

**The Word Became Flesh**  
**Week 46**  
**John 15:26-16:7**  
**“The Ministry of The Holy Spirit (Part 1)”**

**Introduction**

**“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. John 14:15-17”**

As Jesus prepares His disciples for the crucifixion and the chaos that will follow, He reminds them to “abide in Him”, so that they can bear much fruit to the glory of God (**John 15:1-8**). He explains to them that as long as they stay in communion with Him, He personally guarantees that they bear this fruit, which is a reference to the “Fruit of The Spirit” (**Galatians 5:22**). Jesus Himself will see to it that His followers bear spiritual fruit. All that is required of the Believer is that they stay in communion with Him (The True Vine).

As He continues on His way to the Mount of Olives, He expounds upon this communion that His disciples would have in Him. If He were “going away”, as He told them He was, then how would they be able to stay connected to Him? How would they be able to bear this “fruit” He promised, if they were unable to produce it without Him? The answer to these questions is by the indwelling of the promised “Comforter”, Who would come after Jesus was gone. He would establish a permanent connection between the Believer and Christ. He would be our “connection” to The Vine. For it is The Holy Spirit of God that enables us to obey the commands of Christ, and thereby, “remain in His love” (**John 15:10**). Were it not for the indwelling Holy Spirit, we would fail miserably at this thing we call “The Christian Walk”.

**I say, then, walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don’t do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Galatians 5:16-18”**

I believe that many Christians today have a difficult time understanding the powerful ministry of The Holy Spirit. Many on the “charismatic” side teach that He is “showy” and dramatic in His dealings with a Believer. They mistakenly believe that He causes them to exhibit grandiose behavior that draws attention to the Believers themselves. I firmly believe that nothing could be further from the truth. For the ministry of the Holy Spirit is NOT to glorify the Christian, but instead, to glorify The LORD Jesus Christ. He would **never** take the spotlight off of Jesus in order to put it on you or me, my friends. This is simply **NOT** His purpose for coming to us.

The opposite end of the spectrum, in today’s more “frozen” congregations, is that they simply avoid any meaningful influence from The Spirit whatsoever. They try and “do church” in the flesh. Jesus has warned us that **apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5)**. So the church that is resistant to the Spirit’s control will be dead as a doornail as a result. So where is the balance? What exactly does The Holy Spirit do in us? And what does it mean to be led by Him?

For the next few weeks, we will attempt to answer these questions, as we continue our study in The Gospel of John. Jesus lays out for us the ministry of The Holy Spirit, Who is our Comforter that comes alongside us so that we can follow Christ and bear “much fruit”. Today we will begin to delve into the ministry of The Holy Spirit. For *The Bible* tells us everything that we need to know about Who He is and how He operates within the Believer. Today, we will see three phases of His ministry according to Jesus. The Spirit brings to us *The Ministry of Exaltation, Exhortation, and Expediency*.

**Ministry of Exaltation (vs. 15:26)**

***“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.”*** **John 15:26**

The first thing that we must address as we look at these words of Christ is the structural integrity of the Godhead. Notice that The Holy Spirit is not introduced here as “some thing”, but rather, as “He”. He is a person and not a thing. And He is a living being, as well as, an equal part of The Trinity. Also it is imperative that we see God The Father, God The Son, and God The Holy Spirit **all** as equal and unified. Jesus says that it is He Himself, Who will send The Spirit Who “proceeds” from The Father. The Greek word used here means to “go forth”. The Spirit, Who is alongside The Father, will be sent from Christ to come alongside of us! That is a powerful promise. He is *from* God, sent *by* Christ, *to* us. Can you see now, the perfect union and equality of The Trinity? Jesus has just laid it out for us, so that there can be no question.

Once we understand this concept of unity within The Godhead, we begin to examine the role or “ministry”, if you will, of The Holy Spirit. First we notice Who it is that The Spirit has come to exalt.

***“He will testify about... ME.”***

**John 15:26**

The primary ministry of The Holy Spirit is to glorify The LORD Jesus Christ. Let us be clear in this. He does not come to glorify Himself. And He most certainly does not come to glorify us! He has come to lift up the Name of Christ. The reason being that Christ has surrendered Himself to suffer on our behalf in obedience to His Father.

***For this reason (the submission of Christ to His suffering) God highly exalted Him and gave Him the Name that is above every name, so that at the Name of Jesus every knee will bow — in heaven and on earth and under the earth — and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God The Father.***

**Philippians 2:10-11** (with added clarification)

So bearing this in mind, how does The Spirit of God respond if we, as followers of Christ, do *anything* in any way to take the focus off of Jesus to draw attention to ourselves? Answer: It grieves The Spirit of God. Pure and simple. This has never been, and never will be, about glorifying us. It is about Christ, and Christ alone. The mission of The Holy Spirit is to bring testimony about Jesus. He *doesn't* even draw attention to Himself, even though He too is an equal member of The Godhead. He places **all** emphasis on The Son. Period. End of discussion. So, if you claim to be led by The Spirit of God, then you will do everything to keep all the glory going in the direction of The Son of God.

And this is why I am so opposed to the so-called “charismatic” movement, where individuals seem to be far more concerned with showing how spiritual they have become, rather than pointing to Christ, the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith! I know full well that this statement will be offensive to some, but I can only go by what I read in the Scriptures for my defense. If it glorifies you, then it is of the flesh, but if it glorifies Christ, then it is being directed by The Spirit. This may not be popular, but it is most certainly Biblical. Remember that your flesh is in a constant struggle to glorify itself, but The Spirit has come to lift up Christ.

So, if you or I do anything in a church service that causes people to see us and not The Christ, then we just had “church in the flesh”. And church in the flesh is a colossal waste of time, **for apart from Christ we can do NOTHING**. We have not been chosen to glorify our flesh, but rather, we have been called to crucify it (**Galatians 2:20**). So, first and foremost, we must learn that the ministry of The Holy Spirit is to exalt the Name above all Names. And that Name, my friends, *is* and *shall always be*...Jesus.

**Ministry of Exhortation (vs. 15:27-16:4)**

**“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.”**

**John 15:27 - John 16:1-4**

Once we understand the “prime directive”, if you will, of The Spirit, then we understand our role in helping to carry out His mission here on earth. He is *in* us so that we can effectively bear witness of Christ. We are to be living testimonies to the Name of Jesus. We bear witness to His glory, by sharing His gospel and His love. And we can only do this as we are led of The Spirit. It is The Spirit Who fulfills in us the promise of Christ that we will bear fruit for the glory of God.

And as we go out to bear witness to the Name of Christ our LORD, we must be fully cognizant of the fact that because this world hates Him, we will be hated as well. But The Spirit will give us the strength that we need to carry out the mission. He will keep us from stumbling. The world will do everything in its power to stop us, but we will not be stopped, as long as we are led by The Spirit. The gospel is an offensive weapon wielded against the very strongholds of the enemy.

**“But you.” He asked. “Who do you say that I AM?” Simon Peter answered. “You are The Messiah, The Son of The Living God.” Jesus responded. “Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.”**

**Matthew 16:15-18**

Once again, the Spirit of God enables us to proclaim with power exactly Who Jesus is, and that His gospel is unstoppable. This world may hate us, but they cannot overpower us, as long as we live by The Spirit. Do you feel like a failure today? Then crucify your flesh and be led by The Spirit, and you will testify to the glory of The Name of Jesus. We must learn as a church to get ourselves out of the way so that The Spirit can work.

Our flesh wants its own glory. The Spirit only wants to glorify Christ. Our flesh wants the world to love us. The Spirit causes them to hate us. Our flesh desires the “easy life”, but The Spirit leads us to a life of suffering and sacrifice, in order to lift up the cross of Christ. Our flesh may lead us to “run the aisles of the church” to show how spiritual we are, but The Spirit wants people to run to Christ and find all they need in Him. Dead people are no longer interested in having what they desire. Being dead is to be long past caring for personal ambition and aspiration. So, we must die to self, in order to be led of The Spirit.

The Spirit of God has come to reside in us, to be our guide and helper. He exhorts us to be obedient to the commands of our LORD. This is the only way that we can produce lasting fruit for His glory.

**“If you keep My commands, you will remain in My love.”**

**John 15:10a**

And we can only do this by the power of The Spirit, Who encourages (exhorts) and enables us to follow. Apart from Him, we can do nothing.

**Ministry of Expediency (vs. 16:5-7)**

***“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.”*** **John 16:5-7**

Now, first of all, we need to see how little the disciples seemed to be concerned for Jesus, and how much they were worried about themselves. There again, that is exactly what the flesh does. They had asked Jesus questions earlier regarding His leaving them, but they were only concerned about what that would mean for *them*. Not one of them had asked Him what this would mean for Him, and I believe that is why He mentions it in this passage. He knew where their focus was, but He wanted them to understand what was happening and why it was for the best.

The word that is translated “for your benefit” in the Greek is “*symphero*” (pronounced soom-fer’-o), and it means “*expedient*” (the KJV translates it correctly). It means that it is the best course of action to get a preferred result. And this is why it was expedient for Jesus to leave and for the Spirit to come. Christ spent His entire early ministry in Galilee. Although He was God, during His time on earth He was confined to a human body, meaning that He could only be in one place at a time.

Upon returning to His Father, two amazing things would take place. First, The Spirit would descend from heaven and indwell every Believer, everywhere. And second, Jesus would be at the right hand of God The Father, serving as our High Priest in heaven. He would become our Advocate up there while His Spirit would come alongside every Believer down here. This is the expedient ministry of which Christ was speaking. If He remained with His disciples, then the rest of us would not have The Comforter/ Counselor to be with us. And we most certainly need the presence of The Spirit in order to be obedient to Christ.

One of the things that I have learned over the years is that I have no earthly idea what I am doing most of the time. In my own flesh, I don’t even know what I should pray for. Because my flesh wants to ask God to do stuff... for ME. Without the direction of The Spirit, I would not even know how to pray. And even when He is guiding me, I still have that struggle between He and my flesh. That is why The Spirit will often pray on my behalf, when I do not even realize that He is doing it!

***In the same way the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to His purpose.*** **Romans 8:26-28**

So you see, a large portion of The Spirit’s “Expedient Ministry” is to communicate with God on our behalf. He lives within us, and He actually knows us better than we know our own selves. And therefore, He knows how to pray for us, when we do not have the slightest idea what we really need! Thank you Jesus for sending us The Spirit to be our Counselor, Comforter, and Friend!

These are just a few of The Holy Spirit’s Ministerial responsibilities, and there are many more that we need to understand. But know this, His primary duty is to see to it that Christ is glorified, and He does this ***through us***. And in order to enable us to bear more of the glorious “fruit”, He prays for us so that we may become even more fruitful! Jesus glorified His Father by His obedience, and now we are called to glorify Christ in the same fashion. And The Spirit enables us to do just that. Let us make it our life’s goal to be led by The Spirit of The Living God.

And let the Believer say... TRUTH!!!