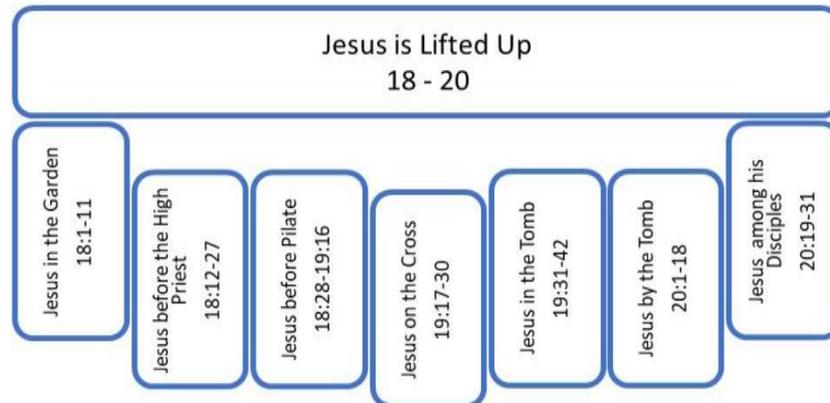


Lesson 24: John 14:16-31 and John 16:5-15 The Promised Holy Spirit

Introduction



The two great themes of John's Gospel are the nature of Jesus and the nature of faith. The intersection of those two themes brings about a third theme, the nature of discipleship. When we see Jesus for who he really is and when we follow him in faith, we are a disciple. What does that look like? What does it mean to be a true follower of Jesus? What is the essence of discipleship?

Jesus has been talking about that in chapters 13 and 14. He exhorts his disciples to an attitude of humility, "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet (13:14)"; and to a motive of love, "a new commandment I give, even as I have loved you (13:34)"; and to submissive obedience, "if you love me you will keep my commandments (14:15)." You are a disciple of Jesus if you humble yourself like Jesus, love like Jesus and obey like Jesus.

But can human beings, in their fallen state, practice humility, love and obedience, according to the model of Jesus? Some might fake it for some time, apparently Judas did, but then he walked away. What about those who are really serious and excited about Jesus, and they want to live for Jesus? Can they live in humility, love and obedience Jesus is calling for? Peter's not going to make it through the night without denying Jesus.

This was the problem through the Old Testament with the Mosaic law. God can hand down holy and righteous and good commandments. And the Israelites can proclaim, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient (Exodus 24:7)!" But can they? Before Moses comes down off that mountain, they're going to have broken a range of commandments in their celebration of a golden calf that they produce.

The Old Covenant is a long lesson in human nature under good law. It is a lesson about the effectiveness of providing human beings with an external law and expecting them to live up to that law. The law, working from the outside in, does not empower human beings to live up to the moral vision of that law.

Can disciples of Jesus live up to a vision of humility, love and obedience? No, they cannot. You cannot live the Christian life, not on your own. Not unless something happens to you, something changes.

So, now we come to a core reality of the gospel of Jesus Christ. True belief in Jesus does not leave the follower unaffected. To be born again is not merely to have a new perspective on life. Faith is not merely a matter of the will. Moses and Jeremiah and Ezekiel, they all saw something, they prophesied that with the New Covenant God would do something inside of us. We would not be asked, not be required like Old Covenant believers, to live outside in, the law outside of us working into the heart. Instead, we are to live inside out. The law is to be written on our hearts, transforming our outward behavior from an internal reality. The prophets spoke of a new heart.

Alone, we do not have the power or ability to live according to the vision of life that Jesus is teaching. But he does not leave us alone. He promises to us the internal presence of the Holy Spirit. This is why he called it a new birth. It is Jesus in us, it is a new reality; Jesus living through us.

Calling us to this new reality, Jesus is going to empower us for the journey. This is the truth at the center of John's exposition on discipleship in these chapters, in 13-17. The promise of the Holy Spirit is given in 14 and 16 and then, at the very center of the section, Jesus describes the Christian life through the vine and branches metaphor. We will address that central metaphor in our next lesson. In this lesson we will consider the promise of the Holy Spirit by asking these three questions:

- (1) What is the promise?
- (2) Who is the Holy Spirit?
- (3) What is the role of the Holy Spirit?

What is the promise?

So what is this promise? When Jesus told the disciples in chapter 14 they would do greater works than he had done, he added, "because I go to the Father (14:12)." He also says in chapter 16, "I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away (16:12)." How can that be true? If you could choose between your pastor and Jesus, who would you choose? Your pastor. Jesus. If you could choose between listening to a podcast by me and a podcast by Jesus, who would you choose? If you could be disciplined by anybody or by Jesus, who would you choose? If we were to pick between Peter to lead the early church or Jesus, or to pick Paul to take the gospel to the Gentiles or Jesus or any leader of a Christian movement or Jesus, who do you choose? It's Jesus all the way, right? Jesus, Jesus, every time: Jesus.

I am certain that for these disciples who had enjoyed the presence and fellowship even friendship of Jesus they could not imagine how it could be better for Jesus to go away. Yes, he's got to die on the cross or all hope is lost. But he's going to raise again to new life and he's going to be with us. Why then leave? How can it be better if Jesus leaves?

I would never choose for Jesus to leave. But Jesus has said that if he does not go he cannot send the Holy Spirit. He does not explain that. He doesn't explain why we can't have both. We take him at his word. Either Jesus stays or he sends the Holy Spirit but not both. When we understand that, we begin to see the wisdom in the choice of Jesus going and sending instead in his place the Holy Spirit. I can see three points of wisdom in that.

First and foremost, by leaving, Jesus is able to live inside of us in spiritual union through the Holy Spirit. Instead of the Law outside of us, molding us from outside in, we now live by the Spirit in us, transforming us inside out. Disciples cannot live for Jesus while Jesus is with them because they need a work of the heart. And that only happens if Jesus goes.

Second point of wisdom, if Jesus remained physically on earth, do I really believe that he would be the pastor of my particular church or the leader of my movement or even teach in my language? Jesus would be limited physically to one place if he was still here. By going Jesus is able to be with each one of us through the Holy Spirit no matter who we are, how insignificant we might feel, Jesus is with us and he is in us. No matter where we are, no matter when we are, Jesus is able to be there.

Third, by going Jesus puts responsibility on us. Other than the presence of the Holy Spirit, nothing has the power to transform more than responsibility. If Jesus is here, everybody looks to him to make the decision. But if Jesus is gone, who is going to feed the sheep? Who is going to do the ministry of teaching and prayer? Who's going to do the ministry of service and care? Who is going to lead worship? Who's going to display the humility and love and obedience of Jesus to my family, in my workplace, at my school, in my community? Who will take the gospel to the nations? Who does all these things? You. You are the parent, you are the husband, you are the wife, you are the child, you are the friend, you are the neighbor, you are the leader, you are the servant, you are the presence

and wisdom and love of Jesus in your sphere of influence. Jesus is in you. You take Jesus with you. Jesus loves through you. People experience Jesus through your presence. People experience Jesus through you if you take up the responsibility to live for Jesus.

Jesus says he is going. And he promised to send the Holy Spirit. He has fulfilled that promise. And according to Jesus, it is better that he has gone, so that the Holy Spirit might dwell in us.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

That's the promise. So, who is the Holy Spirit that Jesus promises? Let's read verses of promise in chapters 14 and 16. We'll start with John 14:16-19 and 25-27.

¹⁶ "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; ¹⁷ *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you *will* see Me; because I live, you will live also.

²⁵ These things I have spoken to you while abiding 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 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. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."

Now John 16:7-8 and 13-15.

⁷ "But 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 He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;

¹³ But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you. ¹⁵ All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose *it* to you."

Who is this Spirit Jesus promises to send? Jesus also identifies the Spirit as Holy, that's in 14:26. The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal power source. Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as a person. He abides. He teaches. He convicts. He guides. He glorifies. Jesus establishes a very close connection between the Spirit, himself and the Father. Jesus speaks of the Father sending the Spirit, but he also says that he sends the Spirit. Jesus parallels his relationship to the Father and his relationship to the Spirit. Just as the Father sent Jesus, Jesus sends the Spirit. Just as Jesus spoke what he heard from the Father, the Spirit speaks what he hears from Jesus. Just as Jesus glorified the Father, the Spirit glorifies Jesus. There is a tight connection.

The term Jesus first used in his promise was not "Holy Spirit" but "parakletos". That is in 14:16 and then again at the beginning of the parallel passage in 16:7. My Bible translates parakletos as "Helper". Other English Bibles use "Counselor" or "Comforter" or "Advocate". The word literally means to "call alongside." "Para" is "alongside" and "kaleo" is "to call". In Greek, the term was most commonly used for one who comes alongside to give legal assistance. That is the sense of the translation of Advocate or Counselor. It is not camp counselor but a legal counselor. This meaning comes out in chapter 16 when Jesus speaks of the Spirit as convicts the world of sin. That's a little bit more of a legal context.

The translations "comforter" and "helper" have to do with the more general sense of the word as "one who comes alongside". All three ideas, Advocate, Helper and Comforter give us a sense of the role of the Holy Spirit. And all three could lead us into some kind of misunderstanding. The Holy Spirit is our Advocate, praying on our behalf and convicting the world of sin, but he is more than that. He is also our helper, but he is not our servant. He does not exist to meet our needs. He's not a genie in a

bottle. He does not obey our commands. And he is our comforter, but he also calls us to brave action and convicts us when we sin. He doesn't just tell us what we want to hear.

We cannot understand all of who the Holy Spirit is through this one word "parakletos". The word helps. But we need to understand that word in the rest of the context of the chapters. There is a very helpful phrase in the first words of the promise. Jesus says in 14:16, "[the Father] will give you **another** helper." Catch that? "[the Father] will give you **another** helper." The Holy Spirit is our helper, our comforter, our advocate, but he is not the first. He is being sent as another helper. Another parakletos. Who is the parakletos that precedes the Holy Spirit?

In this context it is Jesus. Jesus is teacher and Lord. He is also the good Shepherd who comforts and advocates for and helps his sheep. Jesus is now going away. And so, he sends someone else to walk alongside with the disciples. He does not walk alongside as a fellow sheep. He walks alongside as a shepherd. The Holy Spirit is equal to God the Father and God the Son. He is God the Spirit, equal, yet mysteriously separate. We owe him our love and allegiance, just as we love and serve Father and Son as a distinct member of the trinity. So, we have this promise that the Son is going to send the Holy Spirit to continue alongside of us. And we come to understand who he is, he is the third member of the Trinity. So, what is his role? What is the role of the Holy Spirit, especially in this context of discipleship that?

What is the role of the Holy Spirit?

Just looking at what Jesus is saying here about the Holy Spirit, we could say that the role of the Holy Spirit is to extend relationship with Jesus to everyone one of us who believes through his internal spiritual presence with us.

And I'd like to break that down into three more specific roles that I see Jesus indicating here.

The Holy Spirit guides us into truth. The Holy Spirit empowers us for service. And the Holy Spirit transforms our hearts. These are all three suggested in Jesus' teaching here in the Gospel of John and more fully developed later in the epistles of the New Testament. I will refer a little bit to other texts outside of John to affirm what we see here but mostly I'm limiting myself to John. We are not trying right now to be comprehensive. We are trying to understand the theology John is giving us.

The Holy Spirit guides us into truth.

I am starting with the role the Holy Spirit fulfills in guiding us into truth. I will spend most of my time on this role, which will set us up for shorter consideration of the other two roles.

Jesus gives the Holy Spirit the title, Spirit of Truth, in both chapter 14 and 16. Jesus says he will teach the disciples all things and bring to their remembrance what he has said. He also says that the Spirit will guide us and disclose to us that which he takes from Jesus. There is a special sense in which this promise applied only to the apostles and a few close associates of the apostles. The Spirit inspired these men to remember the words of Jesus and to write down for us the four Gospels. And the Spirit further led other apostles and men connected to them in understanding and application of these New Covenant truths. And they wrote letters, Luke wrote a history, John wrote a revelation and the result is the New Testament. Peter writes about the Holy Spirit's role of revelation in the Scripture in 2 Peter 1:20-21,

²⁰ But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one's own interpretation, ²¹ for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Jesus's promise here to his disciples that through the Holy Spirit they would remember his words and that the Holy Spirit would further take from Jesus and give to them can be understood in this specialized sense of biblical revelation. This is special inspiration of the Holy Spirit that bears unique authority as the word of God. No one speaks like this anymore. This is special. This is unique. This is Bible.

Then we ask, do the words of Jesus here about the Holy Spirit have an application for every disciple who is to come, not just for the special few who authored biblical books, who remembered the truth and who were guided into the truth? Does the Holy Spirit guide us into truth?

I believe the answer is, "Yes. Yes, the Holy Spirit does guide us into truth." This is the initial experience of every believer. We cannot believe in Jesus if the Holy Spirit does not open our eyes to the truth of who Jesus is and who we are and of what our need is. Jesus declared this in 6:65, "No one can come to me, unless it has been granted him from the Father." The Spirit must work in each of us. He must open our eyes to the truth.

Paul speaks of a subjective experience of the Spirit in Romans 5:5 when he writes of God pouring out his love in our hearts by the Holy Spirit and also in Romans 8:16 when he writes of the Spirit testifying with our spirit that we are children of God. What I mean by the word "subjective" is that this is an internal experience of a believer that cannot be proved to anyone else. The Spirit reveals to you the truth of God's love and the truth of your adoption. That is revealed internally to you. Disciples of Christ experience the subjective opening of the eyes of the heart to certain truths by the Holy Spirit.

I believe we also experience the Holy Spirit guiding us into action. I believe that's part of our subjective spiritual experience. We have this sense that we ought to do something. And it's the Spirit nudging us.

I remember once after getting married and moving into our new apartment, I was home alone. And I got a strong sense that I ought to go knock on my neighbor's door. I had seen him on the balcony when I came in. Being a strong introvert, I resisted that feeling for a long time. But believing it was the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I finally gave in and went and knocked on my neighbor's door. I felt weird and I awkwardly introduced myself. He said, "Do you have a car?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Something happened to my ride, and I need to get to the airport to catch a flight." I said, "I'll take you." So, I gave my neighbor a ride to the airport. He did not place his faith in Jesus on the way. And he did not become a good friend. I still don't know why God wanted me to take him to the airport. But I believe that it was the Holy Spirit that led me to his door. God knows why, I don't know why. But we have these moments of sensing that it is the Spirit of God leading us to do or leading us to say. He guides us, subjectively and internally. And he opens our eyes, he teaches us subjectively and internally.

While affirming the subjective work of the Holy Spirit to guide us and teach us, I also feel the need to warn you about automatically defining subjective experience as the Holy Spirit. I get a little nervous around Christians who make no place in their lives for the daily work of the Holy Spirit. I also get a little nervous around Christians who too quickly identify their feelings and ideas as coming from the Holy Spirit.

It is wise to learn to walk in faith and trust in the leading of the Holy Spirit. It is also wise to learn to recognize our own emotions in such a way that we can step back from these emotions and ask how God might or might not be at work in them.

Christianity without emotion is severely problematic. The fruit of the Spirit includes love, joy and peace. These are subjective experiences. They are things that happen in you. You experience them. You know if you feel love. You know if you have joy. You know if you experience peace. And I should wonder about my walk with Jesus if I never feel moved or if I never feel calmed by the presence of his Spirit.

At the same time two clear realities give me caution in automatically equating my own emotion with the work of the Holy Spirit. The first reality is that I am quite aware that many different factors affect my emotional state. Exercise, a good meal, a haircut, kind words, mean words, the crunch of leaves on an autumn day, the laughter of a little girl, the smell of lavender, a thousand different things create different emotions in me. The next time you watch a movie, pay attention to how the

soundtrack is trying to change your emotional state. They use music to get us on the side of the hero. They use music to get us to agree with things that we don't agree with, to set us against the villain, to create excitement or nervous anticipation. Producers use music as a tool to create nostalgia, or melancholy, or romance, or happiness all hopefully at the right moment, when they want you to feel what they want you to feel. And just thinking about that makes me say how easily music can move me emotionally. I am susceptible to music. When I reflect on the multitude of other factors besides music that affect my internal state, I become more cautious about attributing the thoughts I have or feelings I have to the Holy Spirit.

The second reality that gives me caution in attributing my emotional state to the Holy Spirit is the reality of emotion as part of worship in every religion. When you study different religions, every major religion seems to have proponents that lean away from emotional experience and proponents that lean toward emotional experience. There are Muslims, and Hindus, and Jews, Mormons, and New Age practitioners who participate in emotional worship experiences that closely mimic pretty much every emotional experience claimed by various Christian groups, from the lightly emotional to the very emotionally expressive. You can find all of that in other religions.

Recognizing this, how do we wisely evaluate this recognition that a multitude of influences affect our internal state, even in our religious practices of worship?

Well, we do not reject emotion. Love, joy, peace are fruits of the Spirit. The Psalms probably express in prayer to God any human emotion you can think of. We love God with heart, mind and soul as whole people. That includes our mind and our emotions and our actions. We do not want to turn away from expressing our emotion in relationship with God, simply because we cannot clearly define the source of our emotion or because we know some other religious groups also experience emotion in a similar way apart from the Holy Spirit.

So, what do we do? I believe we humbly accept that we cannot always clearly define our subjective experience. We embrace relationship with God. We embrace the love, the joy, the hope, the sorrow that come from the Holy Spirit. But we do not define emotion as equivalent to the Holy Spirit. We recognize that some of the emotional experiences that we have are not from the Holy Spirit or might be mixed, the Holy Spirit might be working in us but there might be other things in us creating emotion. We do not seek emotional experience as a defining factor of our spirituality. We do not glorify emotion as though emotion is the Spirit. You know, do you feel the Spirit in this place? Well, maybe. That might not be what I'm feeling, though. I don't know.

I have two recommendations here. First, according to John 16:14, the Holy Spirit comes to glorify Jesus. If the worship experience is more about my personal emotion or more about the work of the Holy Spirit going on to give people experience; if it's more about those things than it is about glorifying Jesus; if I'm not hearing the name of Jesus and the clear Gospel of Jesus, then something is off in that experience. The Spirit does not glorify himself. The Spirit glorifies the Son. Worship of Jesus is not about my emotional experience. It is about the Son and I need to learn to discern the difference. I want to have the right emotion in my joy of who Jesus is, and in the character of Jesus, and actions of Jesus, and in the truth of Jesus. That's what I want my emotion to line up with.

Second, the Holy Spirit works in conjunction with the Word of God in a community of believers. So then in worship I want to hear the Word of God. I want the Holy Spirit to be revealing truth to me and I don't want just popcorn bits of the Word of God all spread out; I want the Word of God in passages; I want the Word of God taught; I want my mind to be engaged with my emotions to be engaged with my spirit in the understanding of truth. And when I have a subjective experience that seems to be guiding me into some course of serious action - knocking on my neighbor's door is not so serious so if I get a nudging there I just act on it - but we're talking about life change or some kind of serious sense of the will of God for my life, then I bring that experience to the Word of God. I'm not going to make a life change based on an emotional response that I have that I think is the Holy Spirit. It may be the Holy Spirit but I'm going to bring it to the Word of God, I'm going to discuss it with

other wise believers, I'm going to seek the will of God in the Word of God through the Holy Spirit. I am not left to my subjective experience. That would be dangerous because my experience goes up and down. Right after Paul wrote that the Spirit of God pours out his love into our hearts, he also wrote, "But God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us (Romans 5:8)." I enjoy the subjective experience of God's love in my heart. I enjoy that joy. But I have to confess that that experience is not constant. Sometimes I feel far away from God. Sometimes I feel unlovable by God. Sometimes I feel angry or disappointed with God. I am not feeling the love in those moments. Does that change the fact that God loves me? No, not at all. The reality of God's love is established in the objective truth of his word. How do I know God loves me? Is it based on my subjective experience? No! No. Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so. It is based in his objective Word. He has said it. It is true. And I want to feel that. But when I don't I still embrace it as true.

The Holy Spirit guides us into truth through the objective Word of God. And yes, he works in us separately, individually, subjectively. But growth in our understanding of truth, in our ability to discern God's will does not come from the Holy Spirit apart from the Word of God. The Word of God is the tool the Holy Spirit uses to guide us into truth.

We got a glimpse of this in the Samaritan woman's story. In John 4, Jesus told her that the true worshiper of God worships in spirit and in truth (4:23). This statement is followed by the example of the villagers who ask Jesus to stay with them. After two days many believe because of the teaching of Jesus. These new believers said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world (4:42)." They had some kind of initial experience, they heard this woman telling her story and something had changed in her and she says, "He knows everything about me", and she tells how he knew about her husbands and the man she was currently living with, and from listening to her something happened in them, and they have this experience where they believe in Jesus. But now, after two days, they're hearing the Word of Jesus. So the Spirit may or may not have been working in their initial experience, we don't know, but the Spirit has been guiding them through the teaching of Jesus. So now they stand on this stronger foundation. They've had their subjective experience but it's grounded on the objective truth of the Word of Jesus.

Later, speaking in Jerusalem to many Jews who had believed, Jesus declares, "If you abide in My word" - it's very similar language, we're getting ready to look at abiding in his Spirit and abiding in Jesus - "If you abide in My word *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." The experience of the Christian life comes both from abiding in Jesus and his Spirit, and from abiding in his Word in the truth of the Bible. The Spirit does not guide us into the knowledge of truth apart from the Bible but in harmony with our ongoing commitment to learning the truth of the Bible. And that's both in our own study and reading of the Word, and also in communication with other people in our community with listening to preaching and being in small group and being in Bible discussion, the Spirit works through the Body and the Bible to guide us into truth.

The Spirit alone is not God's solution. He has given us the Word for the renewing of our mind. And the Bible alone is not God's solution. We walk in darkness without the help of God. The most biblically trained men of his age were among those who hated Jesus the most. So it's not just Bible. We need the Spirit of God to open our eyes to see the truths of the Bible. Man in his natural state cannot understand the Word of God, will not accept the Word of God. We need the Holy Spirit to free us from the bondage of our sin and the darkness that we live in.

We need the Spirit and the Word together.

To sum up this role, the Holy Spirit fulfilled a special role of revelation in the lives of those men who God chose to write down the Words of Scripture. Apart from that special work in that select few, the Spirit works to guide all believers into truth through knowledge of God's word.

When I say that I feel the need to add something. The Spirit works to guide all believers into truth through knowledge of God's word. That's true; it feels separated from application and that's never the right way to take the Bible. I should say that the Holy Spirit works to guide all believers into truth through knowledge of God's Word and through the application of his Word. That is more accurate to the spiritual process of growth. We really need a bit of Mary and a bit of Martha in us. We need to sit at the feet of Jesus and we need to get active in our service. We commit to learning the Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit, so that we can apply the will of God in the power of the Holy Spirit. This brings us to the second role of the Holy Spirit in these passages. We'll be much shorter with the second and third roles. The second role is that the Holy Spirit empowers us for service.

The Holy Spirit empowers us for service.

That idea will be pronounced clearly when we talk about the branches depending on the vine to produce fruit. And that's the idea of power through us. We can do nothing apart from him. He must empower us for service. But that idea is woven through chapter 14. First, the disciples are told, "you will do greater works." Then they are told, "ask anything in my name and I will do it." And then, "If you love me you will obey my commandments." So this is about doing.

And it is easy to make the connection between great works, prayer and obedience. If we are going to attempt to do the great works that God has prepared for us to do, we're going to have a lot to pray about. We need help. Jesus is announcing ahead of time that we already have the help we need to do the great works he is going to call us to do. The Holy Spirit not only guides us, he also empowers us to perform the works that he's guiding us into.

So we have this need to know the truth and we have this need to be empowered to do the truth. But we have another need. God's desire is that we be freed from our bondage to sin so that we might serve him willingly from a heart of love. God wants followers who love him. The Holy Spirit performs this third role in our lives as well. He guides us into truth, he empowers us, and he transforms our hearts.

The Holy Spirit transforms our hearts.

At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus told Nicodemus about the need for internal spiritual change, "You must be born again." Being born again by the Spirit is like having a seed of love planted in our hearts. The Spirit in us enables us to see God truly and to love him. We still struggle with the domination of our own self-love. But the Spirit of God has begun something in us, and he is calling us to grow into it.

When we place our faith in Christ, the penalty of our sin is paid for and a new work of the Spirit has begun. We have been saved and we will be fully glorified with Christ in heaven. He has promised to keep his hold on us. Nobody can snatch us out of the Father's hands and he says, "And I will lose not one, I will bring you there." But we live between those two realities. We have been born again and we will be glorified with a new body in heaven. But we are not there yet. We live between the already and the not yet. There is still a process going on, this process that we're involved in as disciples. And God is calling us to join by faith the work he is doing in us. He calls us to participate in the working out of the salvation that we already have.

Paul put it this way, writing to the Philippians 2:12,

¹² So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

God is at this work in us not just to empower us to do but it says, "to will and to work for his good pleasure." He is changing our very will, he's changing our heart. Transformation is a process. We are called to obey. And he will transform our hearts that we might become the kind of creatures who enjoy doing the righteous works he has called us to do. He said, "If you love me you will keep my commandments." And he is freeing our hearts to do exactly that.

Conclusion

Jesus has promised to send the Holy Spirit. This is part of his comfort for the disciples as he prepares to leave. He's not going to leave them alone and that is great encouragement to us as well. We are not alone in our walk with God. He is present with us.

The promise of the Holy Spirit is one of the wonderful new things about the New Covenant. Not only did Jesus Christ finally pay the penalty of sin that had been promised so long before. He also fulfilled this other promise to do a work in the heart of the followers of God. The Holy Spirit has now been sent. And the Holy Spirit guides us into truth, empowers us for service, and transforms our hearts to love. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus makes it possible for us to live for God, not according to laws from the outside pressing in, but from new heart working from the inside out. In our next lesson, as we focus on this wonderful metaphor of the vine and the branches we're going to consider how practically do I walk in the power of the Holy Spirit; what is my part to see this reality, to participate in the working out of my salvation?

Reflection questions

1. Read John 14:16-31. What stands out to you as interesting, important, strange or confusing? What are some questions that come to mind?
2. Now read John 16:5-15. What stands out to you in this passage?
3. When you compare John 14:16-31 and John 16:5-15, what repetition do you see, either in repeated language or repeated ideas?
4. When you compare the two passages, what stands out as different? What is added in the second passage? How is the focus of the second passage different than the first?
5. In John 14:6, Jesus says that he is sending another helper. He is referring to himself as the first helper. The Holy Spirit is another helper. How do you understand Jesus as helper or parakletos? How does comparing the Holy Spirit to Jesus help you think about the nature and role of the Holy Spirit?
6. How do you define the role of the Holy Spirit as seen from these two passages?
7. How did the Holy Spirit work in a special way to guide the apostles in the truth?
8. How have you experienced the Holy Spirit in your life guiding you in truth, empowering you for service or transforming your heart?