

The Indwelling Spirit

John 14:12-31

The Holy Spirit is not a force, a feeling, or an impersonal effect. He is the third person of the Trinity and every blessing from God the Father, given through the Son, is applied to us by the Holy Spirit. On Pentecost Sunday we remember and celebrate that after Jesus ascended into heaven to rule at God's right hand, He poured out the Holy Spirit upon the church (Acts 2:33-35; 17-18). Not only is the Spirit upon us, but according to Jesus, He indwells us. This has profound consequences.

Greater Works than Jesus

Jesus is preparing to go to the cross and wants to prepare His disciples for what will happen to them. They will go from confusion and despair to joy and clarity, all by the work of the Spirit. It will be better for the apostles if He goes to the Father because they will be empowered to do even greater works than He does (v12). What can this possibly mean? Did the apostles outdo Him? Do we do greater miracles than Jesus did when He was on the earth? Jesus was sinless and His power was manifest, but when He ascended into heaven *as a man*, He "received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit" and then "poured out [Him] which you now see and hear" (Acts 2:33). We read the Gospels like Docetists who think that Jesus is not really a man doing things by the power of the Spirit but just God who looks like a man. He set aside His divine power to live as one of us, which is how He could grow in wisdom and stature (Lk. 2:52). Before Pentecost, the apostles struggled to understand Jesus and to minister powerfully (e.g. Matt. 17:21). But after He ascended and poured out the Spirit, the church has been doing greater works: declaring the kingdom of God in power on account of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (Acts 2:22-24, 36). The first catch was 3000 people (Acts 2:41). We're not doing greater works apart from Jesus, but greater works through Him: "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" (v14). When you pray in His name, you are asking the Father as though Jesus Himself were asking, which is why the Father hears you. Jesus will do what you ask in His name in order to glorify the Father (v13). Prayer and action go together. So pray *in Jesus' name*.

The Spirit of Truth

If we love Jesus, we keep His commandments (v15). This is never done in our own strength or in order to merit God's love, but in response to it. Jesus knew He would die, rise, and ascend, so He prayed to the Father to send another Helper who would never leave the apostles or the church (v16). The word *Helper* is translated from *parakletos*, literally "the called alongside one." It's also rendered Paraclete, Advocate, Counsellor, and Comforter, and was used in classical Greek to refer to a legal defender. The apostles would be facing all kinds of persecution and false accusations, and though the world would not receive the Spirit of truth, He would dwell with and uphold them (v17). Jesus, the spiritual father of the apostles on earth, was leaving, but He was not leaving them orphans because the Spirit would be with them (v18). Fathers speak the truth to their children, like we see in the book of Proverbs. The Spirit of truth illuminates the word of God for us, driving the loving truth into our hearts and minds. Not reading Scripture is a self-orphaning activity, a pretense of being separated from the Spirit and apart from Christ who said "I will come to you" (v18). Jesus said things that went over the disciples' heads because He knew the Spirit would later teach them and bring to mind all that He said (vv25-26). This how the apostles wrote Scripture—inspired and God-breathed by the Holy Spirit—and the way we are disciplined as read and let the word dwell in us richly (Col. 3:16).

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The Peace of Christ

Though Jesus would leave the world, the apostles would still see Him, live, and know that He is in the Father, they in Him, and He in them (v19-20). Jesus says this sight and knowledge will come through love—by keeping His commandments (v21). Judas (not Iscariot) wonders how they will be able to see Him while the world cannot, so Jesus repeats Himself and adds that He and the Father will love anyone who loves Him, and will make their home with him. Soon they would understand (v26). The worst and scariest event in the history of the world was right around the corner, and so Jesus gives and leaves His peace—one that lasts, not like the world's (v27). He commands them not to fear: "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Isn't fear natural and unable to be controlled? It seems this way, but we must go back to the truth. If we have the Advocate, Helper, Counselor, and Comforter, if the Father and Son dwell in us by the Spirit and we in Christ, if His word is written on our hearts and runs through our veins, if we lay hold on all of this and more, then how can we not be at peace? What can man do to us? Just run the worst-case scenario: what if you die? "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). Whatever gets in the way of you saying "Amen"—what about my kids?; what if I get sick?; I just want thus and such; I couldn't imagine not being able to have/do/go/be this thing—is the idol robbing you of the peace of Jesus Christ. The apostles did not need to understand all that Jesus was talking about in order to hear Him say "I am going to the Father" (v28). If they heard that, and were loving Him, they would conclude that whatever else this stuff means, it's good for them because it's good for Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the peace of Christ. If we lay hold of these truths, whatever comes to pass in this sorry world will only be another thing to trust Him through and see as part of God's plan for justice, righteousness, redemption, and glory to shine through. We will act in love, and not react in sin. He tells us these things now so that when we experience evil and hardship, and see evil done to others—even the crucifixion of spotless Lamb of God—we will believe (v29).