

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit – Part IV
Pastor Ty Blackburn
John 16:12-15
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Thank you, Steven, for leading our worship. One of the blessings of having an associate pastor that can carry a tune is he can fill in for our regular song leader. I say that because I don't have the ability, and I'm very grateful for those that do, that can teach and sing. I appreciate Emily playing for us this morning too.

I invite you to turn with me in your Bibles to the sixteenth chapter of John, John 16. As you turn, I just want to add a word of thanksgiving to the Lord, and appreciation to those that worked for vacation Bible school this week. It was really very well done and the Lord blessed it. We had a great crowd and a lot of folks from outside of the church that came. So we are excited about the seeds that were sown for the Gospel, the relationships, some of the families that came on Friday evening for our hot dog supper, and worship time together. It was really encouraging, so pray for those seeds that were planted. But one of the things that I was really encouraged about was our leaders. Most of the people that were involved were our younger folks in the CCF group, the College and Career Fellowship, who took such a role in leading. What a blessing to see the Spirit of God working in the hearts of His people, and burdening them to pour their lives into the children. So praise God for that. Thank you for your labor for the Lord.

Well we are in John 16, we've been looking at this passage for some time, and particularly the subject, the title of the message is 'The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit'. This is actually Part IV of a series by that same title, 'The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit'. We've seen that in this passage in John, when we think about the big context of the passage we are looking at this morning, which we are going to be focusing on Verses 12-15 of John 16, we are in the section of John known as '*The Farewell Discourse*', where Jesus is, on the night before His crucifixion from John 13 to John 17, we have a record of His time with the disciples. And particularly in 14-16, we have three chapters of rich teaching in which He is trying to give them, in a sense, His last instructions. He is going to continue to minister to them through the Holy Spirit, but this is His last time physically before the cross to be able to talk with them about all that is coming.

And we've seen that one of the major emphases that He has during this time when they are not aware of all that is coming, they are perplexed, they are concerned because they are aware of this one thing. He has made very clear in '*The Farewell*

Discourse’ that He is leaving. He says, “I’m going away and where I go you cannot follow.” This is very distressing to the disciples. Then He begins to tell them, “Not only am I going away, but things are going to get really bad for you. Circumstances are going to go from bad to worse,” and so they are feeling the weight of Jesus leaving, and things getting worse. He tells them they are going to experience the opposition of the world. They can expect persecution. “If they hated Me, they will hate you,” He says. He tells them at the beginning of this chapter, which we are going to read in just a moment, that things are going to be so bad that, “When they kill you,” as 10 of the 11 of the men whom He said these things to were murdered and martyred for their faith. “When they kill you, they are going to think they are offering service to God. It is going to be so dark spiritually in this world that they are going to kill you and think they are doing what God wants them to do.”

So they hear all of these things, and they’re overwhelmed with their circumstances that are going to be coming upon them, but also the main circumstance that Jesus will not be with them after three and a half years of walking the dusty trails of the holy land, Palestine, with Jesus, hearing Him teach, seeing Him heal, feeling the comfort and amazing love of His friendship. They are now going to be separated from Him physically, and this is distressing them. This is why He keeps saying to them, “Don’t let your hearts be troubled.” The central article from which He intends them to derive strength and encouragement is the Doctrine of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit. His message is throughout these three chapters—14, 15, and 16. “The Father is going to send you another Helper, the Holy Spirit, and it is understanding the person and the work of the Holy Spirit that is going to make all the difference in your life.” Now let’s read John 16, we’ll read Verses 1-15, realizing we are going to focus in on the last 4 verses of the passage we are reading.

John 16:1 ~ “These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling. 2 They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God. 3 These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me. 4 But these things I have spoken to you, so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them. These things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

5 “But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ 6 But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7 But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. 8 And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; 11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

12 “I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 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. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you.

Let’s pray.

Father, as we bow before Your word, how aware we are of our need of help, of divine assistance. Lord, we look at our lives, we see everywhere around us testimony that we need help. We are not the people that we ought to be. But when we come to Your word, and we come to doctrine, and teaching, and Your Scripture that is of the depth that we have here, we are especially mindful of our need of grace. Grant that the Spirit of truth might even now take from You, Lord Jesus, and disclose to us the wonder of who You are—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And we pray this in His name, Amen.

J.I. Packer, in his classic book, Knowing God, talks about how the Doctrine of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit is often absent from especially conservative, Bible-believing, Reformed churches because we have tended to overreact to the extremes of the charismatic movement, where they are talking about the Holy Spirit way too much. Because when the Holy Spirit is really ministering, as we have seen in previous messages, when the Holy Spirit is really ministering, the main topic is Jesus most of the time. But we still need to understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit because Jesus wants us to. So, Packer talks about this, so he says, and he is writing in 1970 or so, but this is still true. He says:

It is startling to see how differently the biblical teaching about the second and third persons of the Trinity respectively are treated. The person and work of Christ have been, and remain subjects of constant debate within the church, yet the person and work of the Holy Spirit are consistently ignored. The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit is the 'Cinderella' of Christian doctrines, very few seem to be interested in it.

Many excellent books have been written on the person and the work of Christ, but the number of books worth reading on the person and work of the Holy Spirit can almost be counted on the fingers of one hand. Christian people are not in doubt as to the work that Christ did, they know that He redeemed men by His atoning death. Even if they differ among themselves as to exactly what was involved in that, the average Christian though is in a complete fog as to the work the Holy Spirit does.

Most people do not think of the Holy Spirit at all, and have no positive ideas of any sort about what He does. They are for practical purposes, in the same position as the disciples who Paul met at Ephesus. When Paul went to Ephesus he found some disciples, and this is what they said when Paul spoke to them. They said, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit." They were disciples of Jesus yet they didn't even know there was a Holy Spirit. They had been baptized with the baptism of John. It is an extraordinary thing that those who profess to care so much about Christ should know and care so little about the Holy Spirit.

He goes on to talk about the fact that Christians can articulate that if it wasn't for Jesus, we have no faith. If you take away the incarnation, Christianity is gone. If you take away the cross, there is no salvation. If you take away the resurrection, we are of all men most to be pitied. But if you take away Pentecost, what are we left with? If you take away Pentecost, if the Holy Spirit was not poured out because of the work of Christ, if Jesus had just gone to Heaven and left the disciples on their own, what we would have today would be no Gospel, and no New Testament. I mean, can you imagine the 11 without the Holy Spirit? What we would have today? Would they have remembered the words, and recorded them perfectly? No! I mean, they were always in a fog themselves as to what Jesus was about, and you see the radical difference that the Holy Spirit made in so many ways.

We talked last week about His ministry which is focused on in Verses 8-11, the Holy Spirit's ministry as advocate. That is, it is a legal term, or an understanding that, in Verse 8-11, when He says, "When He comes He will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment. The Holy Spirit will, in your

ministry, as you encounter the world, He will stand with you as an advocate did in the 1st Century. A dear friend when you were on trial would come to your side, and stand with you against the charges, defend you. The Holy Spirit will do that. When the world comes against you, and you feel like you are ready to cave in, the Holy Spirit will enable you to stand.” Now Jesus said this to the 11. Now think about who was listening to these words, and what was going to happen in the next few hours.

Peter heard these words. Peter didn't think he needed an advocate. Remember Peter earlier, on this same night, told Jesus, “Though everybody forsakes You, I will not forsake You.” He was brimming with self-confidence, but just hours after this, when people were just asking him, “Hey, you were with Jesus,” three times he denied even knowing Christ. And in those moments, he was in the presence, the physical presence of Jesus. Remember Jesus is off at a distance from him, but Jesus looked at him when Peter denied Him the third time, and the cock crowed immediately. Peter denies Him, looks at Jesus, Jesus looks at him, the cock crows, and he remembers the word that Jesus said the night before, “I tell you the truth, Peter, you will deny Me three times before the rooster crows.” He had the physical presence of Christ and look what he did when confronted with the pressures of the world, he caved in. But then you turn to Acts 4, you see Peter and John heal a man, after the Holy Spirit has been given. They are called in before the Sanhedrin, the high priests. They say basically, “Do you know Jesus? What are you doing?” And Peter says, in fact, let me just read it to you, Acts 4, look at the difference. It says in Acts 4, they ask him in Verse 7 after the healing. Here he has been arrested by the same people who crucified his Messiah.

Acts 4:7 ~ When they had placed them in the center, (That is he and John.) they began to inquire, “By what power, or in what name, have you done this?” 8 Then Peter, (Look at the next words.) filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them,...

“I don't know Him. No.”

Acts 4:8-11 ~ ...filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers and elders of the people, 9 if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, 10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead— by this name this man stands here before you in good health.

He goes on to say in Verse 12:

Acts 4:12 ~ And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

Radical difference when you have the advocacy ministry of the Holy Spirit. And we're going to see in John 16 today, as we look at the person and the work of the Holy Spirit, we come to another element of His ministry. He is not only, we've looked in previous weeks, we've said He is a guide, we've said He is a homemaker in the sense that He makes a home for us, in us, for God. Last week He is our advocate, today we are going to talk about the person and work of the Holy Spirit, His ministry, He is our teacher. That is what John 16:12-15 focuses on, our teacher. As we look at this, what we're going to see is the wonder of, and the advancement that His ministry is. In fact, we're going to look at three points this morning. Our thoughts will be organized around three points. We're going to look at the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. First of all, *The Superiority of His Teaching Ministry*. Secondly, *The Solidarity of His Teaching Ministry*. And thirdly, *The Sublimity of His Teaching Ministry*.

1) The Superiority of His Teaching Ministry:

First, *The Superiority of His Teaching Ministry*. Now, we're not saying that the Holy Spirit is a better teacher than Jesus, please understand. We're not saying that He is better than Jesus, in fact, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are equally perfect teachers. That goes without saying, but what is it that makes His teaching ministry superior is not the teacher, but the context. The Holy Spirit's teaching ministry is superior to the earthly teaching ministry of Jesus because of the context. Jesus' teaching ministry took place before the cross, and before the resurrection, and before the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's ministry takes place after the cross work of Christ, where He makes sinners alive when He saves us. And the Holy Spirit's ministry is also different in context that it takes place where? In the heart. It is no longer a merely external teaching ministry, the Holy Spirit is in our hearts. So what makes His ministry superior is not the teacher, but the context. Nevertheless, we are saying, in light of these things, that the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit is superior to the teaching ministry of Jesus during His earthly ministry. Is this not precisely what Jesus Himself is saying in these verses? Look with me at Verse 12.

John 16:12-13 ~ “I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth;

This is where you see the superiority of the Holy Spirit’s teaching ministry. Jesus says, ***“I have many more things to say to you,...*** There are so many things I want to share with you.” Like the word order in the Greek emphasizes the many things as the first thing on His mind. “There are so many things that I want to impart to you, but you cannot bear them now.” The idea of ‘bear’, the word ‘bear’ here, translates the Greek word ‘bastazō’, which comes from the Greek word ‘basis’. We get our English word ‘basis’, a transliteration of this. So the verb means ‘to be a basis, or a base, or support’, and the idea is a base or foundation upon which something rests. Jesus says, “I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear up under the weight of them. I have deeper and heavier teaching. I want to communicate weightier, spiritual realities, but you are not able to bear the weight of them.” But, look at that key phrase, ***But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth;*** “When He comes, you will be able to bear these things, and you will be able to handle the heavier, weightier, spiritual realities.” The Holy Spirit’s ministry is such that when He comes, He will be able to guide you not into just most of the truth, not just more of the truth, what does He say? ...***He will guide you into all the truth;***

Now the emphasis is on the word ‘all’. In fact, if you turn over to Chapter 14:26, another passage where He is talking about the Holy Spirit on this same night, Verse 25-26.

John 14:25-26 ~ “These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. 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.

The emphatic use of the word ‘all’. The Holy Spirit’s ministry will not be limited in the way Jesus’ earthly ministry was. Now again, there is no deficiency in Christ, He is everything. Everything that He accomplished is what made the Holy Spirit able to come, but the deficiency was in us. We were spiritually blind. The disciples, even though they had been born again, they did not have the Spirit in the full measure so that they were dull, and unable to see. But when the Spirit came, they suddenly were able to see. The Holy Spirit gave them the power to bear the truth.

We read that passage earlier from 1 Corinthians. Remember what the Holy Spirit does is He teaches you the mind of God. He understands the mind of God and He teaches us the mind of God. He enables us to see. It is literally like this, you know if you want to give somebody, I didn't think of this illustration ahead of time, it just came to me, so as often as the case, may the Holy Spirit give you the ability to 'bear' with me. But you want to give somebody a load, your child to carry something, and you are trying to teach them as they grow to be a part of helping the family. Well, you don't give them the biggest, heaviest thing when they are four years old, or lay it on the ground and say, "Pick it up. Let's go! Come on!" No, they are not able to bear it, but what do you do? You give them a little something to carry, and you try to give them something that pushes them a little bit too, right? Enough so they feel like when they got done they did something. "And you did something. That's great!" Then they get a little older, what do you do? Give them a little more. What He is saying is, the Holy Spirit's ministry is a personal ministry, an internal ministry that He comes into the heart of the believer and He basically walks along with you. He gives you what you can bear, and He guides you into all truth. He gives you a little more, and a little more, and a little more, and that's all going to come from His word because this is where the Holy Spirit works. This is His book. He has inspired every word of it.

It is clear when you look at the teaching in 2 Peter 1, how did the prophecies of the Old Testament come about? They came about when the Spirit of God led men to speak, to write. And the New Testament was breathed out by God. The word 'breathe' is 'spirit', 2 Timothy 3:16. So the Spirit uses the word, but what He does in the life of the Christian is He enables you to bear a little more, and He gives you what you can carry. Then He works with you as you grow along, and He is working in your life to help you, to need a little more, then He gives you a little more. This is the wonderful ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is a personalized, in a sense it is kind of like a personal spiritual trainer that we have.

Personal trainer, that is a big thing that has come into vogue in recent years, isn't it? Nothing wrong with that, I mean, if you can afford it, and that is something that helps, that's great. A personal trainer is somebody who kind of 'rah rah' you into motivation. Then the personal trainer knows how much you can handle. "Hey, you can do one more set today than you did last week. Let's do it." And he helps you to build your strength. The Holy Spirit spiritually has that role in our life. Now we don't see Him with our eyes, we don't hear Him with our ears, but this is His role in our lives. And it is quiet, and it is behind the scenes, and often we are like J.I. Packer talked about earlier, we're not appreciating the work of the Holy Spirit, or

being sensitive to the work of the Holy Spirit, and therefore we are not benefitting as much from the work of the Holy Spirit. But this is why Jesus gave Him.

Not only does He help you to know how much weight you can carry, and impart more of the weighty spiritual matters of Scripture, but He is a tender friend operating because He was sent from the Father. He not only gives you what to carry, but He helps you. It is like you've got the weight in your hands, but His hands are underneath your hands helping you hold it, and carry it. That is the superiority of His teaching ministry. He gives us power. Jesus said, "You are not able to bear them now." That is, "You don't have the power to bear the weightier matters that I want to talk to you about, but when the Holy Spirit comes, He will empower you to understand them. He will give you the power, the ability."

Turn with me to Ephesians 3. You see this everywhere. If you start looking for this you will see it everywhere, but this is one of the wonderful passages where you see this particular truth illustrated. The necessity of the ministry of the Holy Spirit to enable us to bear all that God has for us. To be able to experience it, to carry it. In Verse 14 He says:

Ephesians 3:14-19 ~ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

That is the ministry of the Holy Spirit. God wants us to experience the wonder of who He is in a way that truly surpasses knowledge. He wants our experience of His love to be so great that it is four-dimensional. We live in a three-dimensional world, but He just talked about four dimensions when He said, ... ***the breadth and length and height and depth,***... It is supernatural. Well, how do you come to experience that? Well, the Holy Spirit must do a work in you, and that is His purpose, His teaching ministry. So when you think about your life, what is the application of this?

You think about your life and you may, as you anticipate the future, you see difficulties on the horizon, maybe personally as you are getting older, you begin to think, “I’m going to have health issues,” or “I feel like I may be having a health issue now,” and you are worried, you are concerned. “How will I bear up under that?” Or, “What if this tragedy strikes and some accident happens. Things have been going so well for so long.” You know how sometimes you feel like something bad has got to happen, it has been too good. Life is a fallen world, something bad has got to happen. That is not the way that we’re supposed to be thinking. That is not godly thinking. We are supposed to Philippians 4:8 that. You know, whatsoever things that are true, noble, pure, lovely, think on these things. But the reality is, that we also do realize that in this world, Jesus said, “You’re going to have tribulation.” But we don’t have to be afraid of the tribulation.

The disciples would have been afraid looking at what was coming. “You mean they are going to put us to death, and they are going to celebrate, and think they just praised God by murdering us?” How can we bear up under that? Jesus says, “You will have a teacher who will be with you. A personal teacher who will teach you what you need when you need it. He will walk with you, and He will enable you to go through each day of your life.” This is the ministry of the blessed Holy Spirit. So therefore, don’t worry, don’t be afraid. You have the consummate teacher with you and in you. That is the superiority of His teaching ministry.

2) The Solidarity of His Teaching Ministry:

Secondly, *The Solidarity of His Teaching Ministry*. Now here we mean the consistency, the complete agreement of the Holy Spirit’s teaching ministry with Jesus’ teaching ministry, the continuity of His teaching ministry with the teaching ministry of Christ. Yes, it is superior, but it is in solidarity with it. It is a continuation of Jesus’ teaching ministry. We see this in Verses 13-15, back to John 16. In Verse 13, when He said, ***But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth;...*** Look what He says next.

John 16:13 ~ ...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.

It is important to notice here, He says, ***...He will not speak on His own initiative,...*** The ESV, the English Standard Version translates it, ***...he will not speak on his own authority,...*** The Greek literally reads, “He will not speak from Himself...” That is, when He teaches, He will not speak from Himself. He will not

speak His own ideas. He is not going to teach something radically different or new. No, He goes on to say, to explain what He means by this.

John 16:13-15 ~ 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. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you.

Do you hear the repetition of the word ‘disclose’? Three times in that passage He uses the word ‘disclose’. Once in 13, and once in 14, and once in 15. What He hears He speaks and discloses. “He takes, or receives from Me, and discloses to you,” in Verse 14. And the same thing in Verse 15, “He takes or receives of Mine, and discloses to you.” The word ‘disclose’ is an important word. It is the word ‘anaggellō’, and it comes from the root word ‘anaggellōs’, ‘a messenger’, ‘angel’, we transliterate that word ‘angel’ in English. But the word ἄγγελος (aggelos) is the person who has a message. And so ἀναγγέλλω (anaggellō) means to announce from above. But the messenger is one who speaks exactly and precisely what he has received. A good messenger doesn’t come and just say whatever he thinks. The messenger receives a message. Whether written or verbal, he receives the message and his objective is to deliver precisely what he received. There’s no creativity. This isn’t creative writing class when you’re a messenger.

You can imagine an ancient Egyptian messenger thinking, “You know, I really think I can flower this up a little bit. I’m going to soften this here and there,” and somebody else that’s a servant of the Pharaoh tells Pharaoh what he did with his message. His creative writing became his last will and testament. That’s not your job. Your job as the *aggelos* is to deliver the message that the authority has sent. And so the Holy Spirit is giving the message that Jesus is giving Him, complete solidarity with Jesus’ teaching ministry. He’s not doing his own thing. He’s in complete agreement with the Lord Jesus. And isn’t it interesting, He’s just like Jesus in this way? The beauty of the Trinity in the economy of how they worked out the plan of salvation—Jesus when He came, did not come and do His own thing. What did He say about His own teaching? Look back to John 7. Turn over to John 7:16.

John 7:16 ~ So Jesus answered them and said, “My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. 17 If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.

That's the same exact phrase as you had in John 16. He will not speak from Himself. Jesus says, "Listen, I'm not speaking from Myself." Verse 18:

John 7:18 ~ He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

He says, "Look, when I came, I didn't come giving you My own thoughts. I came listening to the Father and telling you exactly what the Father told Me to say. And now the Holy Spirit has come, and He's not doing His own thing. He's listening to Me and giving you exactly what I've told Him to say." There's this perfect continuity and consistency in the word of God from Genesis to Revelation. This is one of the marks. We were talking in Sunday Morning Bible Study, our Associate Pastor was teaching on the doctrine of the Canon, how we know what books are in the Bible, and one of the things that the church recognized from the Scriptures is that one of the things that marks Scripture off from other proposed things that people think might be Scripture, they recognize that it was consistent with all that had been said before, that there was an organic unity of the books, that it had the same mark and the same theme. It's all about Christ, and it was clearly recognized all along through church history back into the Old Testament. And this is what Jesus is saying. "Listen, the Holy Spirit is not going to give you something new. He's going to give you exactly what I'm giving Him, and remember that I gave you exactly what the Father gave Me." There's this perfect oneness of mind in the Trinity. He also said in that passage we just looked at in John 7:

John 7:18 ~ He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

Jesus came not seeking His own glory and not speaking from Himself. He spoke from the Father and He continually said, "Give glory to the Father. I've come to bring glory to the Father." In fact, in John 17 in His prayer, He says, "Father, I have glorified You. I came to glorify You, and that's what I have done. My whole life has been a desire to glorify You." And now the Holy Spirit when He comes, He doesn't speak of Himself. What does He do? According to John 16 the passage we're just reading, what does He says in Verse 14?

John 16:14 ~ He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.

The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus. He doesn't speak of His own initiative, and He doesn't seek His own glory. There's a beautiful oneness of mind and attitude in the Trinity. What a glorious reality of who God is. Now, His word is His tool. The Scripture is always His weapon, and His focus is Christ. So that's the solidarity of His teaching ministry. The superiority of His ministry is that now He is able to teach us all things. The solidarity is it's consistent with everything that Jesus has done, and continues to focus our attention on Christ.

3) The Sublimity of His Teaching Ministry:

That is the majesty and grandeur of it. When the Holy Spirit comes, the wonder of what He does is He takes us to new levels with God that we never would have imagined possible. The outworking of God's plan of salvation, everything's now done to make this reality possible. Look with me at John 14:20, something Jesus had said to them just a few hours earlier about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Now, before we read Verse 20, look at Verse 16. This is when He's been telling them, "I'm going away. Don't let your heart be troubled. I'm going away." In Verse 16, He says:

John 14:16 ~ I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

He says, "I'm going to send you the Holy Spirit. Don't worry." Verse 20:

John 14:20 ~ In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

The first question is, when is that day? I think strictly speaking, you can think it's the day of the cross in resurrection, but in reality, I think it's speaking of the day of the Holy Spirit's giving. "When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, and in that day when the Holy Spirit comes to you, you will know what? You will have the ability to handle the weighty doctrine of the interpersonal relationships of the Triune God. You will know that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you." He's basically saying, "Listen, one of the things the Holy Spirit will do when He comes to you, is He will begin to unpack for you the weightier things that are the most delightful things of who God is."

The doctrine of the Trinity is a difficult doctrine. It's one that when you think about it too long, it tends to hurt your brain. It's like your brain is a muscle and you wear it out. But it's the Holy Spirit's ministry to be your personal trainer spiritually to let you wear your brain out so you can take a little more of the wonder of who God is, because the doctrine of the Trinity is one of the most beautiful and wonderful realities. It is the most beautiful and wonderful reality that any man can contemplate, and it has all the implications. It is so important. The doctrine of the Trinity is that God is one God, and yet there are three Persons in that one God. And the three Persons are equal in power and glory, and yet they are distinct in role and function. The Father administers. The Son accomplishes. The Spirit applies. There is subordination of the Son to the Father, yes. They are equal in power and glory, yet there is this functional subordination. There is subordination of the Spirit to both the Father and the Son. They are equal in power and glory, yet the Spirit is sent forth from the Son and the Father. But the reality of it has implications.

I remember the most awesome seminary lecture I ever had, I remember so vividly. I've talked about it. Some of you have been here long enough that you've probably heard me talk about it. Doug Kelly, my Professor at Reformed Theological Seminary who was a Systematic Theology Professor, one of the most brilliant men I've ever known. He was actually a man who was educated in Scotland, but he was born and raised the first ten or twelve years of his life in the mountains of North Carolina. So he had an Appalachian accent at its root, and then he went off and he kind of brushed it up with Scottish. And when he was teaching, his accent was really quite intriguing, but he would have failed preaching class, because the preaching class at RTS, you also had to worry about how you looked, and he used to have this habit. When we was really excited, he would start rolling his tie. He would be talking about something and preaching with this hand, and he would be rolling his tie just like this. He'd get all the way to the top and then he'd let go of it, and then he'd start rolling again. And that was really when he was excited.

Well, the day I walk into class in Systematic Theology and the title is the lecture is *The Co-inherence of the Persons of the Trinity—The Doctrine of Perichoresis*. Now, is that one that you think, "I want to get there early for that"? I mean, your brain hurts just even—what is he talking about? But when he got going into the implications of the fact that God is Triune, the implications of the fact that there are three Persons in one substance, and what this means for all of life, it was staggering. His tie rolling wasn't distracting, because God was showing His glory, and what he was trying to show us, and what he said that day, he called us to the sublimity of the most sublime, grandest, most majestic and beautiful doctrines, the doctrine of the interpersonal relationships of the Trinity, that Jesus is saying,

“That’s what the Holy Spirit is going to do. He’s going to help you understand what it means for Me to be in My Father, and My Father to be in Me, and the Spirit to be in Us. And then for you as a child of God, you come to be a part. You’re in Christ. You’re in God. You’re a part of this new relationship.”

He talked about the implications this has. He was talking about how in the west, we’re very individualistic. Europe and America normally refers to the west, western culture. In America, we are west on steroids. That is, America is characterized by rugged individualism. It’s all about the individual. It’s about me. It’s about looking out for number one. It’s the pioneer spirit, going out and making a way, forging my way. It’s all about the individual. In the east, it’s all about the group. It’s not the one. It’s the many. Or you could say it’s the group. This is why, for instance, folks from Korea and other places in the east, when you ask them their name, before they get Americanized, they would tell you—I had several friends in Seminary who had the last name *Kim*, and the way they said their name back there was, if you asked somebody their name, they’d say, “Kim, Sun Kwon.” I had another friend. “What’s your name?” “Kim, Yung Kwon.”

Now, in America, what will we say? “I’m Ty Blackburn. This is my brother Todd Blackburn.” We start with our first name, because what’s most important to us is who I am, and secondarily my family.” What’s most important in the east is who the family is, and secondarily the individual. It’s the tension between the one and the many. In the Trinity, the one and the many are equally valid. The Trinity splits right down the middle and shows us that the very nature of God has such implications. The nature of God is such that He’s always existed in personal distinction. There has always been the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, distinct in Person, and yet in a relationship of love. There is individuality and yet there is oneness. And what happens in both extremes is, like in the west, we become more and more isolated because we’re more and more individualistic. In the east, you have ridiculous ideas like Buddhism, that the goal of life is nirvana. The goal they’re working for, the most faithful Buddhist in meditation and trying to discipline their lives, the goal they’re looking for is to lose their own personal identity into the massive oneness of the universe. That’s their goal. They lose themselves as a part of the one. But the doctrine of the Trinity says you don’t lose yourself when you become part of the one. In fact, in the doctrine of the Trinity, Jesus is fully Himself. The Holy Spirit is fully Himself. The Father is fully Himself. They delight in each other as distinct individuals, yet there is perfect oneness of purpose, perfect delight in each other.

I mean, as I've talked about as we go through John, I just was mentioning earlier how the Holy Spirit wants to glorify Jesus. Jesus wants to glorify the Father. The Father looks down from Heaven and says, "Look at My Son. Look at My Son." He's glorifying Jesus. He's ordained that Jesus had the preeminence, that Jesus received the Name that is above every other name. The Father wants Jesus lifted up. Jesus says, "Look at the Holy Spirit." This glorious oneness of purpose does not mean that there's not unique individuality. And we're created for that. We're wired for that, and sin has distorted it in the west and the east so that we're going off the track. But understanding it correctly brings us back.

The nature of the relationships of the Trinity, there is perfect transparency in the Trinity. The Father knows the Son. In fact, Jesus says that. "No one knows the Son except the Father. No one knows the Father except the Son. You guys don't know us, but we know each other. We know everything about each other." There's perfect transparency, no need to hide anything, and yet perfect transparency, this unique diversity. The Holy Spirit does things that Jesus doesn't do. The Father does things that Jesus doesn't do. They have different roles and functions, and yet they delight in each other. The Father delights in the Son. That's why He looks down at Jesus when Jesus is being baptized, and remember when Jesus was baptized, and He comes to John the Baptist to be baptized, and John the Baptist says, "I can't baptize You. I need to be baptized *by* You." Remember that, what Jesus said? He didn't say it this way, but he said basically, "Yeah, you're right in one sense, but this is necessary to fulfill all righteousness." What was He saying? "I know that in reality I don't need to be baptized, because baptism is about repentance, and I don't need to repent. You're right, but you see, I came to identify with sinful people that I'm going to purchase back, and they need to repent, and I need to identify with them fully so that I can be their Savior. So it's necessary, to fulfill the righteous plan of God."

When the Father looks at Jesus doing that, it's as if the Father, it's like a dad watching his son play ball, or watching his daughter play ball, and they say, "That's my girl! That's my boy!" It just wells up and it comes out. That's the way the Father said it. "This is My Son whom I love, with whom I'm well pleased." He's saying, "This is My Son. I love Him so much. I'm so pleased with Him." That's the genuine love of the Father for the Son. And whenever you get Jesus talking, He's saying, "I want to tell you about the Father. He is so wonderful, so incredible. He is perfect righteousness. And let me tell you about the Spirit. Don't worry. The Holy Spirit is coming, the Spirit of truth. He's going to lead you into all truth. He's going to take you to places that I have not taken you."

When the Spirit comes, what does He say? “Let Me talk to you about Jesus Christ. He’s everything that you need. Now, think about that. I want you to think with me for a moment about how we relate as people, when we find the greatest fulfillment. Isn’t it funny, I’ll give you an example. I love good comedians, and now in You Tube you can watch jokes online and stuff. Tim Hawkins is one of my favorites. He’s got some times where he’s not as good as others. But anyway, I watch Tim Hawkins sometimes and his jokes are so funny. Why is it that I want to share that with somebody else? Why is it so important for me to say, “Patti, you’ve got to see this?” And we watch it, and then we laugh together. You see the shared experience is better than the individual experience? Sharing something, God has made us to want to share.

When your child does well in something, like I said, they did well, and so you say, “That’s my boy,” but when you get home you say, “Son, that was so well done. You did such a good job on the task I gave you, the job I told you to do. You did so well.” When that happens, isn’t there something—our hearts are thrilled, because what’s happening? Two individual people with diverse personalities, diverse personal beings, are united in purpose and in agreement, and that is the most enriching experience in the world. This is why people pay extra money to go watch a game they could see better at home on TV. I don’t think that’s a good trade. I think that’s a bad trade. I think it’s better on TV, and you can just watch it with some people at home, right? Not by yourself. It’s much better with somebody, but it doesn’t have to be 75,000 people. Let’s just do it with four. But there’s something about even like something happens and you talk about it. Like I said, maybe there’s this joke you saw, and you saw it, and somebody else saw it, but when you talk about it, it’s better in the talking about it. You go back and look at it later and you say, “That really wasn’t that funny. But when we were talking about it, man, it was so rich,” because God made us for relationship.

That’s what the doctrine of the Trinity means. Relationships are the most important thing in the world, because God has always existed in a relationship. The essence of who He is, is relationship, where different Persons know one another. And when you have more transparency, the Spirit comes along to teach us how to do this. “I want to teach you what God is like, and then I want to teach you to have relationships among yourselves like that, where you can have more transparency, and you can appreciate the diversity, and you’ll have unity.” When you have that, you have everything, and that’s what Heaven is going to be. You’re not going to melt into just the background in Heaven. I mean, there are going to be a lot of people in Heaven, but our God is a great God, and He’s going to know you.

In fact, there's a verse in Revelation 2 or 3 when he's talking to the churches, and he says that He's going to give you a rock with a name inscribed on it for you, which only you and the Lord know. Think about that. The Savior is going to look at you, and there's something that you share with Him that He shares with no one else. But you're not jealous. You don't need to be. Isn't it wonderful that He has a rock for them too? That's the glory of who God is.

So the Spirit is given to lead us into these things. He is our Guide, our Teacher, to show us the wonder that this is what life's all about. And we don't need to be stressed out about the fact that we don't know. We feel like we're so far below what we need to. Just get in His word and look at Christ. That's what the Spirit does. He wants you to keep looking at Jesus, but trust in the power, and working, and the faithfulness of the Holy Spirit.

Let me just share one other thing about how the Holy Spirit helps us. He helps us to learn to pray. This is the role and ministry of the Holy Spirit. This is how He helps us to begin to commune with God. Prayer is communion with God. He helps us in understanding the word of God. That's knowing God and hearing from God. And then He helps us in speaking to God, because His role is to unite us into the oneness of the Godhead. Romans 8:26-27 says that often we don't know what to pray. It's in the context of suffering. We're suffering and we don't even know what to pray. We don't know what to say. We don't know how to even vocalize what's going on in our hearts, and it says that the Spirit Himself groans within us with groans that are too deep for words. And He knows the mind of the Father, and the Father knows the mind of the Spirit, and so He intercedes for us according to the will of God. That is, He prays for us, and in us, and through us. It's His ministry.

In fact, in the Old Testament, they prophesied in Zechariah 12:10 that God would pour out His Spirit, and when He poured out His Spirit, He says, "The Spirit of grace and of intercession," the Spirit would teach us how to truly intercede, how to pray. I'm going to teach a Bible Study in a couple of weeks starting on Wednesday night. I've been working on this subject of prayer, and it is so encouraging the stuff that the Lord has been doing in my life as I've been trying to study on this, because the Elders felt like we need to talk about prayer, not so we could talk about it, but to do it. The title of my series is going to be *With the Spirit in the School of Prayer*. Andrew Murray wrote a book *With Christ in the School of Prayer*. I'm going to teach on *With the Spirit in the School of Prayer*, and one of the things that's been very helpful to me is to look at the Puritans and what they said about the role of the Spirit in teaching us to pray. This is the one you have with you.

You worry about your prayer life. Well, you should be concerned, and I've had to be concerned at times when my life is too prayerless. I've thought, "Why am I not praying more? Why am I not thinking of God more?" Well, look at Christ and trust in the work of the Spirit. Get in the word and fellowship. But listen to what he says. John Bunyan writes this about his own struggles with prayer, and how the Spirit has to help you learn to pray. Bunyan writes:

May I but speak my own experience, and from that tell you the difficulty of praying to God as I ought. It is enough to make you poor, blind, carnal men to entertain strange thoughts of me.

He's talking like preaching a sermon. He says, "Listen, if I tell you how hard it is for me to pray, you poor, blind, carnal men are going to think really bad things about me." That's what he's saying.

For as for my heart, when I go to pray, I find it so loathe to go to God, and when it is with Him, so loathe to stay with Him.

He's saying, "When I go to pray, I find my heart not wanting to go, and when I get there to God, I don't want to stay."

I find it that way so that many times I'm forced in my prayers first to beg God that He would take mine heart and set it on Himself in Christ, and when it is there, He would keep it there. Nay, many times I know not what to pray for. I'm so blind. Nor I don't know how to pray. I'm so ignorant. Only blessed be grace, the Spirit helps our infirmities (Romans 8:26). Oh the starting holes that the heart hath in time of prayer.

And what has to happen to really make you pray is you have to become aware of two things. You have to become aware first of all of your incredible poverty and need. We will pray because we must pray. To discipline yourself to pray is a good thing, but realize that really what you need to ask God for is an awareness of your poverty, so that I can't make it through this next hour without praying. Life is so hard that I have no choice but to pray. Martin Luther, it was said, that when things were really tough for him, when he had a lot of burdens on him, he would get up extra hours early, not to get started on his work, but to have extra hours in prayer. That is right. It's counterintuitive, but it's right.

You have to know your need. Lord, I need You so much. And who is it that teaches you that? The Holy Spirit teaches you that. He brings you to see your—even like Bunyan was saying—my heart doesn't want to pray. Why is that? And when you find that, what should you do? You don't run away and quit praying. Say, "Lord, please help me. Look at my heart. I don't want to pray." Even as you go to prayer, "I don't want to, Lord. Help me." You have to see first of all your absolute poverty and sinfulness, but secondly you have to understand that you're going to your Father. In your poverty, in your sinfulness, in your dirtiness, in your weakness, what do you need? You need to go to your Father. And what is the Spirit's role but to teach you that He's your Father? Galatians 4:6 says this:

Galatians 4:6 ~ Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

"Daddy, Papa!" Because you truly are sons, God has sent the Spirit, and the Spirit comes into your heart, and what He wants to do in your life is make you cry out, "Daddy!" to God. He wants you who see your sinfulness, who see your own aversion to prayer, to be able in that moment to run to your Daddy, because you need Him so much, and that's the ministry of the blessed Holy Spirit. He wants to unite us to God, to make us enjoy the oneness of fellowship with Him, and He will teach us to pray. He will teach us to pray, and He will teach us to walk, and He will be with us each step of the way, and He will teach us more and more the wonder, and glory, and majesty of all the beauty of God, all the sublimity that is in God. It's the Holy Spirit who teaches you how beautiful God is, so that the things of this world become less and less attractive. It's the ministry of the Spirit.

You say, "I'm looking at my life. I look at my life and I see the pull of the world." Well, you may need to stop doing some things. You may need to cut some things off, but don't despair, and don't run away and try to fix yourself. Let the Holy Spirit help you run to God. Understand that seeing your need and seeing your poverty is part of the plan. That's evidence of His work in your life. Isn't that encouraging? When you see how bad you need Him, that's evidence of Him working. That's the wonder of who God is. When you have the Holy Spirit, you have everything. That's what Jesus was saying to the disciples. "You have no need to despair." When you have the Spirit of the living God, you have the Spirit of Christ, you have the Spirit of God. You have Jesus and you have the Father all in the package of the Holy Spirit.

Now, the question is, do you know God? Because if you don't know God, you don't have the Holy Spirit. If you've not been saved, if you've not gone to Jesus, if you've not repented of your sins and believed in Him for salvation, you do not have the Holy Spirit. But the good news is that today you can receive the Holy Spirit. Only go to Christ. Look to the cross. Jesus' death is payment for our sins, His resurrection proving that His offering was accepted. He is the Redeemer. He is the Savior. Go to Him and receive the blessing of His Spirit whom He sends as our Comforter and our Helper.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer...

Father, we thank You for the glory of who You are. We thank you that every family in Heaven and on earth derives its name from You, from the eternal heavenly family—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Lord, we confess our own hardness of heart, our slowness of mind, our need for You to capture us, and focus us on what really matters. Let us see that there's nothing more precious than to know and love You, nothing more blessed than to experience fellowship with You. Lord, help those who are here who have not come to You, today to stop fighting against You, and to surrender to Jesus Christ. And for those of us who belong to You, but have not been seeking You as we ought, cause Your Spirit to cry out within our hearts, "Abba Father," so that You will be more the delight and the joy of our souls. We pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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