

Holy Spirit talk #1ii

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Holy Spirit talk #1i

The Spirit who leads us to Christ

Readings : John 16:4b-15

I'm so thankful for this time we have together today and I'm praying that it will be full of Comfort, Encouragement & Challenge

Aim - seeing hearers grown and strengthened in their faith and their commitment to Christ and his mission in the world.

What a privilege to spend 5 weeks thinking about the Holy Spirit from the Scriptures! I'm praying that this will be a great time of learning and growing in our knowledge of the Lord. Let's pray that this transforms us more and more into the likeness of the Lord Jesus.

Prayer

Dear heavenly Father, please grow us to be more and more like the Lord Jesus as we listen to your word. It was and is your greatest delight to glorify Him. That too is the work of your Holy Spirit in the world and in us. So please help us to do this. And we pray in Jesus' name. Amen

Introduction

It's a big ask to take on such a series and to do it justice. For we're talking about the Spirit of the living God. Who dares to pretend to be able to speak rightly of the Holy Spirit? We are mere creatures and we're thinking about the living God himself - the Spirit of the living God. Who can say how God will act and what his plans are? His ways are so much greater than ours. Jesus' words to Nicodemus in John 3:5,7-8.

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"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

There are just so many things that we can say about God and His Spirit - so many ways the Bible speaks about Him.

Let's be wary of pitting the Spirit against the Bible. "That's the Bible", you say. "The Spirit is a whole lot bigger than the Bible." You study the Bible - it takes concentration and effort. You can memorize verses from the Bible. The Spirit - well that belongs to a whole other realm.

I say that we need to be wary of pitting God against his word. For we do have true words from God in the Scriptures - we have a living word, God-breathed, inspired - or breathed out by the Spirit of God

The apostle Peter writes in his second letter 2 Peter 1:20-21

No prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

In the OT, God's Spirit was active in the world. In Exodus 35 Moses is given a blueprint for the construction of the tabernacle. Exodus 35:30-33

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30 Then Moses said to the people of Israel, "See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah;

31 and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship, 32 to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze,

33 in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every skilled craft.

In the book of Judges, we see certain individuals empowered by the Spirit to deliver God's people from their enemies. God's Spirit rushed on the young Samson and he tears a lion in pieces with his bare hands. Same thing later on when he's bound by the Philistines. He breaks free of his bonds, finds a fresh jawbone of a donkey and strikes down 1000 men. When king Saul meets a group of prophets in Gibeah the Spirit rushes on him and he prophesies among them. David, Elijah etc.

These were particular moments when God's Spirit acted upon and at times rushed upon particular people often to fulfil a particular task - very often delivering God's people from their enemies.

However the OT prophets looked forward to the Spirit age - when the Spirit would indwell all God's people. The age of the Spirit - post Pentecost. And there's a clear before and an after.

Today we're spending our time in John 14-16. This is where Jesus makes 5 clear promises about the coming of the Holy Spirit - His coming will mark the start of the Spirit age. It's a particular context - the upper room discourse. Where Jesus is speaking to the 12 (soon to be the 11 - for Judas will go out from them). Jesus speaks to them and loves them. 13:1

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13 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end

And he goes on to show his deep love for them by the act of washing their feet.

It's really important for us to get a sense of anticipation of the new age that stands right before them at this point of time - the age of the Spirit that we're now in - that we enjoy - with all its benefits. The 11, are at the very cusp of this dawning of a new age - the age of the Spirit.

Jesus himself is the Spirit filled one. John 1:32-33

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32 And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.

33 I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'

2 really important passages John 7:37-39, 12:20-24 - these are such important verses.

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37 On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' "

39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

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20 Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. 21 So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

22 Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. 23 And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

You can see that there is a before and an after. And notice particularly, the close connection between God giving His Spirit and Jesus being glorified. More about that a bit later. Today as we look at this part of John's Gospel we're looking at the most concentrated teaching on the Holy Spirit in the whole Bible - Jesus himself is our teacher.

Doctrine of Scripture

I'm not saying that Jesus' words here are somehow more important than other places where the apostles describe the work of the HS. Yes, this is the most comprehensive teaching from Jesus on the topic but we're not going to pit Jesus against the others. Jesus' teaching here takes place in a very particular context.

There is going to be much more to be said about the HS - that'll be for future weeks in the series. So please don't think that in this talk that I'm going to be able to say everything about the HS. There is however a very clear teaching by our Lord here, teaching that gives us great certainty about who the Spirit is and what he will do when he comes to the 12.

Firstly there's a word here that we need to pay some attention to:

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Paraclete - meaning Helper, Counsellor, Advocate.

Let's crack on with the 5 promises - We're going to move through them quickly. Very helpful to have your Bibles open

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Promise 1 14:15-17

15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,

17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

I want to invite you to read carefully - for throughout this whole section in John, from chapters 13-17, Jesus switches from speaking to the 11 in their particular context - which unique to them. Jesus talks about them but then in almost the same breath goes on to speak about believers in every time and place.

Take a look at verse 12 "whoever believes in me will do the works that I do We saw that back in the passage about living waters flowing from "whoever believes in me". Again and again Jesus talks about those who will believe in him, love him. In chapter 17 for e.g., he prays for the 11 but then goes on to pray for the 2nd much wider group made up of all those who will believe in him in the future. 17:20-21. **No SLIDE**

20 "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one,

Back to our the first promise then in 14:15-17. Here Jesus speaks to the 11 about the Helper coming to them and being with them forever. The beginning of the chapter - let not your hearts be troubled. They were troubled. Look at Thomas' question in 14:5. Notice that the Spirit is another Helper - Jesus himself is the first Helper. The Spirit is the other helper. Are they both going to help in the same way? Jesus doesn't say yet. He simply says that the second helper will be with them forever. And he will dwell with them and be in them. Remember, context is king. The context here is the 11 learning that Jesus is just about to leave them. And their hearts would have been thumping! Jesus is reassuring these 11 fearful men.

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Promise 2 14:25-27

25 "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you.

26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

Promise #2 builds on promise #1. Here, the Holy Spirit will not simply be with them - promise #1. He will do something. He will be their teacher, teaching them all things. And the Spirit will remind them of all that Jesus taught them. Isn't this so great to know?

You read the Gospel narratives and you see how little the 12 understood. They were with Him, they saw what he did, they heard him teach. However at the time they simply don't what to make of Jesus. Peter, who gets things so wrong - puts his foot in his mouth on multiple occasions. And yet when the Spirit comes He will remind them of Jesus' words and teach them. John 2:18-22. **No SLIDE**

18 So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" 19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

20 The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" 21 But he was speaking about the temple of his body.

22 When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

Brothers and sisters, this is not a promise to us - not in the first instance. We can't lay hold of this as a straight line from Jesus to us in our day. We're not expecting the Spirit to remind us of all that Jesus taught them. However this promise does give us great confidence in the Scriptures. Written by men - men who were weak and failed to grasp at the time, but then who through the Spirit's work in them, after his coming into the world, faithfully and accurately wrote what Jesus told them. It was not their own interpretation of the events. They were being carried along by the HS. They wrote what they had been taught and the words that Jesus had spoken to them reminded of by the HS. Not everything was captured, mind you. John 21:25. **No SLIDE**

25 Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

No everything - But all that we need.

Can you see why it would be wrong for us to look for the Holy Spirit leading us but at the same time bypassing the reading of Scripture? True, I've said that this Jesus is speaking to the 11 in their particular context. He's not saying everything about the Spirit's work in the life of the christian believer. He's not giving them a doctrine course on the HS. He's speaking to these 11 men, who are highly troubled at this moment and are in need of great reassurance given what they are just about the face.

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Promise 3 15:26-27

26 "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

The context here is the hatred of the world, that Jesus describes in 15:18-25 ****No SLIDE****

If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you...

Two witnesses are on view here. The witness of the Helper, the Holy Spirit. And the witness of the 11. They go hand in hand. You have been with me from the beginning. They are Jesus' appointed witnesses. They are the apostles whom Jesus had appointed to be his witnesses Acts 1:2. ****No SLIDE****

2 until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

Absolute tightness between Jesus, his teaching of them and that of the Helper, the promised HS

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Promise 4 16:4b-11

7 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

*8 And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:
9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; 11 concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*

Let's slow the pace a bit.

This 4th promise is so important for it describes the Spirit at work in the world. And it is the only place in the Bible where this happens. Everywhere else the HS is described as being at work in the life of the believer. He will only come if Jesus goes away.

The world in John's Gospel is not the physical, material ground - the round thing that we stand on. When Jesus uses the word "world" in John he's talking about the created order in rebellion against its maker.

What will the Holy Spirit do when Jesus sends Him to them? A. verse 8

Convicting the world. He's the prosecutor standing in court before the judge. The world is in the dock. And the 3 things of which the world is being charged are: sin, righteousness and judgement. Sin vs 9, righteousness v10 and judgement verse 11. Jesus explains the reason why each of these charges will stick - and why the conviction will stand - You're going to look at the reasons in your growth group studies. But for now it's enough for us to see that when the HS comes the world will be on trial. But note carefully will you to whom he comes. It's to the "you" - once again meaning the 11. The Spirit will do this amazing court work in convicting the world of its wrongdoing when he comes - to the 11!

Now I want to collapse the 4th promise in with the 5th. You can't separate them. On a first, superficial read the 2 promises seem to be talking about different things. But this is not the case.

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Promise #5 - John 16:12-15

12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15 All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

The Spirit will convict the world of sin - but when and how will he do this? A. By coming to the 11 and guiding them into all the truth. When the Spirit comes and glorifies the Lord Jesus. And declares to them what the Father and the Son still has to say to them.

You cannot bear them now - that is, the many things that Jesus has still to say to them. The implication is that once the Spirit comes they will be able to bear them .

Now let's slow things down even more. I've been working hard to understand verses 13-15. Jesus is saying something very important here - and it's worth trying to get your head around what he's saying here.

What will the Spirit actually speak? A. What he hears. But what does or what will the Spirit hear? What exactly he will declare to them that is still to come? The answer to these question is verse 14. He will glorify Jesus.

The "what is mine" here, that the Spirit will declare to them is what the Son shares with the Father, verse 15. That which is shared between the eternal Son and the Father.

It is the Father's delight to glorify the eternal Son. And that too is the Spirit's delight.

OK then. I wish we had more time to tease out these last verses - they are so important! Let's look at some implications of all this for us today.

Implications

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You might be cross with me as, by saying that Jesus is speaking these promises to the 11, in a way, I've kind of taken them away from us. I can't claim that the Holy Spirit is going to lead me into all the truth. Or that he will remind me of all that Jesus taught. We can't claim such promises - even though it is absolutely true that we have the Holy Spirit living in us in the same way that they did. However there's still a difference between them and us in that they were the eyewitnesses of Jesus' resurrection. And these 5 promises do land with us. We live in the age of the Spirit - in which the Spirit is powerfully at work in the world and in us.

As we place our complete confidence in the witness of the Spirit inspired Scriptures. The Bible has been under attack for centuries - its authority eroded. We can have every confidence in the NT witness of the apostles because of the promises that Jesus makes here.

By reading the Scriptures my brothers and sisters, your faith will be grounded and strengthened.

People who don't know the living God will be led to put their trust in Jesus.

The Spirit leads us to Christ. He's not going to lead us somewhere else. He won't lead us to himself. He will glorify Jesus and always bear witness to Him.

Where are you looking to see the Spirit's work in your life? It is as you glorify the Son. Is that your greatest joy and delight? For that is the Father's. When we glorify the Lord Jesus, when we speak about Him, love Him, serve Him we align ourselves with the God who made the universe.

What would it take for you or I to be ready to glorify Jesus at any cost? When it might be inconvenient or even embarrassing? Where you may find yourself silenced or stonewalled? Do your work colleagues know that you follow Jesus? Have you prayed about letting them know that you're a Christian? And then when you actually speak about glorifying Jesus in your life, know that that is a mighty work of God's Spirit acting in your and in the world.

And when we're knocked down we need to get ourselves up again and seek to glorify Jesus in our words and our actions.

It will take deep and resolute commitment on our part. But know this. Glorifying Jesus is the most significant thing we can possibly do in all of our life. And it will take a deep work of God's Spirit in our hearts. Let's pray.

Prayer

Father, thanks for the joy of knowing you as our loving heavenly Father. Help us to live to please you. Please do that work in us by your Holy Spirit in line with all your plans and purposes. Your and the Spirit's greatest delight is to glorify your Son. Help us to do that in all that we do and say. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen