

Wiersbe Bible Exposition Commentary

JOHN 14:15-31

We must pray in loving obedience (v. 15). When you love someone, you honor his or her name; and you would never use that name in a demeaning manner. *Love* is an important theme in the Gospel of John; it is used as a verb or noun a total of fifty-six times.

We Have the Holy Spirit (John 14:16–18)

Jesus had a great deal to say about the Holy Spirit in His Upper Room message, for apart from the help of the Spirit of God, we cannot live the Christian life as God would have us live it. We must know who the Holy Spirit is, what He does, and how He does it.

The Holy Spirit is given two special names by our Lord: “another Comforter” and “the Spirit of truth.” The Greek word translated “Comforter” is *parakletos* and it is used only by John (14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 John 2:1). It means “called alongside to assist.” The Holy Spirit does not work instead of us, or in spite of us, but in us and through us.

Our English word *comfort* comes from two Latin words meaning “with strength.” We usually think of “comfort” as soothing someone, consoling him or her; and to some extent this is true. But true comfort strengthens us to face life bravely and keep on going. It does not rob us of responsibility or make it easy for us to give up. Some translations call the Holy Spirit “the Encourager,” and this is a good choice of words. *Parakletos* is translated “Advocate” in 1 John 2:1. An “advocate” is one who represents you at court and stands at your side to plead your case.

As “the Spirit of Truth,” the Holy Spirit is related to Jesus, the Truth, and the Word of God, which of itself is the truth (John 14:6; 17:17). The Spirit inspired the Word and also illumines the Word so we may understand it. Later on in this message, Jesus will explain the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Since He is the “Spirit of Truth,” the Holy Spirit cannot lie or be associated with lies. He never leads us to do anything contrary to the Word of God, for again God’s Word is truth.

If we want the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, we must seek to glorify Christ; and we must make much of the Word of God. When you compare Ephesians 5:18–6:9 with Colossians

3:16–4:1, you will see that both passages describe the same kind of Christian life—joyful, thankful, and submissive. To be filled with the Spirit is the same as to be controlled by the Word. The Spirit of Truth uses the Word of truth to guide us into the will and the work of God.

The Holy Spirit abides in the believer. He is a gift from the Father in answer to the prayer of the Son. During His earthly ministry, Jesus had guided, guarded, and taught His disciples; but now He was going to leave them. The Spirit of God would come to them *and dwell in them*, taking the place of their Master. Jesus called the Spirit “another Comforter,” and the Greek word translated “another” means “another of the same kind.” The Spirit of God is not different from the Son of God, for both are God. The Spirit of God had dwelt *with* the disciples in the person of Jesus Christ. Now He would dwell *in* them.

Of course, the Spirit of God had been on earth before. He empowered men and women in the Old Testament to accomplish God’s work. However, during the Old Testament Age, the Spirit of God would come on people and then leave them. God’s Spirit departed from King Saul (1 Sam. 16:14; 18:12); and David, when confessing his sin, asked that the Spirit not be taken from him (Ps. 51:11). When the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost, He was given to God’s people to remain with them forever. Even though we may grieve the Spirit, He will not leave us.

The way we treat the Holy Spirit is the way we treat the Lord Jesus Christ. The believer’s body is the temple of the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19–20), so what he or she does with that body affects the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Spirit wrote the Word of God, and the way we treat the Bible is the way we treat the Spirit of God and the Son of God.

The world cannot receive the Spirit because the world lives “by sight” and not by faith. Furthermore, the world does not know Jesus Christ; and you cannot have knowledge of the Spirit apart from the Son. The presence of the Spirit in this world is actually an indictment against the world, for the world rejected Jesus Christ.

The word translated “comfortless” in John 14:18 means “orphans.” We are not alone, abandoned, helpless, and hopeless! Wherever we go, the Spirit is with us, so why should we feel like orphans? There is no need to have a troubled heart when you have the very Spirit of God dwelling within you!

We Enjoy the Father's Love (John 14:19–24)

“The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us” (Rom. 5:5). Orphans feel unwanted and unloved, but our Father shares His love with us. Jesus explained a threefold manifestation of God's love.

There was a past manifestation to the disciples (vv. 19–20). John 14:19 focuses on His resurrection and post-resurrection appearances to His disciples and other believers. The last time the world saw Jesus was when Joseph and Nicodemus took Him from the cross and buried Him. The next time the world sees Him, He will come in power and great glory to judge lost sinners.

John 14:20 centers especially on the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost and the oneness of the believers with their Lord. Jesus returned to heaven as the exalted Head of the church (Eph. 1:19–23); then He sent the Spirit so that the members of the body would be joined to their Head in a living union. Believers today, of course, did not see Jesus after His resurrection or in His ascension, but we are united to Him by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

There is a present manifestation of Himself to believers (vv. 21, 23–24). Note the repetition of the word *love*. If we treasure His Word and obey it, then the Father and the Son will share Their love with us and make Their home in us. The word translated “abode” in John 14:23 means “make our home” and is related to “mansions” in John 14:2.

When the sinner trusts Christ, he is born again and the Spirit immediately enters his body and bears witness that he is a child of God. The Spirit is resident and will not depart. But as the believer yields to the Father, loves the Word, prays, and obeys, there is a deeper relationship with the Father, Son, and Spirit. Salvation means we are going to heaven, but submission means that heaven comes to us!

This truth is illustrated in the experiences of Abraham and Lot, recorded in Genesis 18 and 19. When Jesus and the two angels visited Abraham's tent, they felt right at home. They even enjoyed a meal, and Jesus had a private talk with Abraham. But our Lord did not go to Sodom to visit Lot, because He did not feel at home there. Instead, He sent the two angels.

Our experience with God ought to go deeper and deeper, and it will as we yield to the Spirit of Truth and permit Him to teach us and guide us. If we love God and obey Him, He will manifest His love to us in a deeper way each day.

There will be a future manifestation when Jesus Christ returns (v. 19). Judas (not Iscariot) recalled that Jesus had said He would not manifest Himself to the world (John 14:22). But this seemed to contradict other statements He had made, such as recorded in Matthew 24:30. His question was, “What has come to pass that You are no longer going to reveal Yourself to the world?” Has there been a change in the divine plan?

Jesus had been rejected by His own people, so He could not manifest Himself to them. In fact, it was an act of mercy that He did not manifest Himself to the world, because that would have meant judgment. He has revealed Himself to His church and left the church in the world to be a witness of God’s love. He is patiently waiting, still giving lost sinners opportunity to repent and be saved (2 Peter 3:1–10). One day He will return (Rev. 1:7) and the world will behold Him.

One of the best ways to ease a troubled heart is to bathe it in the love of God. When you feel like an “orphan,” let the Spirit of God reveal God’s love to you in a deeper way. Charles Spurgeon said, “Little faith will take your soul to heaven, but great faith will bring heaven to your soul.” Your heart can become a “heaven on earth” as you commune with the Lord and worship Him.

You Have His Gift of Peace (John 14:25–31)

Shalom—peace—is a precious word to the Jewish people. It means much more than just the absence of war or distress. *Shalom* means wholeness, completeness, health, security, even prosperity in the best sense. When you are enjoying God’s peace, there is joy and contentment. But God’s peace is not like the “peace” that the world offers.

The world bases its peace on its *resources*, while God’s peace depends on *relationships*. To be right with God means to enjoy the peace of God. The world depends on personal ability, but the Christian depends on spiritual adequacy in Christ. In the world, peace is something you hope for or work for; but to the Christian, peace is God’s wonderful gift, received by faith. Unsaved people enjoy peace when there is an absence of trouble; Christians enjoy peace *in spite of trials* because of the presence of power, the Holy Spirit.

People in the world walk by sight and depend on the externals, but Christians walk by faith and depend on the eternals. The Spirit of God teaches us the Word and guides us (not drags us!) into the truth. He also reminds us of what He has taught us so that we can depend on God's Word in the difficult times of life. The Spirit uses the Word to give us His peace (John 14:27), His love (John 15:9–10), and His joy (John 15:11). If that does not calm a troubled heart, nothing will!

Again, Jesus assured them that they would see Him again (John 14:28). Why rejoice because He returned to the Father? Because His return made possible His wonderful intercessory ministry on our behalf, our great High Priest in heaven (Heb. 2:17–18; 4:14–16). We have the Spirit within us, the Saviour above us, and the Word before us! What tremendous resources for peace!

In John 14:30–31, the Lord named two of our great spiritual enemies—the world and the devil. Jesus overcame the world and the devil (John 12:31), and the devil has no claim on Him. There is no point in Jesus Christ where the devil can get a foothold. Since we are “in Christ,” Satan can get no foothold in the believer's life, unless we permit it. Neither Satan nor the world can trouble our hearts if we are yielded to the “peace of God” through the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus said “My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28), He was not denying His own deity or His equality with God, for then He would have been contradicting Himself (John 10:30). When Jesus was here on earth, He was necessarily limited by having a human body. He voluntarily laid aside the independent exercise of His divine attributes and submitted Himself to the Father. In that sense, the Father was greater than the Son. Of course, when the Son returned to heaven, all He had laid aside was restored once again (John 17:1, 5). Jesus showed His love for the Father (and for the world) by voluntarily going to the cross. He did not hide or flee. He willingly laid down His life. He and the disciples may have left the Upper Room at this point (John 14:31) so that what Jesus said from that point on was spoken on the way to the Garden. Or, they may have arisen from the table and lingered awhile as He instructed them. We can easily imagine the allegory of the vine being given as they walked that night through the vineyards.

His own perfect peace assures us that He alone can give true peace. Jesus was always the Master of the situation, and He enables us to take control of our lives as we surrender to Him and receive His legacy of peace.¹

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, [*The Bible Exposition Commentary*](#), vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 352–354.