



The Gospel of John

Session 30: Jesus's Teachings at the Last Supper, Part 2

THE LESSON AT A GLANCE

You'll notice in today's lesson that we skip a substantial portion of text. We'll circle back and explore John 15:1-25 next week and examine one of Jesus's essential teachings about abiding in Him. We'll also find the seventh, and final "I am" statement.

Today, we're examining Jesus's teaching on the Holy Spirit, and how He dwells in the hearts of believers. In John 16:7, Jesus told the disciples it was better for Him to leave so that the Spirit could come. His words likely confused the disciples, who couldn't imagine anything better than Jesus's real, physical presence.

The Holy Spirit abides in every believer all the time, helping, sustaining, and growing us to be more like Jesus. Discuss ways in which the Spirit moves and speaks in your lives.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURES

John 14:15-31; John 15:26-16:15

THE MAIN IDEA

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to guide, comfort, and advocate for believers, calling them to respond with loving obedience.

QUESTION TO EXPLORE

How does the Holy Spirit help us to live in loving obedience to God?

SCRIPTURE IN CONTEXT

John 14:15-26 The Holy Spirit, our Counselor, guides us toward love and obedience. Jesus told the disciples that if they loved Him, they would keep His Word. The Spirit enables us to follow Christ's teaching and remains with believers forever.

John 14:27-31 The Holy Spirit, our Comforter, allows us to experience Christ's peace. The world tries to give us peace that is incomplete, fleeting, and insufficient. Christ's peace is perfect, permanent, and sufficient to keep us until we are with Him for eternity.

John 15:26-16:15 The Holy Spirit, our Advocate, bears witness to the truth of Christ, convicting sinners and drawing people to God. In the lives of believers, the Spirit seals, helps, intercedes for, sanctifies, grows fruit, and gives gifts to help the body of Christ.



START HERE

How would you describe the Holy Spirit to an unbeliever? He (never “it”) is the third Person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit, *paraklētos* in Greek, shares the same attributes as the Father and Son, yet He is often spoken of hesitantly, and with some uncertainty. It’s often easier to describe the Father or describe Jesus whom we see in the New Testament, than to describe the Holy Spirit, who remains, for many believers, somewhat of a mystery.

Even the disciples failed to understand Jesus when He spoke of the Spirit’s arrival. They couldn’t grasp the gift that Jesus would send after His resurrection and ascension. Today, questions remain about how the Holy Spirit comes into our lives, fills us, and gifts us for ministry. While belief in the Holy Spirit and His work is an essential doctrine of our faith, articulating His role remains a challenge.

English translations of Scripture differ on how to translate *paraklētos*. Some translations, like the Christian Standard Bible use “*Counselor*,” others prefer “*Comforter*,” and yet others “*Advocate*.” The variety of languages reinforces a central idea—the Person of the Holy Spirit is too large and too wonderful to be fully contained by any one human word. He is—like the Father and Son—beyond our complete understanding.

DISCUSS

If you were to describe the Holy Spirit in just one word, what would you say? Why is any title we give Him incomplete?

ADDING CLARITY

John’s Gospel pays much attention to the Holy Spirit. Several passages teach about the nature and role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church and the individual believer (14:15-31; 15:26; 16:7-15).

REVIEW AND DISCUSS THE TEXT

1. Loving Jesus demonstrates obedience and is guided by the Counselor—the Holy Spirit.

John 14:15-26: *“If you love me, you will keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive him because it doesn’t see him or know him. But you do know him, because he remains with you and will be in you.”*

“I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Because I live, you will live too. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, you are in me, and I am in you. The one who has my commands and keeps them is



the one who loves me. And the one who loves me will be loved by my Father. I also will love him and will reveal myself to him."

Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it you're going to reveal yourself to us and not to the world?"

Jesus answered, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. The one who doesn't love me will not keep my words. The word that you hear is not mine but is from the Father who sent me.

"I have spoken these things to you while I remain with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you."

Unpacking John 14:15-26

You've probably heard some version of this saying: *"Life (or marriage, or parenting) doesn't come with an instruction manual."* Thankfully, believers in Jesus have both. Scripture is our instruction manual (2 Timothy 3:16-17), and the Holy Spirit is our guide (John 16:13). We are not alone as we live the Christian life.

Yet, on the evening of Jesus's arrest, the disciples were probably feeling a lot less certain. Jesus repeatedly told them He would die, and in John 14 He said He would be leaving them to return to the Father. With no written New Testament yet to instruct them, the disciples likely anticipated an uncertain future. How would they remember Christ's commands, let alone be able to carry them out? Life without Jesus would seem impossible.

In verses 16-17, Jesus gave a couple of startling promises: *"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive him because it doesn't see him or know him. But you do know him, because he remains with you and will be in you."* First, Jesus would give them Someone to help them follow His commands—the Counselor. Second, this Counselor would lead them in truth. And third, the Counselor would be seen (perceived) and known by believers but is hidden from unbelievers. Finally, the Spirit would not come *on* people as He did in the Old Testament (Judges 6:34; 1 Samuel 16:13; Ezekiel 2:2) but would dwell *within* them. Jesus's promise was an altogether new and wonderful thing!

Jesus promised that He would not leave the disciples (v. 18), even though shortly the world wouldn't be able to see Him any longer (v. 19). How could that be? Jesus used the relationship He has with the Father to describe the relationship He would have with His people. *"On that day you will know that I am in my Father, you are in me, and I am in you"* (v. 20). Just as Jesus lives in a perfect, permanent relationship with the Father, we will remain in a perfect, permanent relationship with God through the Counselor—the Holy Spirit.



In verses 21 and 23, Jesus emphasized that obeying His commands is an indicator of our love for God. We cannot say we love Him and repeatedly ignore His commands. As John Stott wrote, *“The mark of genuine love for Christ is not sentimental feeling but practical obedience.”* When we obey God, He continues to reveal Himself to us. By contrast, in verse 24, Jesus said that the one who did not love Him would not keep His words. Obedience is the fruit of relationship.

“I have spoken these things to you while I remain with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you” (vv. 25-26). The disciples would not have to live on their own, and neither do we. In fact, we can't. We need the Holy Spirit living in us to be able to love and obey God to begin with. The Holy Spirit does not only teach us how to love God and obey His commands, but the Holy Spirit reminds us of the truths we already know. Loving Jesus is demonstrated through obedience and is guided by the Counselor—the Holy Spirit.

DISCUSS

- According to John 14:15-26, how did Jesus connect love and obedience?
- What tends to motivate your obedience to Christ—love, duty, fear, or something else?
- What is one specific command of Jesus that you sense the Spirit prompting you to obey more fully this week?

2. Jesus gives peace through the presence of the Comforter.

John 14:27-31: *“Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Don't let your heart be troubled or fearful. You have heard me tell you, ‘I am going away and I am coming to you.’ If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. I have told you now before it happens so that when it does happen you may believe. I will not talk with you much longer, because the ruler of the world is coming. He has no power over me. On the contrary, so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do as the Father commanded me. “Get up; let's leave this place.*

Unpacking John 14:27-31

Some English translations of *paraklētos* use “Counselor” to describe the Holy Spirit, and others use “Comforter” to characterize the presence and work of the Spirit in the life of a believer. While Jesus didn't use the word *paraklētos* in these immediate verses, the promise of His continued presence through the Holy Spirit framed the entire passage. The disciples could have peace, precisely because He was giving them the Spirit to dwell in and among them.

The promise of God's peace is all throughout the Old Testament. This peace or “*shalom*” meant more than just freedom from their enemies, it represented completeness, soundness, and welfare. God's shalom brings quiet, tranquility, and contentment. It refers to peace in human



relationships, peace with God, and peace from war. It is tied to our covenant relationship with God through Christ, who is our peace (Ephesians 2:14).

God's shalom is part of the high priestly blessing in Numbers 6:22-26, where Aaron prayed for Israel: *"May the LORD bless you and protect you; may the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; may the LORD look with favor on you and give you peace."*

In Isaiah 26:3, the prophet wrote, *"You will keep the mind that is dependent on you in perfect peace, for it is trusting in you."* As the disciples contemplated Jesus's departure, they were indeed in need of God's shalom, keeping them in peace as they trusted in Him.

What the disciples could not yet realize is that Jesus's shalom would be more than protection from their enemies or even a sense of tranquility. Jesus's shalom would arrive through His sacrificial death and resurrection. *For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile everything to himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross* (Colossians 1:19-21). The enduring shalom that the disciples, and indeed all believers experience, comes not from sentimentality, but from Christ taking our sin upon Himself and purchasing peace with God on our behalf.

"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Don't let your heart be troubled or fearful" (v. 27). Jesus could leave His peace with the disciples because He would purchase their peace with God on the cross. Shalom belongs to Christ and is His to give away. We experience Christ's peace, which Scripture says passes all understanding, as we pray and seek God (Philippians 4:6-7).

Christ's peace doesn't mean we won't have trouble, rather that Jesus is with us in our difficulties. After His arrest, the disciples would face troubles of all kinds. Yet, Christ pointed them toward Himself, offering a real and lasting peace that looks different than the fleeting kind of peace the world offers. Sheila Walsh, in her book, *It's Okay Not to Be Okay*, said, *"Peace is not the absence of trouble but the presence of Christ."*

The Comforter brings peace because peace is a fruit that the Spirit inherently grows. Galatians 5:22-23a says, *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."* The fruit of the Spirit is not the fruit of effort; rather the fruit of abiding. As we abide in Christ and walk in step with the Spirit, the fruit of peace grows in us and extends to others through us.

"You have heard me tell you, 'I am going away and I am coming to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I" (v. 28). Jesus reminded the disciples that He was going away, by His death on the cross, and He was coming back for them in His resurrection. Because of His death, we have peace with God (Galatians 5:1) and because of His resurrection, we will experience the peace and joy of our eternal relationship with Jesus, who is our peace (Ephesians 2:14).



"I have told you now before it happens so that when it does happen you may believe. I will not talk with you much longer, because the ruler of the world is coming. He has no power over me" (vv. 29-30). Jesus also reminded them that His departure was part of God's greater plan. Though the disciples felt loss, Jesus pointed them toward the ultimate victory of what lay ahead. The ruler of the world was coming but had no power over Him. Jesus was not tricked into the cross. Jesus willingly laid His life down and would take it up again (John 10:17-18). Even in the face of the cross, Jesus spoke with confidence and peace. The Spirit would comfort the disciples in their grief and loss and would remind them of His promises after His resurrection.

In the same way, we can have confidence in our circumstances. *"Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:6-7). Like the disciples, Jesus promises us His peace. The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, is one of the ways we receive and experience Christ's peace no matter life's challenges.

DISCUSS

- *How did Jesus describe the difference between His peace and the world's peace?*
- *When you feel anxious, what do you typically turn to for peace?*
- *How can you intentionally rely on the Spirit's comfort this week instead of external circumstances?*

3. The Holy Spirit, our Advocate, convicts, testifies, and guides.

John 15:26-16:15 *"When the Counselor comes, the one I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father—he will testify about me. You also will testify, because you have been with me from the beginning."*

"I have told you these things to keep you from stumbling. They will ban you from the synagogues. In fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering service to God. They will do these things because they haven't known the Father or me. But I have told you these things so that when their time comes you will remember I told them to you. I didn't tell you these things from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going away to him who sent me, and not one of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' Yet, because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don't go away the Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment: About sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me; and about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged."

"I still have many things to tell you, but you can't bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. For he will not speak on his own, but he will speak whatever



he hears. He will also declare to you what is to come. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. Everything the Father has is mine. This is why I told you that he takes from what is mine and will declare it to you."

Unpacking John 15:26-16:15

While some English translations for *paraklētos* use Counselor or Comforter, the Greek also has another definition: the Advocate. Jesus expanded on the Spirit's ministry by describing Him as an advocate, who would testify about Him (John 15:26). The Spirit would bear witness to the truth of Christ, and the disciples, empowered by the Spirit, would also testify. This partnership highlights the Spirit's role in advancing the gospel through believers.

In John 16:1-6, Jesus painted a picture of what the disciples could expect after His death. While Christ's resurrection secured our spiritual and eternal peace, it did not usher in unilateral peace in all circumstances. Jesus warned the disciples what to expect, saying, *"I have told you these things to keep you from stumbling. They will ban you from the synagogues. In fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering service to God. They will do these things because they haven't known the Father or me. But I have told you these things so that when their time comes you will remember I told them to you. I didn't tell you these things from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going away to him who sent me, and not one of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' Yet, because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart."* Jesus's death and resurrection would not be an end to the religious leaders' disbelief and destruction, rather just the beginning. Jesus said things would get worse for the disciples after His death, and He wanted them to be prepared. But how?

The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, would come in Christ's place. In fact, Jesus said it was better if He went away, because then the Spirit would come (v. 7). Then, Christ pointed out three important roles of the Advocate, not in the life of believers, but in the presence of unbelievers: *"When he comes, he will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment: About sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me; and about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged"* (vv. 8-11).

The Spirit lives in the hearts of believers, but works on the lives of unbelievers, drawing them to salvation. The Advocate convicts people of their disbelief in Christ. Jesus called this *"blasphemy against the Spirit,"* a sin that will not be forgiven (Matthew 12:31-32). Salvation comes through Christ alone, so those who stubbornly refuse the Spirit's leading to repent and turn to Christ will die in their sins. Jesus said the Advocate would also convict people about righteousness—each person will have to decide for themselves what they believe about the person of Jesus. Those who attempt to achieve righteousness apart from Christ will stand condemned by the Spirit's judgment. Finally, the Advocate will convict about judgment because Satan stands judged already. The Holy Spirit will convict and ultimately condemn those who blindly follow Satan's schemes rather than turning to Christ, who is *"the resurrection and the life"* (John 11:25).



Jesus reminded the disciples that they would not have to face the uncertainty of life after His death alone: *"I still have many things to tell you, but you can't bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. For he will not speak on his own, but he will speak whatever he hears. He will also declare to you what is to come. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. Everything the Father has is mine. This is why I told you that he takes from what is mine and will declare it to you."* (John 16:12-15)

The Holy Spirit is our Counselor, Comforter, and Advocate. He convicts believers of sin, drawing us near to God for repentance (John 3:5-8). He seals us for the day of redemption (Ephesians 1:13), indicating our permanent, irrevocable status as God's child. The presence of the Spirit baptizes us into God's family at the moment of salvation (Titus 3:5). The Spirit helps us to pray (Jude 1:20) and even intercedes on our behalf (Romans 8:26-27).

The Holy Spirit also sanctifies and sets believers apart and leads us in righteousness (Galatians 5:16-18). He grows fruit in our lives as we abide in Christ (Galatians 5:22-26) and gives believers gifts to use in God's service (1 Corinthians 12:4). He also helps us discern God's will (1 Corinthians 2:10-11). Not only these, but unlike Jesus, who, in His physical body could only be physically in one place at a time, the Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of all believers always. No wonder Jesus told the disciples it was better if He went away so the Spirit could come!

Francis Chan, in his book about the Holy Spirit, Forgotten God, said, *"The truth is that the Holy Spirit is a person . . . He is alive, active, and present in the lives of believers."* The Spirit is not an it, but a who—the third person of the Trinity, and the promised gift of Christ after His death and resurrection. Through the Holy Spirit, we do not just have God among us, but God within us, saving, sealing, and sanctifying people until the day of Christ.

DISCUSS

- *What three areas did Jesus say the Spirit would convict the world about?*
- *The Holy Spirit convicts us too, as part of our sanctification process. How have you experienced the Spirit's conviction or guidance in your life?*
- *How can you be more intentional about partnering with the Spirit in sharing the truth about Jesus?*



DEEPER FOCUS

REFLECT ON THE TEXT

DISCUSS

- How does your daily life reflect loving obedience to Christ?
- Where might the Holy Spirit be prompting you toward greater obedience now?

RESPOND TO THE TEXT

- How has the Spirit in you allowed you to experience Christ's peace?
- What needs to get quieter in your life in order to hear the Spirit's voice more clearly?

APPLY

What would it look like to depend more fully on the Spirit as Counselor, Comforter, and Advocate this week?

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