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The Holy Spirit—Our Helper

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, June 19, 2011

Jesus' Teaching on the Holy Spirit (Part 1)

Looking at the things Jesus told the disciples about the Holy Spirit during His last meal with them helps us appreciate and rely on the Spirit's ministry to our church, and in our day-to-day lives as individual Christians, in this world.

Most of the Lord Jesus' teaching about the Holy Spirit was given to His disciples just before He went to the cross. And the timing was important. He had made the shocking announcement to His disciples that He was leaving them; and they were greatly distressed over this news. What would they do now? How could they go on without Him?

In comforting them, Jesus wanted His followers know about the ministry of the Holy Spirit that He would send in His place. Jesus taught that the Spirit's ministry would be the divine provision for His followers on this earth until the time He would come again for them.

This morning, we'll look at the first three of six great affirmations that the Lord Jesus made concerning the Holy Spirit on the night before He went to the cross. Generally speaking, these first three affirmations have to do with the Spirit's work in our witness in this world; and the last three have to do with the effects of that witness upon the world.

Note that the Lord highlighted the Spirit's ministry as . . .

I. THE HELPER OF THE SAINTS (John 14:15-18).

- A. The thing that Jesus calls the Holy Spirit here is "Helper" which is the Greek word *parakletos* (*para*, which means "along" or "beside"; and *kletos*, which means "someone who is called"). A *parakletos* is someone 'called alongside' to provide comfort to someone else, or to stand as their advocate, or to provide help to them in times of need. And that's what Jesus says the Holy Spirit is to us--the divine Person who is called alongside us as we dwell on this earth; serving as our Helper while Jesus is apart from us.
- B. Note that Jesus calls Him "another" Helper--not *heteros*; which means "another of a different kind"; but *allos*; which means "another in addition" or "another of the same kind". In other words, the Holy Spirit--whom Jesus promised that He would send in His place--was "another" Helper to His followers of the same kind as Jesus Himself.
- C. How differently would we live today if we knew that we were in the constantly supportive presence of Jesus Himself? Jesus promised that if we have trusted Him as our Savior, we already do have such a Helper--continually with us; so close to us as to actually have taken up permanent residence in us; just as divine, powerful, wise loving, comforting, and holy as Jesus Himself. We truly can live in this world as bold witnesses who have "been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

II. THE PROTECTOR OF THE TRUTH (John 14:25-26).

- A. Jesus' words here weren't meant to apply to everyone, but rather specifically to the eleven disciples who had been in His bodily presence. It was only to them that He could say, "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you".¹ As we will see later, the Holy Spirit does have a ministry of guiding all the saints (see John 16:12-13 and 1 John 2:26-27); but

these particular words of our Lord were meant to apply specifically to the eleven apostles (Judas being excluded from their number).

- B. But note the specific promise Jesus makes to those apostles. The Father would send the Spirit "in My name" (that is, as Jesus' divine Representative who operates in perfect continuity with all that Jesus Himself had sought to be toward them and to teach them); and "will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."
- C. The apostle John said that there were so many things that Jesus did that, "if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written" (John 21:25). How easy it would have been for these precious few men--frail and faltering as they were--to forget the things that it would be crucial for the church to know, or to miscommunicate truths that would be vital to our personal salvation. They were, after all, as human as we are. With Jesus gone, how could anyone be sure that they accurately remembered and recorded the things He did and taught? How could we--in the ministry of our church--be assured that the Gospels we preach from, and the New Testament letters we teach from, are accurate representations of what Jesus truly wanted His people to know? It's thanks to the infallible teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit; whom Jesus sent to these apostles. Because of this aspect of the Spirit's ministry--protecting and guiding the ministry of the apostles--we can whole-heartedly trust our Bible!

III. THE BEARER OF THE WITNESS (John 15:26-27).

- A. Not only did the Holy Spirit ensure that the church would have an accurate record of the things that Jesus did and taught as our Redeemer and Lord; but He also ensured that their report of Jesus would be proclaimed to those who needed to hear it. In Jesus' teaching, the Holy Spirit's testimony of Him and His ministry in this world is connected to the witness that the apostles bore of Him.
- B. In and of themselves, those apostles could never hope to bear a faithful witness of Jesus to the world. They had all abandoned Him at His betrayal; and afterwards, they went into hiding for fear of their lives. But Jesus had made this promise to them after His resurrection before He ascended to the Father: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Jesus even urged them not to run out immediately in an attempt to be His witness in the power of their own flesh; but to "tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).
- C. Ever since His coming at Pentecost (see Acts 2), the Holy Spirit has empowered Jesus' followers, as His human instruments, to fulfill His ongoing ministry of testifying to Jesus around the world. We today can trust the Holy Spirit to also empower us as His witnesses, and to use us to testify of Jesus to the people He places in our lives.

¹All Scripture readings are taken from the Holy Bible, New King James Version; copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.