

The Gift of the Spirit, Part 2 (John 14:15-31)

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The USS Gerald R. Ford, a new class of aircraft carrier, was commissioned in 2017 after a construction cost of \$13 billion dollars. It's nearly 4 football fields long, has 25 decks, dual band radar, electromagnetic aircraft launch and arresting gear, capacity for over 75 aircraft, advanced missile systems, and a crew of about 2,600 sailors. The entire ship, weapons systems and technologies included, is powered by two A1B nuclear reactors.

Now imagine what would happen if the nuclear reactors were taken out. Emergency backup diesel generators could serve for a time. Eventually, however, the propulsion systems, weapons systems, and modern technologies keeping 2,600 sailors alive would be powerless. All those resources and personnel are of no avail if the ship lacks power. In fact, you could argue the A1B reactor is the most important part of the entire ship. Without it, the Gerald R. Ford cannot do what it was designed to do.

Friends, that's what the Holy Spirit is like for a Christian. He is the one who empowers God's people to love and follow him. Jn 14:15-16, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever..."

God the Spirit is not an optional accessory for Christians or churches who are "into" supernatural things. He's not God's sidekick pal who doles out cool gifts to up the "wow" factor. He is as much God as the Father and the Son are God and with them is to be worshiped and glorified. His indwelling presence is what enables us to say the Lord of hosts is "with us." Jn 14:17, "You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."

In Jn 13, Jesus' disciples are troubled by the prospect of his imminent departure and their imminent failure. In response, Jesus exhorts them to trust him. He tells them to express their faith through loving obedience to his commands. And he strengthens them for the battle by promising to send the Helper they (and we) desperately need. **Loving Jesus means obeying Jesus *by the power of the Spirit.***

So who is this Holy Spirit whose help we need in order to love and follow Jesus? Jesus answers that question in several ways in vv. 16-27 before concluding with a

summary of why their hearts (and ours) should not be troubled. We considered 3 of his answers last Sunday: the Spirit is given by God, the Spirit indwells the people of God, and the Spirit imparts the life of God. We'll consider 3 more this morning: the Spirit reveals the glory of God, the Spirit instructs the people of God, and the Spirit conveys the peace of God. All these activities on the part of the Spirit empower us to love Jesus by obeying Jesus.

1) THE SPIRIT REVEALS THE GLORY OF GOD

In v. 21, Jesus establishes the priority of the Holy Spirit's work by laying out a series of spiritual principles in quick succession. First, he says, "Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me." Love for Jesus is not a spectrum of lifestyle options with people who are careful to obey him on one end and people who are not careful to obey him on the other, but they all genuinely love Jesus. No. The only people who love Jesus are those who keep, who hold fast to his commands by allowing the Word of God to govern and guide what they think, feel, and do. If God's Word doesn't function in that way in someone's life, they don't love Jesus. Period.

Second, "He who loves me will be loved by my Father." Now to some ears, those words sound like salvation by works. If you want God the Father to love you, you have to earn it by loving God the Son. Insert coin of your love for Jesus. Out comes the gumball of God's love for you.

That's not at all what Jesus is saying. He's not establishing a condition for receiving the Father's love. Do this and you'll get that. He's describing a relationship. If this is true, then something else is also true. If Jesus is the treasure of your heart, if he is the object of your highest affection, your deepest loyalty, your greatest trust, then you can know for certain that God the Father delights in you as one of his beloved children.

God's covenant love, his fatherly love, his saving love that ensures you will be justified and not condemned on the final day of judgment, is reserved only for those who love the Son he loves. Why? Because it is through affectionate faith in Christ alone that we enter the family of God. There is no forgiveness of sins apart from faith in Jesus. There is no hope of righteousness in the sight of a Holy God apart from Jesus.



The conditions justice requires for entrance into God's presence and membership among his redeemed people are not conditions you can meet, friend. But they are conditions Jesus meets for all who choose to trust in him. We enter the kingdom of God and experience his redeeming love not through mental assent to the facts about Jesus but through affectionate faith in Jesus.

Have you ever stepped back and wondered, however, why going all in with Jesus is worth it? The world seems to offer so much – an endless string of diversions, pleasures, and pursuits. At the end of v. 21, Jesus tells us why a life devoted to loving him and knowing the Father's favor as a result is worth it. "He who loves me will be loved by my Father, *and I will love him and manifest myself to him.*"

There is no greater glory in the universe than the glory of God. Therefore, there is no greater joy or pleasure in the universe than gazing upon the face of God. And here's the best part. We don't have to wait for heaven to see him! Jesus is eager to reveal, to display, to manifest the glory of God to you right now. How does he do that? Through the Holy Spirit who opens the spiritual eyes of our heart to perceive the goodness of Jesus.

When Judas asks in v. 22 how Jesus will manifest himself to them, Jesus replies in v. 23 with the work the Father and Son will do in making their home with us. How do the Father and Son make their home with us? Look back at the end of v. 17. Describing the work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus says, "he dwells with you and will be in you."

The way Jesus manifests himself to us, opening our spiritual eyes to perceive his goodness and beauty, is through the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. Enabling us to see "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 4:4) is the Spirit's specialty. It's what he loves to do. It's what he was sent to do. And it's what he alone can do!

2 Cor 3:17-18, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." Freedom to do as I please? No. Freedom to see Jesus for who he really is! "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

Moms and dads, you cannot open your child's eyes to see the goodness of Jesus. You cannot have enough conversations, give enough consequences, or reason



them into loving Jesus. 1 Cor 2:14, "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned." Only the Spirit can remove the spiritual blindness from the eyes of your child's heart and enable them to see Jesus for who he really is.

Should you teach your family about the glory of God? Yes. Should you testify to your friends at work about the glory of God? Yes. Do we point to the signs of his glory in the world he created and most of all in the gospel of our salvation? Yes. But we do not have the power to manifest Jesus to anyone. Jesus manifests his own glory, and he does it through the work of the Spirit.

That doesn't make us passive in sharing our faith. It gives us hope that our sharing, our speaking, our teaching, our question-asking, our question-answering, our Bible-explaining, and gospel-announcing labor will not be in vain.

It is also tremendously humbling, brothers and sisters. If you perceive anything of the worth of Jesus and love him accordingly, know this. That's not your own doing. The only reason, the only explanation, the ultimately determinative cause is this – the Holy Spirit opened your eyes and enabled you to see. Arrogant boasting in what we "know" about God or the gospel has no place in the life of a Christian, whether in person conversation or online, because anything we rightly perceive or understand is a gift of the Spirit.

The most loving thing God could ever do for you is manifest himself to you, friend. Part of what drives Judas' question in v. 22 is an underlying assumption that Jesus came to accomplish a physical redemption. V. 22 literally reads, "What has happened that you will manifest yourself to us, and not the world?" How could the Lord's messiah, the one sent from heaven to make everything wrong right, not kick out the Romans and establish the visible kingdom of God on earth? It made no sense. Something must have gone wrong. Hence the question.

We often fail to grasp the same thing, friends. The main thing we want Jesus to do is change the physical circumstances of our life for the better. Is it wrong to ask him to heal your body or provide financially? Not in the least. Until the day Jesus returns and makes all things new, however, the primary work the Lord is doing in our midst, isn't giving people a spouse, a house, a new job, kids, more money, or whatever other thing we desperately want. It's manifesting his glory through the

power of the Spirit so that we see Jesus for who he is, love Jesus for who he is, and learn to live accordingly as he transforms us from the inside out.

God is not a cosmic door dasher. He is the Glorious One who satisfies our souls by manifesting himself to us. Do you believe that? Are you grateful for that? Or is there a lesser glory you crave more than knowing him? Humble confidence in speaking of Jesus, deep gratitude for what we know of Jesus, and contentment with the treasure that is Jesus should mark those to whom the Spirit has revealed the glory of God.

2) THE SPIRIT INSTRUCTS THE PEOPLE OF GOD

In many ways, the two specific examples Jesus gives in vv. 25-27 of the Spirit's work are expressions of the previous point. They are among the most important ways the Lord manifests himself to us through the Spirit who dwells within us. The first concerns the work he does to instruct us. V. 25, "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. (V. 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." As Jesus instructed his disciples when he was physically present, so the Spirit will instruct his disciples when he is physically absent.

Perhaps the most important way the Spirit fulfilled that promise is by inspiring some of them to write the books that form New Testament canon of Scripture. 2 Pet 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."

Yet even that essential activity is part of a broader ongoing activity where the Spirit continues Jesus' work of guiding and directing us in every area of life. It's why Paul speaks of the children of God being "led by the Spirit" in Rom 8:14 or keeping "in step with the Spirit" in Gal 5:25.

Christian, when you need wisdom to answer a friend, when you're trying to figure out how to honor the Lord with your wealth, walk in sexual purity, honor your parents, or love your grandkids, you are not alone. You have a Helper. The Spirit is with you to lead you in the way you should go. It's why Paul defines being "filled" with the Spirit in Eph 5:18 as coming more fully under his influence in various relationships. As Jesus taught his disciples what to do, so now the Spirit teaches us what to do.

Does that include a significant subjective element? Absolutely. Yet when it comes to discerning what the Spirit would have us think, feel, or do, we are not left without objective criteria. The Spirit is faithful to bring the written Word of God to “remembrance” in our hour of need so our thoughts, feelings, and actions are directed by and submitted to the objective authority of Scripture.

He instructs us in the way we should go through things like spontaneous impressions, prophetic words, or wise counsel from faithful friends. But the primary way he instructs us is through the Word of God and we must always test more subjective forms of instruction with the Word of God. If you “sense” God wants you to do something that he has already forbidden in Scripture, your “sense” is not from the Spirit. Guidance from the Spirit and guidance from the Word never contradict one another because the Spirit proceeds from the Word made flesh.

And remember this, friend, on a very practical level. The Spirit’s work of bringing God’s Word to “remembrance,” helping us understand Scripture and apply it to our lives through the gift of illumination, requires something on our part. It requires both a willingness and a faithfulness to spend time reading God’s Word and meditating on God’s Word so there is something he can bring to “remembrance.”

What does “remembrance” imply? That we are recalling or grasping the present significance of something we heard before. The Spirit does not work despite our ignorance of Scripture. He works through our study of Scripture, helping and empowering us to store it up in our hearts, so to speak, so that when a temptation comes, a need arises, or a decision must be made, the shelves of our soul are stocked with God’s Word.

Don’t expect the Spirit to prepare a feast of guidance in your life with an empty pantry. Stock the shelves, brothers and sisters. Diligently study the Word. Then depend on and cry out to the Spirit to take the Word and teach you how to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel. 1 Cor 2:12, “Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.”

And if you find yourself thinking, “But the Bible is so hard to understand. It sort of makes sense when I listen to other Christians talk about it. But I can’t seem to make heads or tails of it on my own,” then do this. Before you read, ask for the Spirit’s

help! Ask him to “incline” your heart to God’s Word (Ps 119:36). Ask him to “open” your eyes so you might behold “wondrous things” in God’s law (Ps 119:18). Ask him to unite your heart to fear the Lord as you read his Word (Ps 86:11). And ask him to “satisfy” you with his steadfast love as you read of his goodness on every page (Ps 90:14).

Trust the Spirit, look to the Spirit, and ask the Spirit to fulfill the Lord’s promise in Ps 32:8, “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.”

3) THE SPIRIT CONVEYS THE PEACE OF GOD

God defines peace differently than we often do. We think of peace as the absence of conflict. God defines peace as the presence of divine blessing and favor in all its fullness. It’s the peace the priest of old prayed for when spoke the words of Num 6:24-26 over God’s people. “The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.”

Real peace, life the way it was meant to be, isn’t something we can create for ourselves because it starts with peace with God and our sin separates us from God. It’s why Jesus came to earth in the first place. Through his life, death, and resurrection he makes a way for us to be reconciled to the Father. When he says in v. 27, “Peace I leave with you,” he’s not talking about a mindfulness that transcends the chaos of the moment. He’s talking about the joy of peace with God, the quietness of soul that comes from knowing the smile of his favor and assurance of his love through faith in Jesus.

How do we experience that peace? The same way we experience all the other benefits of salvation Jesus won for us – through the work of the Spirit. The Spirit takes our spiritual inheritance in Christ, peace with God included, and applies it to our lives. He takes what is ours positionally and works it in our souls experientially so that even amid trouble we learn to rest in knowing it is well with our soul and that a day is coming when Jesus will make all things new.

It’s why Paul says in Gal 5:22 that peace is “the fruit of the Spirit.” You can’t meditate, sing, or pray your way into peace, friend. It’s a gift of the Spirit available to all who are willing to lean the weight of their life on Jesus. Phil 4:5–7, “The Lord is at



hand..." How so? Through the Spirit who dwells within us. So "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

The Good Shepherd, in his infinite wisdom, allows his children to experience seasons of life where peace feels maddeningly elusive. Our responsibility in such a time is to humbly persevere in asking him to restore our souls, knowing the Spirit does not withhold experiential peace a moment longer than God's benevolent purposes require.

He is a master Physician of the soul. He may be alerting us to the presence of unforsaken sin. He may be awakening us to our need to walk by faith not sight. He may be giving us an opportunity to find peace not in the absence of trouble but in the presence of God.

The peace Jesus gives us through the Spirit is nothing less than the abundant, enduring peace God himself enjoys. V. 27, "Peace I leave with you; *my peace I give to you.*" The Lord isn't scurrying around in heaven anxiously trying to hold the universe together. He's seated on a throne, eternally active yet perfectly at rest. He's not surrounded by the raging chaos of earth. Before his throne (Rev 4:6) is "a sea of glass, like crystal" – calm and clear, a place of peace ruled by a God of peace.

That's the kind of peace the Lord is eager to give you, friend. And he doesn't give "as the world gives." There's a fickle, miserly, here-today-gone-tomorrow-quality to the "peace" the world offers. Not so with the Lord, friends. He delights to give his people peace in abundant, overflowing measure, even in the most chaotic situations.

The salvation Jesus won for us brings us into the life and peace God has eternally enjoyed within himself as Father, Son, and Spirit. That's the peace the Lord offers to you, friend, his peace, if you're willing to stop trying to find it in everything else but him. Don't strive to create peace for yourself. It won't work. Look to Jesus, trust in Jesus, wait for the Spirit to bring it to pass in your life.

CONCLUSION



Why should the disciple's hearts not be troubled or afraid despite Jesus' physical absence and their inevitable failures? The Lord gives them (and us!) a summary review in vv. 28-31. Yes, I'm going away. But I'm also going to come to you. The grave will not hold me and even after I ascend to the Father, I will remain with you through the Spirit that dwells within you. He will reveal my glory. He will instruct you in the truth. And he will work the peace I enjoy into the very fabric of your soul.

If you loved me, if you treasured me as Savior I am, you would rejoice in my decision to go to the Father, because you would know the road of death and resurrection I'm about to walk in obedience to him paves the way for you to join me. So when all of this happens over the next few days exactly as I told you, remember my words. Recognize anew that my promises always come to pass.

It may feel like Satan, the ruler of this world, is calling the shots when I suffer a cruel death on a cross of wood, know this. V. 30, "He has no claim on me." I'm not succumbing to his will. I'm accomplishing the Father's will, the greatest act of salvation the world has ever seen.

Why? Because I love the Father. His glory is the governing ambition, the ruling affection, in my life. What I have told you to do – love me by obeying me – is the very thing I am showing you how to do. In light of the triumph of my salvation, in light of the presence of the Holy Spirit who will apply all the benefits of salvation to your soul, don't be troubled and don't be afraid.

To know God is for us and with us through the Spirit who dwells within us is a tremendous privilege, my friends. Praise be to God for the gift of the Comforter, the Helper, the Counselor who brings us safely home. The refrain to one of the hymns we sing responds this way.

"So sing for joy, afflicted one. The battle's fierce, but the victory's won. God shall supply all that you need. Yes, as your days your strength shall be." Let's sing that together, giving thanks for the strength that is ours through the Spirit who dwells within us.