

Receive \* John 14:15-17, 26-27; 15:26-27; 16:5-15  
March 17, 2024 \* Langford Community Church \* Graham Gladstone

When I was a kid, I had a really hard time learning how to tie my shoes. People told me how to do it – something about a rabbit and a loop and shoving the rabbit through the hole – but I just couldn't get it. I couldn't wrap my head around it so I wore Velcro shoes for a long time.

But I remember one day with my grandma Gladstone, pretty sure I was at her house, she sat me down with a shoe in her lap and a shoe in mine and said 'Ok, let's do this together.' And she walked me through it and showed me how to do it and for the first time ever, I managed to tie my shoes.

Now, I think that part of the reason I got it was that my grandma was ambidextrous and did it differently from everyone else, but I think that she came alongside me and walked me through it and helped me to understand what to do.

And according to Jesus in our Scripture today, that's what the Holy Spirit does too. When we put our faith in Jesus, He sends us the Holy Spirit to come alongside us to help us and counsel us and enable us to grow.

So turn with me to John 14:15 and I'll show you what I mean. John 14:15. We're actually going to look at a couple of passages today because Jesus keeps coming back to the Holy Spirit in His Last Supper talk but we'll begin in John 14. John 14:15.

So we're still at the Last Supper. Jesus is telling His disciples how to be His followers even when He's not physically with them and in John 14:15, Jesus says:

15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command.  
16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--  
17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you" (Joh 14:15-17 NIV).

This is Jesus' plan for helping His followers even when He's not physically present – He will ask the Father and Father will give us the Holy Spirit.

Now Jesus tells us some very important things about the Holy Spirit here.

1. The Spirit is given to all those who follow Jesus. That's verse 15. 'If you love me and obey what I command, the Father will send you the Spirit.' Who are 'the people love and obey Jesus?' It's us. It's Jesus' followers. The Father sends the Spirit to those who live for Jesus, which means that if you're living for Jesus, the Father has sent the Spirit to you. The Spirit is given to all those who follow Jesus.

2. The Spirit is not just a force that God has sent you. I remember the first time somebody talked about the Holy Spirit as 'Him' and it threw me for a loop. As a kid, I thought the Holy Spirit was like a power or something, like the Force in Star Wars, but no, it says right here – the Holy Spirit is a Person. Verse 17 – 'The world cannot accept Him because it neither sees Him nor knows Him.' It would be like saying 'You cannot accept my computer because you do not know HIM.' That doesn't make any sense – HIM – implies personhood – so the Father has sent a Person to you.

And 3. Not just any person, the Father has sent Himself to you in the Person of the Holy Spirit. This is the Trinity in action – the Son asks the Father and the Father sends the Spirit to us. Father, Son, Holy Spirit, all God. And did you notice, verse 16 – 'He will give you 'another' Counsellor' – 'another?' – who's the first? It's Jesus. Which means that the Holy Spirit picks up and continues the work that Jesus was doing when He lived on earth. Through the Holy Spirit, God Himself comes to us.

4. And He comes to us not just for flashes of insight now and then. Verse 17, through the Son, the Father sends the Holy Spirit to be with us and in us permanently. God Himself lives within you through the Person of the Holy Spirit if you love and follow Jesus.

So to recap: 1. If you love and follow Jesus, the Father has given you the Holy Spirit. 2. The Holy Spirit is a Person, not a thing. 3. The Holy Spirit is in fact God and 4. If you love and follow Jesus, then God dwells in you through the Person of the Holy Spirit.

Which leads us up to the big question – why? What does the Holy Spirit do as He lives in us?

Well, there's a lot to this answer, but verse 16 gives us a good introduction. And specifically one word in verse 16: And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another \_\_\_\_ - what?

The word that Jesus uses here is tricky to get a handle on. (*Paraklete* – not parakeet). It's literally 'one who comes alongside' which is why I used that language in my intro – grandma 'came alongside' to help me; the Holy Spirit likewise comes alongside to help us.

How exactly does He help us? That's why there are so many different words used to describe the Holy Spirit; it's because Bible translators are trying to accurately capture everything that's tucked into that one very important word.

Think for a minute about all the things that a mother does – caretaker, counsellor, comforter, taxi-driver – what ONE word would you use to describe everything a mother does? 'Mother.' In English, we've assigned that word 'MOTHER' to that whole collection of activities; we just don't have a similar word for the whole collection of things that the Spirit does.

Which is why we have so many different translations trying to get at an accurate meaning for *paraklete*. The ESV is Helper – which is a good, broad overall description – the Holy Spirit helps us – by being a 'counsellor' – that's the NIV – guiding and giving direction. The KJV and the

Living Bible - He comforts us – that's true. I think that the newest version of the NIV uses 'Advocate,' the New Living Translation and the NET Bible use that too, which is helpful, because there *is* a legal aspect to the work of the Spirit, where the Holy Spirit intercedes for us for us before God.

But I actually think there's a specific use of 'advocate' in English that gets close to capturing everything that Jesus intended to say when He said it and it's this – do you know what a patient advocate is?<sup>i</sup> At a hospital? This is someone who is intended to guide people through the complicated process of getting the medical care that they need. It can be difficult to navigate all the specialists and forms and appointments you need, let alone get around the hospital! And so a patient advocate is someone who intercedes for and stands up for patients in the health care system; this is someone who reminds people of what they need to do and where they need to be – and that's a pretty good summary of what the Holy Spirit does.

The Holy Spirit is an advocate in that sense that He helps us and guides us and intercedes for us in all of life.

So if you love and live for Jesus, you have the Holy Spirit in you to help and guide and intercede for you in all of life.

So that's Jesus' introduction to the Holy Spirit in John 14, but as I said before, Jesus kept coming back to the Spirit again and again. John 14:26 He talks about the Spirit, John 15:26 He talks about the Spirit and then John 16:5-16 Jesus expands our view of the Holy Spirit even further. John 16 He explains further how the Spirit works in us AND how the Spirit works in the world. That's a helpful expansion so let's flip over to John 16:5.

5 "Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'  
6 Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief.

Now just a quick aside – real quick. "None of you asks me 'where are you going?'" That seems to be a strange thing for Jesus to say, because in John 13:36 Simon Peter literally asked him, "Lord, where are you going?" There are about a million explanations for this, but it seems that the best way to understand it is to say that Jesus knew what was really going on in their hearts and recognized that Peter wasn't really asking 'Where are you going?' He was asking 'Why are you leaving?' From Peter's point of view 'who cares where Jesus is going?' All he knows is that Jesus is leaving and he wants to know why. I think that makes sense given verse 6 here. They're not really thinking about where Jesus is going; they're only concerned with why Jesus is leaving, which is why 'they are filled with grief.' They're don't want to be left alone but Jesus knows He's NOT going to leave them alone.

And you can see that in verse 7 – 16:7:

7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

Jesus I'm sure feels the pain that His disciples are feeling, but He realizes two things. If He stays with His disciples 1. He'll never die as a sacrifice for their sin and 2. He can only be WITH them and given the physical limitations of a human body, He can only be WITH them some of the time. If He goes away though, then the Spirit comes to believers and then it's not just God WITH us but God IN us to live for Him. And we'll see in a minute how the Spirit works IN us, but first Jesus wants to tell us how the Spirit works in the *world*.

Because yes, the Spirit comes to each believer, but the Spirit also works in the hearts of those who don't believe. There is one caveat - 14:17: 'the world cannot accept Him because it neither sees Him nor knows Him,' but eventually, if worldly people are willing, they *will* sense the Spirit at work and they may just trust in Jesus and receive the Spirit for good. Verse 8:

8 When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:

9 in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me;

10 in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer;

11 and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

When the Holy Spirit comes into the world, He starts working on hearts. He starts nudging our consciences and showing us that what the world calls 'right' isn't always right.

I remember when I was in university, this is exactly what He did. I grew up in the church but then got to university and thought 'I'm a big boy now; I don't have to go to church,' but I couldn't shake the sense that something wasn't right. I kept having these moments of 'Is this all there is?' and 'If the world says this is ok, so why do I feel so guilty?'

You know what that was?

That was the Holy Spirit in me convicting me of sin, revealing to me my need for a Saviour.

That was the Holy Spirit shining a light on my 'so-called' righteousness so that I realized I was nowhere near as righteous as Jesus when He went into Heaven.

That was the Holy Spirit pointing out to me that judgment was coming and I'd be in trouble if I kept on living the ways of the world.

That was the Holy Spirit at work in me doing exactly what Jesus said He does in John 16. That was the Holy Spirit showing me that I was a sinner in need of saving and Jesus was a Saviour full of grace.

By that grace, I turned from sin to trust in Jesus and when that happened, the Father sent the Spirit to live in me forever.

As a part of the world, He convicted me of sin; but when I believed, He started making me more like Jesus. You can see that in verse 13:

13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

14 He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.

15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you (Joh 16:5-15 NIV).

This is how the Spirit takes us from the sinful life we used to live and makes us more like Jesus.

Verse 13 - He guides us into all truth. He shows us what's truly right and truly wrong and helps us to choose the way that Jesus would.

Verse 14 - He takes Jesus' words and makes them known to us; another verse from the Last Supper is helpful here: John 14:26, Jesus says: "...the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you." That means that at any given moment, the Holy Spirit in us can call to mind the things that Jesus said when He was on earth. He might remind us when we want to lash out at a co-worker 'Love your neighbour as yourself' or tell us 'Let not your heart be troubled' when things go wrong. This is the Holy Spirit bringing to mind Jesus' words so that we can live like Him.

He guides us into truth, He reminds us of Jesus' teaching, He shows us what is to come. That's verse 13 too. In a sense, I think that this means that the Holy Spirit helps us to apply Jesus' words as they apply today, but I also think it means that the Holy Spirit reminds us of the blessings to come that Jesus promised so that we'll persevere in every situation. When we were driving to Florida and eight hours away I was thinking 'ugh will this ever end' but I consciously tell myself 'we'll get there and it will be good, just keep pressing on.' The Holy Spirit does that too reminding us that we'll get there and it'll be good so just keep pressing on.

So what does the Spirit do? The Father sends the Holy Spirit to convict the world of sinfulness and to lead us into Christlikeness – that is, He shows the world their sin and makes US more like Christ.

Given that, what do I want you to do about it? Well, two thoughts in one sentence:

Receive the Spirit and let Him make you more like Jesus.

First, receive the Spirit. If you've been living like the world and sensing something deeper than your conscience saying 'this isn't right,' that's the Holy Spirit at work in you to reveal your sin and the grace of Jesus. It's not easy to admit that need but I'll tell you, when I stopped trying to prop up my own righteousness and instead let Jesus' goodness cover my heart, it was the biggest relief in the world. I felt like a brand new person. So turn from sin, trust in Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit to minister His grace to you.

And I'll say, just for those of us who have been following Jesus for a while, know that the Spirit *is* in YOU. Now I know that we're not an overly charismatic church so we don't make as much of the Holy Spirit as some churches do, but this is an objective, Bible-rooted reality – if you love and obey Jesus, God has sent the Holy Spirit to live in you and to lead you. Receive Him. Recognize Him. Spend some time in Romans 8 where Paul tells us a lot about the Spirit in us – how He leads us (Romans 8:5-6, 14) and intercedes for us in prayer (8:26-27) and confirms that we really are God's children (8:16). Take time to listen to Him and lean on Him and know that He is in you to guide you into Christlikeness.

So receive the Spirit and let Him lead you into Christlikeness.

Some people call the Spirit the silent partner in the Trinity because as Jesus says in 16:13 – “He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears... 14 He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.” The Spirit's job is to point us to Jesus, to lead us into truth, to remind us of Jesus' words and to make us more and more like Him.

Sometimes we get hung up on the flashy aspects of the Spirit – gifts and tongues and miracles – but on a very fundamental level, the work of the Holy Spirit is in the daily grind, making us more like Jesus.

Let Him do that. Listen to Him when He brings the words of Jesus to mind. Spend time in the Word so that Jesus' words are there in the first place! Let Him come alongside you and remake you in the image of Jesus.

Receive the Spirit and let Him lead you into Christlikeness.

Shortly after Julie and I were married, we had friends who asked us to house-sit their house for them. We said ok, figuring it would help them out. When we got there to look around, they had left notes for us on how to take care of things. COPIOUS NOTES. Like, here's the alarm code and here's the wifi, but also 'only use plastic utensils on our frying pans' and 'make sure there's milk in the fridge for us when we come home.'

When Jesus left us, He didn't do anything as impersonal as a list of do's and don'ts. Instead, He sent a part of Himself to us to empower us to live in God-honouring ways. Receive His Spirit, and let Him lead you.

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<sup>i</sup> “A person who helps guide a patient through the health care system. This includes help going through the screening, diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up of a medical condition, such as cancer. A patient advocate helps patients communicate with their health care providers so they get the information they need to make decisions about their health care. Patient advocates may also help patients set up appointments for doctor visits and medical tests and get financial, legal, and social support. They may also work with insurance companies, employers, case managers, lawyers, and others who may have an effect on a patient’s health care needs. Also called patient navigator.” <https://www.cancer.gov/publications/dictionaries/cancer-terms/def/patient-advocate>