

## SESSION 6

# The Work of the Holy Spirit



### QUESTION 1:

*What's your favorite memory of a parade you've watched or attended?*

## THE POINT

The Holy Spirit magnifies the work of Jesus.

## THE PASSAGE

John 15:26-27; 16:7-15

## THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

New Orleans is known as a city of never-ending parties, but it is also a city of parades. Lots of parades! For almost no money at all, you can rent a parade. Getting married? Have a parade. Celebrating a birthday? Have a parade. Celebrating because it's a Thursday? Have a parade.

When a parade comes down the street, it grabs everyone's attention—whether they want their attention grabbed or not! Everyone sees the parade and certainly hears it (and often are inconvenienced by it). Parades aren't meant to be subtle and quiet. The people in the parade do what they can to draw attention to something they consider worth celebrating.

The Holy Spirit's role is a lot like that parade, but for a far greater reason. He works tirelessly to magnify the work of Jesus. He works in and through our lives to draw attention to Someone worth celebrating. Since that's the role of the Holy Spirit, why do we spend so little time talking about Him? Jesus gave us great insight into this too-little-discussed member of the Trinity.

## John 15:26-27

**26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:**

**27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.**

Leaving is hard. When I was working toward my doctorate, I was also pastoring a church, which meant my life was extremely hectic for what seemed like decades. In addition to my regular duties at the church and preaching on Sundays, I was also taking weekly trips to and from school. This meant I was flying constantly—and leaving home constantly. It became routine, but it never got easy to drive away from my family toward the airport. And it was never easy for them to watch me go.

It wasn't easy for Jesus' disciples, either, to know Jesus was leaving. During Jesus' last night with the disciples before His arrest, He explained why it was a good thing that He was going away (John 14). He explained it in terms of a gift—but this wasn't just any gift! The gift was the Holy Spirit! God's Spirit would do two things for them:

1. The Holy Spirit would testify about Jesus
2. The Holy Spirit would empower the disciples to also testify about Jesus.

Just before He ascended into Heaven, Jesus reminded His disciples of this gift as He said,

**“Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).**

The disciples might not have understood just then how powerful these two statements were, but they would soon find out. Acts 2 records the first time they saw the power of the Holy Spirit in their own lives. In Jerusalem, the Festival of Pentecost was in full swing, and Jews from all over the world came to celebrate. On the day of Pentecost, the celebration turned to amazement. Without warning, the Holy Spirit came in a rush and made something unprecedented happen.

**“And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:3-4).**

Just as Jesus had said in John 15, the Holy Spirit empowered the disciples to preach about Him in a way that those who didn't know Him could understand. Over and over in the Book of Acts, we see people doing amazing things through the Holy Spirit—healing people, casting out demons, preaching in unusual places—and every single time, the purpose was to proclaim the gospel of Jesus.

In the Great Commission, Jesus called us to disciple others.

**“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:18-20).**

Jesus never expected us to evangelize and disciple others on our own. We are to rely on His Holy Spirit in our lives. We are never alone. We are never forgotten or left to fend for ourselves. Jesus gave us a commission, and then He gave us the power to carry it out. How the Holy Spirit works through us can vary, but it is always for the purpose of pointing to and testifying about Jesus.

## QUESTION 2:

*How does the Holy Spirit help us to be Christ's witnesses?*

**DIGGING DEEPER****THE COUNSELOR**

See the article "The Counselor" on

pp. 24-27 for an explanation of the Greek term *parakletos*, translated variously as "counselor," "helper," "advocate," and "comforter."

**John 16:7-11**

**7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.**

**8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:**

**9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;**

**10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;**

**11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.**

One of those embarrassing moments in life is when you have food stuck in your teeth—and you don't know it. You can be talking with a group and feel like your jokes are landing, your banter is witty, and you're coming across as confident. But something about the people around you makes you feel like *something* is off. Maybe their laughter seems forced or they keep avoiding eye contact. Later, when you discover the stray piece of food, you wonder, "Why didn't someone tell me?"

Oftentimes, we're blind to our own shortcomings. We can be just as blind to sin in our lives. However, we don't need to left hanging, wondering, "Why didn't someone tell me?" One role of the Holy Spirit is to make us aware of our sin—and He works through

us to make others aware of the sin and the truth of the gospel. Note that Jesus said, “I will send him unto you,” and “when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” We can infer that when the Holy Spirit comes to us, He will do His convicting work *through* us. As we share the gospel and witness for Christ, the Spirit will use our witness to convict unbelievers in three areas.

- ▶ **Sin.** The Holy Spirit convicts us of all sins, but the sin Jesus was referring to here is the sin of unbelief. As He clarified in verse 9: “Of sin, because they believe not on me.”
- ▶ **Righteousness.** Even unbelievers can have a notion of what righteousness is, but the Holy Spirit convicts them about the righteousness of Christ. He leads them to see the truth of who Jesus is: the righteous, holy Son of God. Jesus clarified this in verse 10: “Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.”
- ▶ **Judgment.** The work of Satan and our sin were judged on the cross of Christ. Our sin was judged and dealt with through the death of Jesus, and salvation is complete. In verse 11, Jesus clarified: “Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”

As we share the truth of the gospel, the Spirit convicts the unbeliever of the reality of his sin, the truth of who Jesus is, and how his sin and judgment were dealt with on the cross. Once a person comes to Christ, the Holy Spirit that has come to dwell in Him continues to convict when he sins.

When Jesus was walking with His disciples on the earth, they had the handiest field guide anybody could ask for to explain what was right and what was wrong: all they had to do was ask Jesus! They could look at Him and follow in His footsteps. They could wake Him up in the middle of the night with their questions. But Jesus was just one man, and He could only be in one place at one time. The Holy Spirit dwells in *all* believers, and He does everything for us Jesus did for His disciples. Followers of Christ

have the exact same Spirit that Jesus promised His disciples, and He dwells within us to empower and guide us in the ways that please the Lord.

**QUESTION 3:**

*What are some ways the Holy Spirit helps us recognize our sins?*

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**John 16:12-15**

**12** I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

**13** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

**14** He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

**15** All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

I enjoy doing magic tricks. It's been a hobby of mine for many years. I do not have an assistant—nobody is crazy enough to want to assist the “Great Gallatino”—but many magicians employ an assistant. An assistant helps with willing volunteers, presenting the props, and they help ensure the show goes smoothly. But many of the tricks depend entirely on the assistant. The assistant may be the one having to pick a lock or untie a tricky knot, but it's all part of the act of making the magician look like a magician!

The Holy Spirit is infinitely greater than a magician's assistant, but thinking about that role has helped me understand a little bit better how the Spirit works. Just as the assistant doesn't draw attention to herself but works to keep the focus on the magician,

the Holy Spirit seeks to glorify Christ. The Holy Spirit does not call attention to Himself; rather He casts every eye on the resurrected King.

In verses 13-14, Jesus identified several things the Holy Spirit does:

- ▶ He guides us into all truth.
- ▶ He speaks Jesus' words to us.
- ▶ He glorifies the Son.

These tasks are not separate from one another. In other words, by guiding us into all truth, the Holy Spirit is also glorifying Jesus. Bringing glory and honor to Jesus is a part of everything the Spirit does.

#### **QUESTION 4:**

***How does the Holy Spirit guide believers into all truth?***

We can see that in all the ways the Holy Spirit works. For example, the work of the Holy Spirit is a key theme in Romans 8.

- ▶ The Holy Spirit helps us put to death the deeds of the flesh (v. 13).
- ▶ The Holy Spirit leads us and directs our steps (v. 14).
- ▶ The Holy Spirit testifies that we belong to Christ (v. 16).

How the Spirit does these things directly impacts how we glorify our Savior. As the Holy Spirit helps us put to death the deeds of the flesh, we no longer will walk as children of darkness, but as children of the Light—and that brings glory to Jesus, the One who is the Light. The Holy Spirit directs our steps toward those actions and activities that honor Christ. The Holy Spirit's affirmation that we belong to Christ gives us strength and confidence to tell others about our relationship with Christ. Through it all, we are pointing and giving glory to Christ.



At every turn, the Holy Spirit who dwells within believers gives you the tools to live a Christ-glorifying life. Learning to obey Him is a process, but it will be the most joyous journey of your life.

**QUESTION 5:**

*How does the Holy Spirit glorify Jesus?*

**ENGAGE**

*On the spectrum below, write your initials to indicate where you most often live and work.*

*“Do it Myself”* \_\_\_\_\_ *“Spirit-empowered”*

List attitudes and actions you can adopt to move toward a more Spirit-dependent and empowered life.

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## LIVE IT OUT

As you learn to listen to the Holy Spirit, how will you respond?

- ▶ **Confess.** The Holy Spirit comes alongside us to convict us of sin. If He is convicting you of an unconfessed sin, take a few minutes on your knees to confess your sin and repent of that sin.
- ▶ **Submit.** Allow the Holy Spirit to fill you and have control of your life. Lean on Him to guide your steps.
- ▶ **Share.** Allow the Holy Spirit to use you to talk about Jesus with another person. Trust Him to guide the conversation and give you words that bring honor to Christ.

The Holy Spirit comes into our lives to help us magnify the work of Jesus. The more time we spend listening to Him, the easier obeying His direction will become.

