

This morning we are going to be learning about the ministry of the Holy Spirit from John’s Gospel.

Understanding the Holy Spirit is both essential for a Christian and challenging.

It is essential because without the Holy Spirit you will not be able to follow Jesus.

It is challenging because the Holy Spirit seems to us both mysterious and inaccessible.

I know who the Father is. Calling God “Father” makes sense to me.

I know who Jesus is. Calling Him Messiah, the Son of God, the Word of God, Savior all makes sense too.

But what or who is a spirit? How is He holy? And how do I relate to the Spirit?

The reader of the Old Testament is already familiar with the Spirit of God.

But it is not until we get to the New Testament and the words of Jesus that we realize that the Spirit is a person.

He is God. He is spirit. He is distinct from the Father. He has personality, will, intellect.

The Spirit of God is a “He.”

He is not a what or an it.

He is not like a ghost or an angel.

He is God Himself, the third person of the Trinity.

There is God the Father, Jesus His Son, and the Holy Spirit of God.

Not three gods, but one God in three persons from eternity past existing forever.

The Spirit of Truth is sent by Jesus from the Father to help us follow Jesus.

He is sent into the world, sent to you if you belong to Christ, to help you follow Jesus.

We are now in the midst of Jesus’ Upper Room Discourse.

This is His lengthy and intimate teaching with His disciples right before His suffering and death.

It begins with His washing the disciples’ feet in chapter 13 and ends with the High Priestly Prayer of chapter 17.

Several themes dominate this message of Jesus:

1. Jesus’ relationship with His Father.
2. The importance of obeying Jesus in order to glorify the Father.
3. The certainty of persecution and the difficulty of following Jesus.
4. The identity and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

You might say that it is the Holy Spirit who makes these other themes understandable and doable.

Jesus introduces the Holy Spirit in **John 14:16-17**.

Here Jesus calls Him “Another Helper.”

NIV, “advocate”

KJV, “comforter”

Other translations, “counselor”

So, when this happens it is a clue that here is a word that is difficult to translate into English.

We simply do not have a word for the Greek term “paraclete.”

Literally, the word means someone who comes alongside to help, counsel, comfort, and coach.

Maybe the best translation, if you are an athlete, would be that last word, “coach.”

And it is significant that Jesus here calls the Spirit of Truth, “another coach.”

Another? Who is the first coach? Well, quite obviously that is Jesus.

So, the Spirit of Truth is going to be given by the Father to be someone who takes over where Jesus left off.

The Holy Spirit is NOT the Father or the Son. (vss. 16)

He is “another Helper (comforter, coach).” This means that He’s not the same as the others.

We have a stunning picture of the relationship between the Father, Son, and Spirit in **Mark 1:9-13**.

The Holy Spirit is a person, like the Father and the Son.

He is called “He” = 3rd person singular masculine personal pronoun.

We see this 7 times in chapter 14 and 10 times in chapter 16.

This is particularly significant as the Greek noun translated “Spirit” = “Pneuma” = spirit, breath, wind, air.

This Greek root is where we get the English word pneumatic = operated by air or gas.

And this noun is neuter... calling for a neuter article and neuter pronouns. (gender, French, Spanish)

So the use of the masculine here is striking in its violation of the usual grammatical form.

I am sure that this is done to make a point.

The Spirit of Truth is not an it, a thing, an idea, a way of thinking, a tool, something I use.

I don't use Him! He uses me.

He has “will.” 1 Cor. 12:11

He has emotion. Eph. 4:29-32, Acts 5:3-4

He has initiative, “leading” us. Rom. 8:14, Acts 8:29

Jesus again tells His disciples what will happen in **John 14:25-26**.

I think this is the only thing Scripture tells us that the Father does in the name of the Son.

So now, in John 15:26, Jesus revives His previous teaching about the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit.

I. The Spirit of Truth is God, sent from the Father, to testify about Jesus. John 15:26-27

Again the Spirit is called “paraclete,” helper, counselor, comforter, advocate, coach.

And Jesus tells His disciples again that the Spirit will be sent by the Father and the Son, Jesus.

Actually, in verse 26 Jesus says that the Spirit of Truth “proceeds” from the Father.

This is a strange way of speaking.

But it describes exactly what we saw at Jesus' baptism. The Spirit comes from the Father in heaven.

So the Spirit is sent out from the Father and the Son, and what does He, the Spirit of Truth, do?

Well, right away we are suspicious that it might have something to do with truth.

After all, this is the principal way that Jesus refers to the Spirit throughout John's Gospel.

And, right away, we are not far off.

We read of two missions, here in John 15:26-27, of the Spirit as He goes out into the world.

1. He will testify about Jesus. (vs. 26end)

2. He will make these disciples testify as well. (vs. 27)

You might say that here is the principal work of the Spirit of Truth in this world.

He tells us about Jesus, revealing Jesus through the Scriptures and helping us understand Jesus.

And then He helps us to tell others about Jesus.

You probably have already discovered that talking about Jesus is difficult.

It feels out of place in this corrupt and sinful world.

It meets opposition from Satan who does not want anyone to talk about Jesus.

Bringing up Jesus often threatens relationships and makes people uncomfortable.

Paul explains in Romans 1:16 that he is “not ashamed of the gospel.”

He instructs Timothy to not be “ashamed” of the gospel. Why does he say these things?

It is because the gospel can make us feel ashamed if not for the witness of the Spirit of Truth.

II. The Spirit of Truth is the Helper who keeps us from falling away. John 16:1-4

Jesus tells His disciples that He is telling them all this “so that you will not fall away (stumble).”

Why? Because it is going to get really difficult in this world to be His witness.

Right now I have friends on the other side of the world who are enduring persecution.

The local people and authorities have accused them of trying to convert people.

They have now been threatened with beatings, arrest, and prison.

Why would people do this to sincere, kindhearted, loving people who love Jesus?

Well, right here in verse 2, Jesus tells us. They don't know the Father or Jesus.

This is how this world is. *The martyr William Tyndale, who gave us the English Bible, said, regarding his persecution, “I never expected anything else.”*

Why did Tyndale say this? Because of what Jesus says in verse 4.

Jesus has told us all what to expect as we talk about Jesus in this world.

Now, how does this relate to the Spirit of Truth?

There is a clue just how in verse 1. When all these difficult things begin to happen, the Spirit helps us.

He is our helper, our coach, like Jesus.

First, the Spirit of Truth helps us to not fall away. We will see later on just how He does this.

But for now, it is enough to recognize the testimony of the Spirit about Jesus (15:26)

The Spirit tells us again and again who Jesus is and what He says.

And, next the Spirit helps us to know what to do and say in these horrible moments of persecution.

Matthew 10:16-20 The Spirit of Truth will give you what you are to do and say.

So, with the help of the Holy Spirit you will be able to endure, witness, and be faithful until the end.

He is your helper, your coach.

Between recovering from surgery and the success of Illinois in the tournament,

I probably watched too much NCAA basketball in March.

One game one of the Illinois players, a forward, was getting really frustrated.

The other team had found a way to irritate him by pushing him around and other shenanigans.

After one shenanigan the poor Illinois forward lost it and gave the other guy a shove. Foul.

That didn't help the Illinois player.

So, coach Underwood sat him down on the bench. After about a minute coach went over to talk to him.

You could see the kid there nodding. Coach finished, patted him on the shoulder, and let him think.

He went in again in about five minutes and was focused, frustrated, and played his game.

That's what the Spirit of Truth does for us. He talks to us using the words of truth, Scripture.

When we are under duress, He sits us down and helps us to refocus.

He helps us to see the distractions, temptations, dangers, discouragements, and to follow Jesus through them all.

III. The Spirit of Truth is better for us than having Jesus physically present.

John 16:5-7

It is at this point that maybe a few of the disciples were thinking, "Jesus you are really off your nut."

"There is no way that it is good for us to have you leave. Not a chance."

"How will we follow You if you are not here?"

But Jesus is saying that it is better for them because, when He goes away, He will send the Spirit, the helper.

Hm. If I were a disciple there, I still might not be convinced.

Why is it better that we have the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, with us rather than Jesus physically present?

There is a remarkably simple answer: The Spirit can be with each of us all the time.

Jesus was only in one place at one time.

The Spirit of Truth can be the presence of God with all of us all the time. That is amazing.

And this is going to have an immense impact on the entire world, beyond the physical presence of Jesus.

IV. The Spirit of Truth convicts the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment.

John 16:8-11

To understand what Jesus is saying here it is essential to read these verses in their context.

The Spirit of Truth convicts the world regarding sin, righteousness, and judgment. But how?

You see, this is what the Spirit will do when He comes.

Where, or rather, to whom does He come?

The world? No.

The Spirit comes to those to whom the Father sends Him.

Who is that?

It is to those who follow Jesus.

How does this work?

Well, the Spirit of Truth comes to those to whom the Father sends Him, and they are born again.

Their lives are transformed by the work of the Spirit, they learn to listen to Jesus, to follow Jesus.

And does God snatch them up, right out of this world?

Nope, He doesn't. We keep living right here, though we are saved. Have you ever wondered why?

It is because the Spirit of Truth in us is at work convicting the world through us. How? In three ways:

1. “concerning sin” = People don’t think they sin. Or they think sin is unimportant.
Or they know they do sin and don’t want to think about it!
And along comes little you, and you live out your life right next to them.
You know that you are a sinner and that God hates sin and that sin messes up people’s lives.
And sometimes you might say just that. Or you might say nothing, but they know you are thinking it!
I’ve actually had people say to me, “I know that you think I am a sinner.”
That is the conviction of the Spirit of Truth.
2. “concerning righteousness” = This means the opposite of sin, what is right and the right way to live.
Righteousness is God’s way to live. This world sees little of this, righteousness.
Until little you comes along, filled with the Spirit of Truth, reading your Bible, praying, and what else!
That’s when they say, “You and your perfect little family, you think you are so great!”
And I think, wow, if only you knew how unperfect we are.
But we are trying to live according to righteousness in the power of the Spirit.
It makes people in the world uncomfortable. That is the conviction of the Spirit of Truth.
3. “concerning judgment” = **Hebrews 9:27** Many people hate this doctrine.
They do not like the idea of judgment and hell. Who would? Judgment and hell are for Satan.
No one in the world wants to think about sharing in that. They don’t think about it.
Until little you comes along, and here you are warning people you love about judgment and hell.
Sometimes you might not need to say a word.
My brother said to me about 15 years ago, “I know you think I’m going to hell.”
“What?” I said, “I never said that to you!”
“Well,” he responded, “Do you?”
Why would he ask that? It is the conviction of the Spirit of Truth.

The Holy Spirit living in you will bring conviction to this lost corrupt world wherever you go.
Sometimes just your presence will remind people of sin, righteousness, or judgment.

V. The Spirit of Truth helps us understand what Jesus says.

John 16:12-15

Recall Jesus’ teaching in **John 14:25-26**.

Now, in John 16:12-15, Jesus tells us with greater depth just how this works.

Now, to be sure, Jesus is telling His disciples that the Spirit will help them understand and write Scripture.
But the Spirit of Truth carries out this ministry in our lives, not in writing Scripture, but in understanding it.

“He will guide you into all truth” = The Spirit of Truth leads us in our understanding of Scripture, the Bible.

He will speak what Jesus says. (vs. 13) This is really important.

The Holy Spirit rarely tells us things that are not in Scripture.

The Holy Spirit never tells us things that are inconsistent with Scripture.

Beware the guy who comes along and says, “the Spirit told me...” and then speaks nothing like the Bible.

“He will glorify Me” = He always causes us to think about Christ, and what Jesus Christ says.

We listen to Jesus. We pray to Jesus. We talk about Jesus.

This is why we are suspicious of those who claim to hear the Spirit and then draw attention to themselves.

“He will speak... and will disclose to you...” = disclose means to uncover, to speak, to reveal.

In verses 13, 14, 15 Jesus uses this word three times.

The Spirit reveals to us things that Jesus says, that are there in the Word! Study!

If you are not in the Bible, reading, studying... then the Spirit of Truth has nothing to work with in you.

1 Corinthians 2:6-13 The Spirit understands the thoughts of God. He is God.

Then, using God’s words, He discloses these thoughts to us so that we understand them and obey them.

So, the Spirit of God uses the Word of God

so that the children of God become like the Son of God for the glory of God.