

REMAIN IN JESUS (II)

(The Work of the Holy Spirit)

John 15:18-16:15

Key verses 15:26-27

“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.”

In part 1, we learned how we should remain in a personal relationship with Jesus, and with others by loving one another. Now in part 2, we want to talk about our relationship with the world--to serve the world with God’s love. In order to do so, we need to understand two truths: (i) why the world hates us; and (ii) how the Holy Spirit helps us.

First, why the world hates us. Verses 18-19 say, **“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.”** Here, “the world” refers to the unbelieving world without God. It is ruled by Satan, the prince of this world. If we live a compromising life in this world, we will not be persecuted. But if we want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus, we will be persecuted by ungodly people (2Ti 3:12). When one young lady enjoyed weekend parties frequently, her parents did not say a word about it. Rather, they served her with honey water and delicious food. However, when she began to follow Jesus and spend time in Bible study, prayer and fellowship meetings, they said she was crazy and began to persecute her. When I started attending prayer meetings at 6am, my parents thought I was out of my mind. They asked, “Who are you praying to? God is still sleeping!” They persecute us because we do not belong to the world, but to Jesus.

. We must not compromise with the world. We should not expect acceptance by the world. We must remember that Jesus our master was also hated by ungodly people. As they hated Jesus, so they will hate us. If they persecuted Jesus, they will persecute us. If they obeyed Jesus’ teaching, they will obey our teaching and live as God’s remnant of believers. Jesus came and rebuked people for their sin. But they refused to repent, because they loved their evil deeds. So they are without excuse. Their hatred fulfills Scripture; they hated Jesus without reason (25).

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What does persecution mean to us? Persecution is like a strong wind. When strong winds blow, a young tree sways back and forth. But because of the strong wind, the tree takes deep root in the earth. Likewise, persecutions are essential for our spiritual growth. They make us stronger. In the face of persecution, should we shrink back or give up our life of mission? No, Jesus wants us to carry out God's mission. Jesus wants us to positively testify about Jesus in the midst of persecution. So then, how can we do so?

Second, how the Holy Spirit helps us. In order to help his disciples to testify about Jesus, Jesus promised to send them the Holy Spirit. Look at verses 26-27: **“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.”** Jesus first introduced the Holy Spirit to his disciples in chapter 14 as the Advocate. In Greek, the word “advocate” is “paraklaytos” meaning defender, counselor, helper, intercessor, and encourager. He promised to send the Holy Spirit, the very presence of Christ, to be with them. Jesus' leaving was not an eternal separation, but a new union with them. Jesus did not leave them as orphans. The Holy Spirit would always dwell in them. Anytime we need help, the Holy Spirit helps us. When we need courage, the Holy Spirit gives us courage. When we need wisdom, the Holy Spirit gives us wisdom. When we need comfort or love, the Holy Spirit gives us comfort and love. When we are accused by Satan, the Holy Spirit defends us.

In 15:26, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit would help the disciples to testify to the world. They are too weak to carry out the gospel work by themselves, because persecution is too strong. 16:1-2 show that persecution is not just mocking or ridicule. They would be cast out from their community and even killed. Our missionaries face constant danger when they preach the gospel. In Muslim and Communist countries, they are at risk of being put in prison or deported. Jesus tells us this, so that when the time comes, we may remember his words and not stumble, but keep our faith.

So far, Jesus had taken care of his disciples as a good shepherd. Now Jesus was going to the Father. When they heard that Jesus was leaving, they should have been glad, but they were filled with grief. They were like little children being

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separated from their parents. But Jesus' going away was for their good, because he was sending them the Holy Spirit. In what respect was Jesus' going away for their good? Although Jesus was the Son of God, he was limited in time and space, because he was clothed in the flesh. The Holy Spirit, however, is not limited by time and space, so he could be with them always.

Also, Jesus wanted his disciples not to depend on visible Jesus, but on the Holy Spirit. As long as they depended on visible Jesus, they would remain weak and powerless. But when they depended on the Holy Spirit, they could become great leaders who changed the course of human history. Thank God for giving us the Holy Spirit so that we may depend on him always!

In verses 8-11, Jesus taught them how the Holy Spirit works when they carry out the gospel ministry. Look at verse 8: **“When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment.”** Here the word “prove,” in Greek *el-eng-kho*, is a legal term. Most versions translate it as “convict”. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of guilt in regard to sin, righteousness, and judgment.

Regarding sin, because people do not believe in Jesus. When people think about sin, they have a moral concept such as adultery and murder. But that is the by-product of sin. The root of sin is unbelief in Jesus, who is the only way to God. But people do not consider unbelief in Jesus as a serious sin. They think believing in Jesus is their choice. But actually, it is the fundamental source of sin. So the Holy Spirit convicts the world that not believing in Jesus is sin. When we realize this truth, we can repent of our sins and accept Jesus as our Savior (1Co 12:3).

Also, the Holy Spirit convicts the world regarding righteousness. Righteousness means a right relationship with God. People of the world do not know how to have a right relationship with God. Each person has his or her own righteousness. They think that their own righteousness is right, based on their own standard. But self-righteousness is like filthy rags in the sight of God (Isa 64:6). It is the worst sin because it makes men proud, not acknowledging that they are sinners before God. The Holy Spirit testifies that Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension proves that Jesus is the righteousness of God (Rom 10:4).

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And the Holy Spirit convicts the world of judgment. Until Jesus' coming, Satan held people under the power of sin and death. Satan made men suffer from anxiety, hatred, and the fear of death. But Jesus destroyed Satan through his death and resurrection. Through this the Holy Spirit testifies that Satan has been condemned. Now we have victory over Satan and enjoy peace and freedom in Jesus.

When we testify about Jesus, the Holy Spirit convicts people so that they may repent of their sin of unbelief, their sin of self-righteousness, and for living under the Satan's rule, and that they may come to Jesus. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the main character of the gospel work. When we read the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit taught the disciples, protected them, and guided them. When we carry out God's mission, all we have to do is rely on obey and follow the Holy Spirit. Sometimes when we reach out to share the gospel, we feel powerless to persuade people to believe in Jesus. But when we depend on the Holy Spirit in prayer, the Holy Spirit works in people's hearts.

Another name for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. Verse 13 says, **“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.”** The world is full of lies and deception. Worldly culture becomes more and more distanced from the truth. In this world, it is not easy for us to follow the truth. We are weak and vulnerable before the temptation of the world. But we do not need to worry, because the Holy Spirit guides us into all truth. The Holy Spirit also speaks to us about the glorious second coming of Jesus (13).

Read verse 14-15. **“He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”** Today some people think of the Holy Spirit as merely some mystical experience. But the Holy Spirit is a distinct Person of the Trinity God. The Holy Spirit draws to Jesus and is Christ-centered.. He testifies about and glorifies Jesus. Through the Holy Spirit we can know Jesus intimately, and grow to be like Jesus.

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Personally, I grew up in a nominal Christian family. We went to church every Sunday. But I received no persecution from the world, because I followed the stream of the culture. In my freshman year of college, I was invited to Bible study by Missionary Paul Chin. Through Romans chapter 1, the Holy Spirit rebuked me for my sin of self-righteousness. I thought I was a morally good person. But the Holy Spirit guided me into the truth. I saw myself as a wretched sinner who had nothing good in me. I repented and accepted Jesus as my Savior and my Lord. I made a decision to dedicate my life to follow Christ. Then the persecution began. My worldly friends called me a “Jesus-freak”.

But the Holy Spirit was with me. As the Advocate, the Holy Spirit strengthened me, encouraged me, and helped me to testify about Jesus in the midst of persecution. God blessed my mission-centered life to feed Jesus’ sheep. God blessed me to marry the most beautiful woman of God, Missionary Sarah, and have three children, Esther, Eunice, and Daniel. God raised Jason Sobora to be a committed disciple of Jesus and a Bible teacher. God blessed him to establish a house church with Priscilla to serve campus mission. The Holy Spirit is leading my life to testify about Jesus in this generation.

In verse 33, Jesus says, **“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”** Through the help of the Holy Spirit, we can share in Jesus’ victory. May God bless us to rely on the Holy Spirit, so that we may serve the world with God’s love.