

Text: John 14:15-18, 16:7-14

Title: "The Spirit in John" - Part Two

Time: 8/6/2023 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: Last week we began our study of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John. We saw that the Holy Spirit is the one who anointed Jesus at His baptism to become God's Christ, the Messiah, the Prophet, Priest, and King of our salvation. John tells us this because the purpose of his Gospel is that we would believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life in His name (John 20:31).

We noted that the Holy Spirit anointed Jesus as the Christ in the form of a dove. Like a dove, the Holy Spirit is pure, gentle, and sensitive. And when we remember our Old Testaments, the dove teaches us that the Holy Spirit is the Creator, the one who, announcing the end of God's wrath, brings a believer's life a new era of peace with God, and the one who makes God's atoning sacrifice accessible to the poor.

We also saw from John that the Holy Spirit is much more than a dove. He deserves to be Lord of our lives, and He demands that we let Him be so. And when we do, He saves us from our sin and from this present evil age. He is not just a spirit, but the *Holy Spirit*.

He is water and wind, which bring the power of God's salvation into a believer, creating eternal life. He is also the one with whom God's Christ has anointed us, members of His local churches, that we might accomplish our ministry of gospel reconciliation and witness throughout the world.

John refers to the Holy Spirit with two other titles, which will be our focus this morning: *The Spirit of Truth* and *The*

Paraclete, which means *the one called alongside to help*. The Greek word *paraclete* is translated *Comforter* in the KJV and *Helper* in more recent translations. Our word *advocate* is a close grammatical parallel.

We saw last time that, as the Holy Spirit, God's Spirit wars against our sin and this present evil age. As the Spirit of Truth, God's Spirit wars against seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. And as the Paraclete/Comforter/Helper, God's Spirit wars against the spirits of loneliness and abandonment that make people live as though they are orphans.

I. The Spirit of Truth vs. seducing spirits and doctrines of demons (16:7-14).

Illustration: You may have noticed a road sign recently that says prominently "TRUTH." with "Vivek" underneath. In so far as this politician lives up to his road sign, his is an approach to office of which the Holy Spirit would approve. God's Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. He would vote for truth.

I also saw a bumper sticker recently with a different political message. It was one of a myriad of messages on the back of the car of a young college-aged lady. It said, "I stand with Planned Parenthood." A good preface to that message might be, "Don't talk to me about truth, I stand with Planned Parenthood." When the God's Spirit reads that message, He stands apart from it, not with it. As the Spirit of Truth, He is grieved by destructive falsehoods like this.

Application: The contrast we see in various political messages and opinions today is at its core a contrast between truth and falsehood. And when we dive deep enough into this contrast between truth and falsehood, we find at its bottom a war between God's Spirit and the devil, whom Jesus called the father of lies in John 8:44:

“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

This father of lies is dangerous. He is a murderer from the beginning, which explains why he delights in lies that convince young ladies to stand with the evil of abortion.

On the one side of the war between life-giving truth and murderous falsehood, we find the Spirit of Truth, and on the other side we find not only Satan, but also what Paul called seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, who are in the employ of the father of lies as his liars (1 Tim. 4:1). These liars help their father destroy men and women.

The Apostle John wrote about these spirits of falsehood in his First Epistle (1 John 4:1-6). In that passage Paul’s seducing spirits are John’s spirit of antichrist and spirit of error. They employ powerful false prophets, whom the world popularizes.

These preachers never teach true fundamental doctrine, like the full humanity of Jesus Christ. It is interesting that John does not say that false prophets deny the humanity of Christ; rather, he says that they fail to confess it and teach it. Their lie is not only what they say, but what they ignore and leave out. Their messages are about other things, perhaps even some true things, but never the fundamental doctrines of the faith once delivered to the saints.

Who can raise the banner of truth in a world dominated by the father of lies and his liars? What is the believer to do in the face of countless seducing spirits and doctrines of devils? How can we combat the influence of powerful false

prophets, whose congregations never hear the fundamental doctrines of the faith? How can truth survive, let alone find an advantage, in this conflict against this lying murderer?

Jesus provides the answer to these questions. He is the Spirit of Truth (16:7). Have you ever been tempted to wish that Jesus were still here in bodily form? Our verse tells us surprisingly that we would be foolish to wish that. It is hard to believe what Jesus is saying here, but He emphasizes that He is telling us the truth when He says that it is better for us and our local church gospel work that the Holy Spirit is here instead of Him, though He be the God-man.

The reason for this is that the Spirit of Truth would be sent by Him to accomplish three things in the war against the father of lies and his liars, which Jesus could not accomplish under the parameters of the mission the Father had given to Him: (1) convict the world of sin; (2) guide the apostles into all the truth; and (3) glorify Christ. It is not that Jesus lacked the ability to do these things. He is omnipotent. It is rather that His mission from the Father precluded His doing these things. Let's think about these in reverse order.

1. The Spirit of Truth glorifies Christ in a way Christ could not glorify Himself (16:14). The mission of Christ on this earth involved self-abasement and self-sacrifice. The Scripture says He came to pour out His soul unto death (Isa. 53:12), and that is exactly what He did (Phil. 2:6-8). His prayer was never, "Father, I am going to obtain for myself the glory I deserve," but rather, "Father, glorify Thy Son that Thy Son also may glorify Thee" (John 17:1).

But as we gather here this morning in the presence of our crucified and risen Savior, we have gathered in vain unless Jesus Christ is glorified in our worship. Who can make that happen among us? Only the Spirit of Truth can. The way He

does so is captured by Jesus's explanation of this work: "for He will take what is mine and declare it to you." All that belongs to Jesus becomes ours when the Spirit of Truth takes it and declares it to us. This causes us to glorify Christ in a way He could not glorify Himself.

The Spirit speaks of the blood of Christ, and through the power of that declaration the blood becomes our cleansing and surety, a glory to Christ. The Spirit speaks of the mind of Christ, and through the power of that declaration we let His mind transform, humble, and renew our mind. The Spirit speaks of the body of Christ, and through the power of that declaration we see that we must become a member of His body to glorify our Head in all we do. It is through the declarations of the Holy Spirit that we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly things in Christ. He changes us with His Word and causes us to glorify Christ in a way Christ could not glorify Himself.

2. The Spirit of Truth leads the apostles into all the truth in a way Christ could not lead them (16:13). Part of the mission of Jesus on earth was the work of a gifted but misunderstood Teacher. Jesus once asked His disciples, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like [i.e., a wise man who built his house upon a rock]" (Luke 6:46).

There is a sense in which Jesus, though the greatest Teacher who ever lived, was unable to lead His disciples into all the truth: John 2:22, "When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken"; John 12:16, "His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and

had been done to him.” Once He even had to tell Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan,” because Peter had resisted His teaching so horribly (Matt. 16:23).

But when the Spirit of Truth came during Pentecost, everything changed. The apostles and New Testament prophets were led into all the truth, and they wrote down the truth the Spirit of Truth guided them to because the Spirit of Truth did a work of Scriptural inspiration with them, the same work that gave us the Old Testament Scriptures.

Scriptures are all the truth, the entire faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3), the completed revelation replacing partial forms of revelation (1 Cor. 13:10), the foundation of this new age of local churches (Eph. 2:19-22, 3:5-7), and the thorough furnishing of the man of God unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:17). The Spirit of Truth did what Jesus had not.

3. The Spirit of Truth convicts the world in a way that Christ could not convict it (16:8-11). Jesus’s mission was to go to Jerusalem, not the world. He explains this further to His disciples in Acts 1:8. The Spirit of Truth would empower their witness of the truth to the uttermost part of the earth.

While Jesus was here, there was no true witness planned for New Boston, NH. But when the Spirit of Truth came, suddenly our town became part of God’s gospel plan. That plan was executed in our lives when the Spirit of Truth saved us and empowered us to be His witness as a local church.

Are we as a local church accomplishing the mission of the Spirit of Truth against the seducing spirits and doctrines of demons that are destroying people in our town today, or are we weak, backward, fearful, ashamed, and silent? Don’t be afraid to speak to the world as the Spirit’s local church. Speak in the power and with the word of the Spirit of Truth.

II. The Paraclete/Comforter/Helper vs. a spirit of loneliness and abandonment (14:15-18; *comfortless* = *orphans*).

Illustration: Last week my mother-in-law was visiting. We spent some precious time together with her great-grandson, whom she enjoyed seeing for the first time. I was reminded of the fact that without my mother-in-law, my wife and her sisters may have been orphans. One of the things that warms my heart with profound thankfulness every time I visit my grandchildren is the realization that the Lord has blessed all three of them with loving, responsible parents. I cannot imagine how hard life must be for an orphan.

Application: Jesus understood that gospel ministry would be very much like the life of an orphan were He to leave His disciples with no replacement. The disciples would experience three very long days experiencing that. After the crucifixion and before the resurrection, they were scattered, deniers, hunted, confused, abandoned, disillusioned, and lonely.

A lot of fishing happened during that time, but not much in the way of gospel ministry. But after Pentecost, when the Paraclete/Comforter/Helper came, these same disciples still facing the same dangers, increasingly so, enjoyed very different outcomes. The Paraclete was parenting their gospel ministry. Jesus had not left them abandoned and lonely.

Just like young Isaiah and Cason awaken every morning unconcerned about whether or not their parents will love them and care for their every need that day, the Holy Spirit lifts us from our night's sleep for another day of gospel service as members of one of Jesus's local churches with the promise of grace, power, and protection enough to accomplish the will of our heavenly Father. He feeds us, washes us, clothes us, strengthens us, comforts us, helps us, directs us, unites us, and in it all loves us.

Conclusion: Jesus loves us, and He wants us to love Him. He tells us that loving Him requires obeying His commandments (14:15). And He assures us that His Father at His request will send another Comforter/Helper/Paraclete. That word *another* literally means *another of the same kind*. The Holy Spirit is just like Jesus in His love for us as His disciples.

But Jesus is clear that God's Spirit is only known to those disciples. He is not received by, seen by, or known to the world (14:17). Are you part of that world, blind when it comes to God's Spirit? Must you confess that you have never received, seen, and known the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, the Paraclete/Comforter/Helper? If so, the gospel good news for the world and for you is that God's Spirit convicts the world of this sin and saves believers from unbelief. If He is convicting you of your sin, simply believe that Jesus died and rose again for your sins, and the Holy Spirit will have saved you from your sin and from this present evil age.

“A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction—the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

Preachers and Preaching