

JESUS PROMISES THE HOLY SPIRIT

John 14:15-31

Key Verse: 14:23

“Jesus replied, ‘If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.’”

In chapter 14, Jesus comforts his troubled disciples. In the first part, Jesus promised them a place in the Father’s house. Jesus taught them the way to eternal life in God: Jesus is the way. In this second part, Jesus makes another promise to his disciples: the promise to send the Holy Spirit. Jesus teaches how we must live in order to receive the Holy Spirit. Jesus also tells what the Holy Spirit does for us. Today we can learn how to receive the Holy Spirit and live in his presence.

First, to love Jesus is to obey Jesus’ command (15).

Look at verse 15. “If you love me, you will obey what I command.” This teaching is repeated two more times, in verses 21 and 23. Love for Jesus is a matter of obedience. Jesus challenges our modern concept of love. We live in the time of post modernism. Man has given up the search for absolute truth and finds no meaning of life. Modern man has become very sensual. Many have decided to live for pleasure. They connect to the real world, and those around them, through feelings. Love is understood as a feeling. However, those who live by feelings lose sight of principles. They easily become irrational. They may “feel” that they love someone, yet they act recklessly and become destructive. To Jesus, love is not just a feeling. It is to treat his word as absolute truth and obey it. To love Jesus is to obey his command.

Then what command must we obey? Jesus said in John 13:34: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” What did this mean to the disciples? Soon, Jesus would leave them. They would experience the pain of his death. They would confront the open hostility of the Jews; their lives would be threatened. They would feel that their dreams were broken. They would feel that a happy family life and secure future were impossible. They might want to escape, like the two whom Christ found on the road to Emmaus. But Jesus’ command was, “Love one another as I have loved you.” It meant that they would have to think of one another instead of themselves. They would have to love one another, overcoming their feelings of misery. Peter would have to love John, and vice versa.

Love is a commitment to Jesus, his people and his work. This challenges American Christians. The great Anglican Bible scholar John Stott said that American Christianity is 3,000 miles wide and only one-half inch deep. Many bear the name Christian but do not obey Jesus’ command. Many attend churches but never commit to a body of believers in Jesus. In light of verse 15, to love Jesus is more than church attendance, or displaying a “Jesus lives” bumper sticker. It is to commit to a body of believers who are dedicated to carry out God’s mission. It is to love that body of believers with the sacrificial love of Christ.

Second, the Father will give you another Counselor (16-21).

Jesus knew that obedience to his command would be difficult for his disciples. But he would help them greatly. Look at verses 16-17a. “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth.”

Jesus would send help from the Father. Of course, this refers to the Holy Spirit. Jesus calls him “another Counselor.” The Holy Spirit would be a Counselor to the disciples, like Jesus. Jesus was really a Wonderful Counselor (Isa 9:6). Jesus understood his disciples fully (1:47). Jesus always knew what their problem was, even when they did not know. Jesus always spoke holy words which sanctified their souls (15:3). Jesus planted hope in them when they had no hope for themselves (1:42). Jesus motivated them to overcome their selfishness and learn the compassion of God as good shepherds (6:5). Jesus planted the promise of eternal life and the hope of the kingdom of God as an anchor for their souls (14:2). Though Jesus was leaving them, the Holy Spirit would take over as their eternal Counselor.

The word “Counselor” in the NIV is translated from the Greek word “Paraclete,” which has also been translated “Comforter,” “Helper,” and “Advocate.” The King James Version says “Comforter.” We usually think of comfort as emotional aid to overcome sorrow. A fuller meaning of the word is, “to be with in order to fortify or to make strong.” The Comforter would be a source of strength when they were weak. The Comforter would enable them to stand when they could not stand. The Comforter would enable them to carry out their mission victoriously overcoming all hardship. Senior Pastor Erwin Lutzer of Moody Church here in Chicago experienced the stillborn birth of a granddaughter a few years ago. It was a heartbreaking event in his personal life. Yet it motivated him to study the Bible more deeply and resulted in his book, “One Minute After You Die,” an excellent discourse on entrance into eternity. He could do this by the help of the Comforter.

Jesus stresses in verse 16 that the Counselor would be with them forever. The Holy Spirit could be with them in a way that the incarnate Jesus could not be with them.

The Holy Spirit is not limited by time and space. He would never have to leave them and go somewhere else. He could be with them forever. Moreover, he can be with many people in many places at the same time. In Revelation 1:4, Apostle John mentions the seven spirits before the throne of God. This is also translated “the sevenfold Spirit.” It expresses that the Holy Spirit was with seven churches in Asia, being in all seven places at the same time.

Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the Spirit of truth (17). In contrast, Jesus called the devil the father of lies (8:44). The lying devil leads the whole world astray (Rev 12:9). Among his many lies are the theory of evolution to deny the existence of God, the Koran to present a counterfeit to Christianity, and secular humanism to eradicate spiritual life from western culture. There are many others. We live in a world under deceit. Without help, we are easily led astray. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. He helps us discern the truth, know the truth and follow the truth.

Look at verse 17b. “The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.” The world cannot accept the Holy Spirit. At the time of Pentecost, the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples. Some worldly people witnessed it. They totally misunderstood and said the disciples had too much wine (Ac 2:13). There are many great works of the Holy Spirit in our time. Yet the world pays no attention, or totally misunderstands, because it cannot accept him. This ignorance of the work of the Spirit is to be expected from the world.

Jesus’ disciples are different. They know the Spirit, for they had lived with Jesus who was led by the Spirit. When Jesus was baptized by John, the Holy Spirit came down from heaven and remained on him (1:32,33). The Spirit led Jesus into the

desert where he confronted and overcame the temptation of the devil through forty days and nights of fasting prayer. The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus to heal the sick, drive out demons, work many miracles and preach the word of God with power. Hebrews 9:14 says, “How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God.” Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus lived in absolute purity and holiness every moment of every day of his life. When he offered himself as the Lamb of God, it was a perfect sacrifice of an unblemished nature. Thus, Jesus could say that he always did what pleased God, and that he and the Father were one. Through the holiness, purity and power of Jesus’ life the disciples knew the Spirit. Jesus promised them that this same Spirit would live in them. Here we learn that in raising disciples of Jesus, we must live a holy life by the Spirit.

Look at verses 18-20. When Jesus died on the cross, it marked the end of his public ministry. After resurrection, the Risen Christ appeared to his disciples in glory, a glory hidden from the world. When they met the Risen Christ, suddenly everything made sense to them. They realized that Jesus is God who had shepherded them perfectly. They were right where God wanted them to be. They had an inseparable and eternal bond of love with God through Jesus. This realization was the conclusion of discipleship with Jesus. They would no longer follow the human Jesus by sight, but go forth in faith, guided by the Spirit alone.

Look at verse 21. “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.” Jesus strongly emphasizes that the relationship between God, Jesus and the disciples is a love relationship. The word “love” appears four

times in this verse. Each time it comes from the Greek work “agape” which refers to God’s spiritual love. God’s love is unconditional acceptance and involves life-giving sacrifice (Jn 3:16). To know the love of God satisfies the human soul completely and transforms any person into a new creation who can love God and others and be a blessing.

We see a great change in Ilya “Living Stone” Ushomirsky. The influence of Communism taught him to trust no one, not even his immediate family members. The power of sin seized upon this and hardened his heart like a dead stone. Through compassionate shepherds he learned the love of God. He decided to live as a man of mission and marry a woman of God. It was practical obedience to Jesus’ word. He began to taste the love of God. God blessed him to marry Ruth, a most spiritual and beautiful shepherdess. Now he smiles a lot. He has become a living stone. Many people feel like orphans because they don’t know the love of God. There is no love shortage. Almighty God, who is infinite and eternal, can satisfy all people with his love. We must learn how to tap into the love of God through obedience to Jesus’ words.

Third, we will make our home with him (22-31).

Look at verse 22. “Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, ‘But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?’” Judas grasped the point: Jesus’ love would be experienced on a personal basis by those who obeyed his word. But Judas thought that Jesus should do something more than that; he thought Jesus should show himself to the world and make the whole world into the kingdom of God. We can become like Judas (not Judas Iscariot) when we wonder why God doesn’t just change the United States into a holy nation, or change us and

our sheep into holy saints right away. The underlying premise is that God should do something more.

Look at verses 23-24. “Jesus replied, ‘If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.’” Jesus tells us that there are two kinds of people in the world. There are those who love him and obey his teaching, and there are those who do not love him and do not obey his teaching. To the first kind, the love of God is bestowed. To the second kind, it is not bestowed. In other words, Jesus has done enough to reveal God to mankind. Now it is up to each person to make a decision. We can love and obey Jesus, or we can reject Jesus. Jesus will not force himself on anyone. He acknowledges the freedom of choice of all people. God is not slow in doing his work. God is patient. God waits for sinners with open arms, hoping for their repentance. It is men who are slow and hesitant to accept God’s great redeeming love. If we want to accelerate the coming of God’s kingdom, we must be more diligent in our obedience to the word of Jesus. Moreover, we must thank God for his patience.

Look at verse 23b. “My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.” God’s heart is moved by one person who obeys Jesus’ word. Though there are billions of people in the world, God shows his love to that person tangibly. God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit come into his heart and make their home. “Make their home” signify that it is intensely personal and intimate. It is also a permanent arrangement, not a short-term visit.

As the Holy Spirit dwells in us, he sanctifies our inner persons and makes us holy. He cleanses us from our sins and changes our habits and patterns until we become the kind of people he wants us to be. On Friday night David Lovi confessed that God has changed his inner man. In the past he loved hip hop music. But now he really does not like it. He cannot listen to it for 30 seconds without feeling nauseated. So he threw his CD away. Brian Annear testified that since Jesus came into his heart, he values sharing Bible testimonies on Friday nights more than going to a bar. This is not a result of legalistic willpower, but a genuine change in his inner desire. He likes to be with Jesus and Jesus' people.

When the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in our souls, he leads us on a pilgrimage of the inner man. The goal is to grow in the image of Jesus. The Holy Spirit constantly works for this throughout all the stages of our lives. This week, Dr. John Yoon will begin residency at the University of Chicago. After passing through this training, most people become proud. But Dr. Yoon can be different. Through the indwelling Holy Spirit he can simultaneously make an inner pilgrimage and grow in the humbleness of Jesus. He can learn the heart of a true physician until he can heal not only the body, but the whole man, and share Jesus' healing ministry. When the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts, we all embark on this inner pilgrimage to grow in the image of Jesus.

Anyone who lives together with others knows that it requires being sensitive toward them and making concessions. If we are willing to do this to live with other people, how much more we should do so to live with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not just another human being; the Holy Spirit is God. We must honor his presence. We must regard our bodies as his temple (1 Cor 6:19).

Look at verse 26. “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” The Holy Spirit comes in Jesus’ name. He comes to represent Jesus and to make Jesus known. He does this especially through the word of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the best Bible Teacher for us. As we have studied in John’s gospel, Jesus taught his disciples many things and sometimes they could not understand what he was telling them. But they kept his words in their minds and hearts. Later, when the Holy Spirit came, he explained the meaning and the disciples understood (Jn 2:22; 12:16). Dr. John Jun said that when he wanted to write his life testimony, he had a hard time remembering. But after earnest prayer, God gave him the Holy Spirit. Then he could remember everything and write his life testimony. We need personal time with the Holy Spirit to listen to and accept Jesus’ word.

Look at verse 27. “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” Jesus gives his disciples peace. This peace comes from their perfect fellowship with God. There is no guilt or shame because our sin problem has been solved. There is no future security anxiety because Jesus guarantees the most blessed life in paradise. There is no separation anxiety because through the Holy Spirit we have fellowship with Jesus forever. When the peace of God dwells in our hearts there is no trouble or fear. This is what all people really want. It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

Jesus himself was the example of one who had inner peace in the midst of difficult circumstances. Look at verse 30. “I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me....” Jesus told his disciples what was transpiring. Judas had betrayed him. The religious leaders were sending

temple thugs to take Jesus by force. The time of his arrest was near. Yet Jesus did not see this from a human point of view. He knew that Satan was behind all the evil that was about to happen. Satan's power is real and he works in the hearts of those who are rebellious toward God to make them do his bidding. Jesus would be arrested by the servants of the prince of darkness. But Jesus was not helpless. The devil had no hold on Jesus. The devil gets hold of people through their sins. But Jesus was without sin. Jesus had always done what pleased God. Jesus had been obedient to God from the beginning to the end without fail. And yet Jesus would submit to the arrest and upcoming suffering and death out of obedience to God. Even at that moment, Jesus had the peace of God and he gave the peace of God to his disciples. The Holy Spirit is mightier than the prince of this world. When the Holy Spirit rules our hearts we can have true peace no matter the circumstance.

Today we studied the work of the Holy Spirit according to John's gospel. When we commit ourselves to Jesus' mission and to Jesus' people, even when it seems impossible, he will give us the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God Almighty who lives in us. He is the Counselor who leads us in the truth. As he dwells in us, he transforms us into Jesus' holy image. He assures us of God's love and gives us peace. Let's decide to obey God's will and claim his promise by faith.