

## JESUS' TEACHING ON THE SPIRIT (pt. 1)

Theme: Jesus' 'upper-room' teaching about the Spirit helps us to appreciate the Spirit's ministry to our church and individual lives in this world.

(All Scripture is taken from The New King James Version, unless otherwise indicated.)

No one could teach us more about the Holy Spirit than the Lord Jesus Himself. But most of the Lord Jesus' teaching about the Holy Spirit was given to His disciples just before He went to the cross—on that particular occasion, from the Gospel of John, that we call 'the upper-room discourse'. The timing of our Lord's instruction to the apostles on that night is very important for us to consider. He had already made the shocking announcement to His apostles that He was leaving them. They were greatly distressed over this news. What would they do now? How could they go on without Him? Our Lord's words were meant to comfort them in their distress. He wanted His followers to know about the ministry of the Holy Spirit that He would send in His place; and He taught that the Spirit's ministry would be the divine provision for all His followers on this earth until the time that He would come again for them.

In this week's lesson, 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 while we are in this world; and the last three (which we will consider next week) have to do with the effects of that witness upon the world. How grateful we should be for the Spirit's ministry in us, as we minister in His power the Gospel of Jesus Christ to this world!

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

### I. THE HELPER OF THE SAINTS.

A. We find the Lord's teaching on this primarily in John 14:15-18:

*"If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:15-18).*

B. The name that Jesus uses to refer to the Holy Spirit in this passage is "Helper". That is a word that is translated from the Greek word *parakletos* (from *para*, which means "along" or "beside"; and *kletos*, which means "someone who is called"). In ancient times, a *parakletos* was someone who was 'called alongside' to provide comfort to someone else (like a counselor), or to stand as their advocate (like a defense attorney in a court of law), or to provide help to them in times of need (like a care-giver or benefactor). And that's what Jesus says the Holy Spirit is to us. He is the divine Person who is called alongside us as we dwell on this earth; serving as our Helper while Jesus

is apart from us; providing for us what Jesus would provide for us if He were bodily in our presence.

- C. Note that Jesus calls Him "another" Helper. The particular Greek word that is used for what Jesus says here is very important to note. It is not the Greek word *heteros*; which would mean "another of a different kind". Rather it's the word *allos*; which means "another in addition" or "another of the same kind". In other words, the Holy Spirit—whom our Lord Jesus promised that He would send in His place to minister to us—is “another” Helper to His followers of the same kind as Jesus Himself.
- D. Just think of how differently we would live today if we knew that we were in the continually supportive, constantly empowering, ever-delightful presence of Jesus Himself? Well; Jesus promised in this passage that if we have trusted Him as our Savior, we already *do* have such a Helper as Himself—continually with us; so close to us as to actually be said by Jesus to have taken up permanent residence in us; just as divine; just as powerful; just as wise; just as loving; just as comforting; just as holy as Jesus Himself. In a very real sense, we can live in this world as bold witnesses who have—as was said of the disciples of old—“been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).

## II. THE PROTECTOR OF THE TRUTH.

- A. We find this next truth about the Holy Spirit in John 14:25-26:

*“These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. 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 things that I said to you” (John 14:25-26).*

- B. It's important to note that—properly speaking—Jesus’ words about the Holy Spirit in this passage weren't meant to apply directly to everyone, but rather very specifically and very directly 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". As we will see later—in next week's study—the Holy Spirit *does* have a ministry of guiding all of us who are His redeemed followers (see John 16:12-13 and 1 John 2:26-27). But these particular words of our Lord in John 14:25-26 were meant to apply specifically to the ministry of the eleven apostles (Judas, of course, being excluded from that number; having at that point gone away to betray our Lord).
- C. But note the specific promise Jesus makes to those eleven apostles. Jesus said that 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."
- D. The apostle John, at the end of his Gospel, 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 we read so often that they were—to forget the things that it would be crucial for the church to know, or to incorrectly report the things that Jesus did, or to miscommunicate truths from our Lord that would be vital to our personal salvation and well-being. These great apostles 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 their memories be protected from error or from the imperfections that comes from time? How could we—in the ministry of our church—be assured that the written 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 all 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 these apostolic witnesses—we can whole-heartedly trust our Bible and rest our eternal destiny upon the apostolic testimony that is contained in it.

### III. THE BEARER OF THE WITNESS.

A. Our Lord's teaching about this aspect of the Spirit's ministry is found in John 15:26-27:

*“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning” (John 15:26-27).*

- B. 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 the report of Jesus would be proclaimed to those who needed to hear it by those Jesus appointed to proclaim it. In Jesus' teaching, the Holy Spirit's testimony of Himself and of His ministry in this world is connected vitally to the witness that the apostles bore of Him.
- C. In and of themselves, those apostles—mere humans as they were—could never have hoped to bear a faithful witness of Jesus to the world. They had all abandoned Him at His betrayal; and afterward, 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).
- D. Ever since His coming upon Jesus' gathered followers at Pentecost (see Acts 2), the Holy Spirit has empowered all of Jesus' followers, as His human instruments, to fulfill His ongoing ministry of testifying to Jesus around the world. It has been by the Holy Spirit that the church has been able to fulfill the Great Commission throughout the past 2,000 years (Matthew 28:18-20), and has spread His gospel around the world. We today can also trust the Holy Spirit to empower us as His witnesses in our time, and to use us to testify of Jesus to the people He places in our lives.

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How grateful we should be that the Lord Jesus taught these things to His apostles—and that He even did so in such a way that we could listen in and learn. Looking at the things Jesus told

His appointed apostolic witnesses about the Holy Spirit helps us appreciate and rely on the Spirit's ministry to our own church, and in our own day-to-day lives as individual Christians in this world.

Let's grab hold of these truths eagerly; and faithfully declare our Savior to this world in full confidence all that Jesus taught us about the Spirit's enabling power!