counterpart is used more often and more widely. So we can find translations such as Advocate, comforter, intercessor, counselor, and helper. Since no one word captures the exact idea in the English, the word *Helper* probably gives the broadest idea of what is behind the meaning and the work of the Holy Spirit.

And there are lots of ways that the Holy Spirit helps you.

1. He gives you faith and life.

Gal. 3:3 says *Are you so foolish? **Having begun by the Spirit**, are you now being perfected by the flesh?*

In John 3 Jesus said, *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is **born of the Spirit is spirit.***

Romans 2:28, 29. *For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and*

circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to awaken you to life and faith in Jesus Christ. It's not just that you needed help to become a Christian, you needed everything. And God has done it all. The Father sent the Son. The Son lived and died and propitiated the wrath of the Father and the Holy Spirit applied the finished work of Christ to you. Truly, for the Holy Spirit's part – He has been more than your *helper* in salvation.

2. He prays for you. Here is the great work of an Advocate. An advocate is like a defense attorney. He is One who comes to our side and represents us and helps us in our weaknesses. You are familiar with Romans 8:26, 27. *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, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

3. He gives you assurance. Assurance of any kind is of unspeakable value to men and women. To have assurance of our salvation and relationship with God is immeasurably valuable – and it brings us great comfort. Romans 8:16 tells us *the Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.*

4. He makes you holy. You are called a saint or holy one because the Holy Spirit lives in you. But apart from that the Holy Spirit is making that holiness a progressive reality in your daily living. Galatians 5 outlines the battle between the flesh and the Spirit, ending by showing the triumphant fruit of the Spirit that belongs to every believer. It is because of the Holy

Spirit's ministry to you that you are changing for the good as a child of God.

5. He makes you useful. Romans 12, and First Corinthians 12 are just a couple of places that list some of the gifts of the Spirit that enable you to live a productive, kingdom focused life.

6. He seals you and keeps you. The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit is a pledge of God's love and faithfulness and commitment to save and preserve us until the end. II Cor. 1:21,22 says, *Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.* Ephesians 1:13,14 says *In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.*

So, this is the Holy Spirit's work in us as the *parakletos*. He lives in you. He is always with you. His great ministry is to help you. Listen, from a practical standpoint, we really need to grasp this. Life is hard. Every day you are faced with challenges, decisions, disappointments, opposition, and temptations. But you are never to think that you are facing these alone. The Holy Spirit loves you; He is committed to you; He lives in you; He is your Helper.

II. He is the Spirit of Truth.

Maybe more than anything else the Holy Spirit does, He reveals and glorifies Jesus Christ. Verse 26 ends by summarizing His purpose – *He will testify about Me*. Testifying, in a legal sense, is all about the truth. One who testifies is under oath to tell the truth about what he knows. Look down in

16:14. This is what the Holy Spirit loves to do. *He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.* Here's the reason the Holy Spirit "stays in the background" so often. His work is to reveal Christ and to lift up our eyes upon the glories of Jesus.

He fulfills the work as the Spirit of truth in two ways.

1. He is the One who gives us the truth in the Bible, the Word of God. Again look down into chapter 16:13. You will see that in this passage the Holy Spirit is again called the Spirit of Truth. *But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.*

This promise is first and foremost a promise to the disciples that the Holy Spirit will inspire them in the writing of the New Testament. It's very similar to John 14:26. *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.*

We have confirmation of this work in II Peter 1:20, 21. *But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*

The outcome of this work of the Spirit is that we have a Book, the Bible, that is unlike any other book. It is supernatural in its origin. It is God's book, God's Word. It is trustworthy. It is true. And the whole book testifies about Jesus Christ. In John 5:39 Jesus said, *You search the Scriptures because in them you think you have eternal life, but it is these that bear witness of Me.* So from beginning to end,

the Holy Spirit has given us a testimony about Jesus Christ.

2. He is the One who opens our eyes to the truth. Why does one person see and understand these truths when they read the Bible and another person despises them and fights against them. Why did one thief on the cross believe and the other did not? Why did eleven of the disciples believe but one did not? Why, in the Book of Acts, did a group of people hear the same sermon from the apostles, and some of them responded with faith and others with stones? Why in the jail each week does the Word find receptivity with some inmates and scorn from others? Why can you explain the gospel in an Evangelistic Bible Study in your home and find that two believe and two do not? The answer is that no one can see the truths of the gospel alone, on their own, because we are dead and blind and we need help.

Turn to I Corinthians 2:7-14. *but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom **which none of the rulers of this age has understood**; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him." **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. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining***

spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

Here then is an important thing to understand. To the extent that you are able to comprehend and believe the Bible, you are owing that to the work of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, every time you open your Bible your prayer should be, *open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things from Thy Law.* Will you ask God to help you see and understand His Word. The Holy Spirit who lives in you is committed to that task.

So, the Holy Spirit is the Paracletos – your helper and minister. And He is the Spirit of Truth who not only has given us God’s Word, but helps us understand it.

So what are you to do? Verse 27 tells you. And you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

As you live in a world that doesn’t see and understand, you are to testify nonetheless. You have been given the task of bearing witness to the truth. The apostles were first in line – *you have been with Me from the beginning.* I John 1 is evidence that they were faithful to their charge. *What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us— what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.*

That is your charge as well. If you are Christian, you have seen Christ with your spiritual

eyes. You know Him. And the Holy Spirit will help you in your witness. *You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be My witnesses.* Will you live in this World as a witness for Christ? You don't have to do it alone. But you are called to do it. The Holy Spirit is with you.