

Text: John 16:5-15

Title: "Believe because He sent the Holy Spirit for good"

Time: 1/18/2026

Place: NBBC

Introduction: Over the past year, our federal government has sent federal law enforcement personnel into communities and states to help mitigate their crime problems. The disparate reactions to this help have become a study in contrasts. On the one hand, cities like Washington D.C. and Memphis TN, and states like Florida and Louisiana, have welcomed the offered help with open arms and cooperation. In those states, crime is down and citizens are safer.

Conversely, cities like Minneapolis and Chicago, and states like Minnesota and Illinois, have rejected and undermined the offered help with distrust and protest. In those places, crime has escalated, even against brave law-enforcement officials, and citizens are less safe, especially those who decide to attack those officers.

In a similar way, Jesus is determined to send needed help to people. This helper is the Holy Spirit. The Greek term Jesus uses in our passage for the Holy Spirit is *Paraclete*. That word comes from *para*, meaning *along side of*, and *kaleo*, meaning *to call*. A *Paraclete* is *someone called along side of someone to help him*. It is a word that is very similar to our word *Advocate*.

Jesus wants people to know that help is on its way, and He wants them to know what the nature of this help shall be. As for the 11 remaining disciples, they are not yet fully ready for this help if it means that Jesus would be leaving them. But Jesus wants them to understand that God's plan to help is for their good, along with others, and that it deserves their open-armed embrace and cooperation.

As we learn about this help from the Holy Spirit, which Jesus has sent, we need to ask ourselves what our response to this

help has been. Has it been the testimony of our lives that we do not really think we need this help? Do we wish that the help had never come? Do we reject or even undermine this help? Or are we truly thankful for the good that has come to our lives because Jesus sent us this Helper?

Our passage explains that the Holy Spirit was sent for the good of Jesus's disciples (vv. 5-7), for the good of the world (vv. 8-11), and for the good of the New Testament Scripture (vv. 12-15).

I. The Holy Spirit was sent for the good of Jesus's disciples (vv. 5-7).

Illustration: Have you ever had the experience of seeing things fall unexpectedly into place? When that happens to me, it is often the Lord bringing a blessing to my life out of some mistake, inconvenience, or trial. These blessings can be quite simple things.

Last Tuesday I drove to Concord looking very much forward to seeing Abby's basketball team compete against Trinity Christian School. The plan was to meet my wife at the game and enjoy it together. I arrived at 4:15 pm for the 4:30 pm start time, but as I was walking up to the gym's front door, I received a text from Abby. Her text excitedly told me that the game was amazing, and that at the end they were able to pull away with a 46-33 victory. Evidently, the game time had changed, and I was operating with an old schedule. I had missed the game.

When I called Maureen to explain the situation, she mentioned that she had a gift card for T-Bones from work, and we agreed together to have a nice dinner-date together at T-Bones. Somehow, the evening fell unexpectedly into place. What I at first thought was a wasted trip and a disappointing outcome turned out to be a real blessing.

Application: The Lord often does that in our lives. He knows what is better for us than we do. This was His point for the disciples, who were not yet convinced that Jesus's plan was the best (v. 7). When Jesus says "it is expedient for you," he uses a verb that actually means *to bring together*. It is similar to our idiom that says *things fall into place*.

Jesus would cause things to be better for the disciples by sending the Holy Spirit, and He had to go away before sending the Holy Spirit. In His sojourn on earth, Jesus followed the Holy Spirit's leading; He did not lead the Holy Spirit. In His humiliation as man, feeling our infirmity, His role was not to tell the Holy Spirit what to do, but to do what the Holy Spirit told Him to do as an example to us.

But Jesus's departure was His exaltation – His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to heaven at the right hand of the Father. Risen, Jesus pronounced, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:19). His humiliation ended, He then had authority to send the Holy Spirit.

Do you ever wonder (perhaps even long for) what it would be like to live in Galilee in the days of Jesus's ministry. I am willing to guess that many who watch the TV show "The Chosen" have felt that way from time to time. But Jesus says what we have in the Holy Spirit's help now is much better than a TV show. It is even much better than going back in time and being with Him in person.

Like us, these disciples were having a hard time believing Jesus's promise in this regard (vv. 5-6). They had asked about Jesus's departure earlier, but they had not made serious inquiry into the Lord's plans – where He was going exactly and why. All they focused on was that He was leaving them, and for this reason sorrow filled their hearts.

This sorrow is the opposite of the joy of vv. 20-22. God's plan for us can cause us sorrow at first, like His plan for an expecting mother. This sorrow may come from the difficulty of gospel ministry (2 Cor. 2:1-3); or from the death of a beloved friend or family member (Phil. 2:27); or from just the stubborn unbelief of those we love, who so far have rejected our witness (Rom. 9:1-3); or from the suffering of persecution (1 Pet. 2:19).

In these times of God-appointed sorrow, we do well to remember the promise of Ps. 30:4-5, "Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." We can sing while we sorrow with faith that our sorrow is temporary, but our joy is eternal. The Holy Spirit was sent for the good of disciples, even in their sorrow.

II. The Holy Spirit was sent for the good of the world (vv. 8-11).

Illustration: The wisest man who ever lived wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Solomon in Proverbs 27:6).

Application: As the one who wounds, the Holy Spirit is the best Friend the world could ever have. His help comes in the form of conviction, which is the act of wounding someone in the sense meant by the proverb. To bring conviction is to tell someone they are wrong and in need of repentance. The Holy Spirit does this for the world in three ways (v. 8):

1. The Holy Spirit tells the world we are wrong about sin, and we need to repent. Our error when it comes to sin is that we do not believe on Jesus Christ as God's Son and our Savior (v. 9). This unbelief is the great sin. This is the damning sin. This is the sin for which there is no forgiveness, the sin for which Jesus did not atone.

2. The Holy Spirit tells the world we are wrong about righteousness, and we need to repent (v. 10). In John's day, the world thought they were righteous and that Jesus was the sinner (John 9:24). The same is done in our day. Jesus spent His ministry telling the world they were wrong, but now He was going to the Father and the disciples would see Him no more. Going forward, it must be the Holy Spirit that exposes the false righteousness of the world. He shows the world that all our righteousness is like filthy rags (Isa. 64:6).

3. The Holy Spirit tells the world that we are wrong about the coming judgment. John's world had been poised to execute judgment against Christ by nailing Him as a blasphemer to a Roman cross. They killed the prince of life (Acts 3:15). But the Holy Spirit would show the world how wrong they were by pointing out that this death on the cross was the ultimate victory over their prince, Satan.

A good friend who responded well to this help is our former deacon, Bryan Henderson. His hymn declares that the cross would bring praise to Jesus as the Mighty King: "To the cross our Lord was nailed and with each blow the darkness failed. Death has lost its sting today, as Christ has given us the way."

It was Bryan's testimony that he learned that truth when the Holy Spirit convicted him of how wrong he had been about sin, about righteousness, and about the coming judgment. Has the Holy Spirit saved you from these errors? Has He shown you how wrong you have been? He came for the good of the world, to meet the world's need to be told that it is wrong. His are the "faithful wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy." Which do will you believe?

III. The Holy Spirit was sent for the good of the New Testament (vv. 12-15).

Illustration: The 19th century liberal German theologian, Albert Schweitzer, launched "The Quest of the Historical Jesus" in a book that described a new approach to the study of the New Testament, which developed during the Enlightenment of the previous century. The idea was basically that what the New Testament authors wrote about Jesus Christ was an embellishment of the true Jesus of history, who had to be rediscovered through the critical techniques and materialistic assumptions of modern-day scholarship.

Application: In contrast, our text tells us that Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit to His apostles so that they could know exactly who He is, what He had accomplished, and what He planned to do. Jesus states three times in an emphatic way, "He shall show it unto you." He shall show them the glory of Christ (vv. 14-15) – our New Testament is all about the glory of Jesus Christ (which Schweitzer tried to strip away); and He shall show them things to come (v. 13) – God's new gospel program to reach the world through local churches, rather than through the nation of Israel.

Westcott is representative of other good commentators who highlight the uniqueness of the role of the apostles and NT prophets in the authorship of the New Testament in fulfilment of this promised work of the Spirit to lead them into all the truth: "This section distinctly marks the position of the apostles with regard to revelation as unique; and so also by implication the office of the apostolic writings as a record of their teaching. The same trust which leads us to believe that the apostles were guided in the Truth, leads us also to believe that by the providential leading of the Spirit they were so guided as to present [the truth] in such a way that it might remain in a permanent [written] form" (230).

As one of the recipients of this New Testament revelation, the Apostle John leaves no doubt that he is writing about the true Jesus of history in all His supernatural glory. He writes that

disciples might be helped by the Holy Spirit, that the world might be helped by the Holy Spirit, and that Christ might be glorified by the Holy Spirit. John affirmed about his Gospel, "These things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing have life in His name" (20:31). Our passage teaches that we must believe because He sent the Holy Spirit for good.

Conclusion: John is crystal clear. The Holy Spirit was sent for the good of Jesus's disciples, the good of the world, and the good of New Testament truth. This means, of course, that no matter who you are, the Holy Spirit was sent for your good too. Are we willing to understand the nature of His help and to welcome it with open arms? Are we willing to let Him deal with the crime problem of our own human heart? These are questions A. W. Tozer explored in an essay he titled, "How to be filled with the Holy Spirit":

"Do you want Him to be the Lord of your life? That you want His benefits, I know. I take that for granted. But do you want to be possessed by Him? Do you want to hand the keys of your soul over to the Holy Spirit and say, 'Lord, from now on I don't even have a key to my own house. I come and go as Thou tellest me'? . . .

"Are you sure that you want your personality to be taken over by One who will expect obedience to the written and living Word? Are you sure that you want your personality to be taken over by One who will not tolerate the self-sins? . . .

"Again, I ask you if you desire to have your personality taken over by One who stands in sharp opposition to the world's easy ways? No tolerance of evil, no smiling at crooked jokes, no laughing off things that God hates. The Spirit of God, if He takes over, will bring you into opposition to the world just as Jesus was brought into opposition to it. . . .

“Are you sure, brother? You want His help, yes; you want a lot of His benefits, yes; but are you willing to go with Him in His opposition to the easygoing ways of the world? If you are not, you needn’t apply for anything more than you have, because you don’t want Him; you only think you do!”

May we answer Tozer that we truly do want the Helper that Jesus has sent for our good. We want His help to be Christlike, both on Sunday and throughout the week, both at church and at home. We want His help to tell the world that it is wrong, and His help to read daily our wonderful Bibles that we might see the glory of Christ fully revealed there.

“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*