

Session 6

April 11, 2021

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

John 15:26-27; 16:7-15

As I mentioned a few weeks ago, the promise of the Holy Spirit does *not* mean that He did not exist prior to Pentecost or was not active before then. We see God's Holy Spirit at work in creation; in the empowering of judges, kings, and prophets; in the inspiration and revelation of Scripture; and in the work of regeneration. Yet Jesus promised an even more prominent role for the Holy Spirit following His own ascension into heaven. Here, as Jesus prepared Himself for the cross, and His disciples for His departure, He explained to them in more detail this enhanced role of God's Holy Spirit in the life of the church and the individual believer.

Proclamation (15:26-27). It should come as no surprise that the Trinity always works in concert. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were all active in creation; they were all represented at Jesus' baptism; and they were all discussed in this portion of John. Notice all the inter-related activities mentioned here. The *paraclete* (consoler, helper, advocate, intercessor) will *come to* the disciples, *sent from* Christ, *from* the Father. He is the Spirit of truth who *proceeds from* the Father but *testifies about* Christ. Just as the word *paraclete* means "advocate" in the legal sense, so the word *testify* means "to affirm," "bear witness," or "give testimony" in the legal sense. So, as the Holy Spirit affirms and gives testimony of Christ to the believer, the believer will affirm and give testimony of Christ to the world. Verse 27 reminds readers of the qualifications to testify. The Holy Spirit can testify, having been with Christ for all eternity. The disciples too can testify, having been with Christ since the beginning of His ministry. For reflection: *Charismatic churches often focus on the Holy Spirit. Yet, this text says that the Holy Spirit will focus on Christ. So, a truly spiritual church will focus on Whom?*

Conviction (16:7-11). This passage of Scripture explains two great truths regarding the Holy Spirit: First, there is the *reward* of His coming. Verse 7 is awkward if not considered in full context. Here, the Lord is giving comfort to His disciples. He is simply pointing out that His departure from them is a *good thing*. Jesus, in His bodily form, was only one in place, at one time, doing one thing. But the Spirit would grant God's *omnipresence* in a very intimate and personal way. Second, Jesus gives the *reason* for the Spirit's coming. Here, He describes explicitly the Holy Spirit's work of *conviction*. We all understand what it feels like to be convicted of sin! But in this case, it is probably better to understand the word in the sense of *convincing*. Part of the Holy Spirit's testimony will be to convince the world of who Jesus really is and the tragedy of rejecting Him. First, He will convince the world of sin (v. 8), because they do not believe (v. 9). Bible commentator Matthew Henry put it this way: "The Spirit convinces of the fact of sin; of the fault of sin; of the folly of sin; of the filth of sin, of the fountain of sin, and lastly, of the fruit of sin, (which is death)." Next, He will convict of righteousness, because "I am going to the Father and you will no longer see Me" (v. 10). This likely is a reference to Jesus' personal righteousness. The fact of His resurrection and ascension would prove to the skeptics that He was indeed the righteous and acceptable Son of God. Third, He will convict of judgement, because "the ruler of this world has been judged" (v. 11). Satan's once and for all defeat by the cross and resurrection spelled certain doom for those who, like him, reject Christ.

For reflection: *How does the personal conviction of sin differ from the concept Jesus described in these verses? How are they alike?*

Glorification (16:12-15). Reality returns to the scene in verse 12. There was so much left to say, but neither time nor their state of mind and being would permit it. Nevertheless, Jesus reminded them that the ministry would pass to them by the Holy Spirit. Because He represented truth, He would keep them firmly guided by truth. He would speak to them of what was and is...but also of what would come (see the parallel idea in Rev. 1:4, 1:8, and 4:8). And He would continue to glorify Christ to them, in them, and ultimately through them. For reflection: *How do you think the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ today? What evidence can you see of this in your own life?*