

## The Holy Spirit We Desperately Need (John 14:15-17)

Please turn to John 14 and this morning our verse-by-verse study comes to v. 15-17 where Jesus teaches on the Holy Spirit to come at Pentecost. C.H. Spurgeon, as he would come to preach each Lord's Day, would ask the Holy Spirit to come in blessing on his preaching, and the Lord blessed it as much or more than any preacher in recent history. It was said as he walked up the steps to where he preached, at each step he prayed silently 'I believe in the Holy Spirit.' We sing 'We believe in the Holy Spirit,' but we need to believe not just that truth and the right information about Him, we need to trust and rely on the Spirit for transformation. If anything significant spiritually will happen here today or in our lives now or in the future it will be by the Spirit of the living God. *Not our might, not my power, but by the Spirit of God*, the prophet says. We need to not only *believe in* the Holy Spirit, we need to see more how much *we're in need of* the Holy Spirit, our desperate need of Him

John 14:15 is the Spirit-inspired Word of Christ. Christ says in v. 15 *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, <sup>17</sup> even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."*

In our text, I want us to see 3 reasons we desperately need the Holy Spirit:

### **#1. He's our Helper to Love and Obey Christ (v. 15-16)**

J.I. Packer wrote: 'Christian people are not in doubt as to work that Christ did ... But the average Christian is in a complete fog as to what work the Holy Spirit does. Some talk of the Spirit of Christ in the way that one would talk of the Spirit of Christmas...But most, perhaps, do not think of the Holy Spirit at all, and have no positive ideas of any sort about what He does. They are for practical purposes in the same position as the disciples whom Paul met at Ephesus'<sup>1</sup> (Acts 19:2 *'we have not heard...there is a Holy Spirit'*) But Jesus made sure His disciples heard about the Holy Spirit in v. 16, and He started describing the Spirit as a helper He would send from the Father.

v. 16 begins with *'and'* in most translations, and that means it continues the thought of v. 15, it's connected to v. 15, and I would suggest to you that the call to love and obey there sets up the need for help in v. 16. Jesus promises He will ask the Father to give us a Helper in v. 16, and in context I think the help we need includes loving, obeying Christ. The basic Greek idea is one called alongside to help. It's help called to be *with you*, literally *by your side*

NIV translates 'counselor' instead of help. D.A. Carson says that isn't bad, but only as "long as 'legal counsellor' is understood, not 'camp counsellor' or 'marriage counselor' - and even so, [this] extends beyond the legal sphere ... [KJV] 'Comforter' was not bad in Elizabethan English, when the verb 'to comfort' meant 'to strengthen, give succour to, to encourage, to aid' (from Latin...'to strengthen'). In today's ears, 'Comforter' sounds...like a quilt"<sup>2</sup>

This isn't the comfort of a security blanket like Linus as he walks around. Don't think of just someone cheering you up after a battle, think of someone who strengthens you for the battle, and is with you side by side step by step. Don't just think of an advisor, think of an advocate legally, a paralegal or an attorney or mediator, as the Greeks used for one by the side helping in court

[same word used of Jesus in 1 Jn 2:1, Spirit here is 'another advocate']

This Greek word *paraclete* has 2 parts: the 2nd part is Greek for 'to call,' 1st part *para* means alongside even in English words like *parallel*. *Paramedics* are helpers called to the side of one needing medical help and they'll stay by the side to give as much assistance as needed all the way, even life support. The Holy Spirit is a helper of believers by their side, supplying every need, giving assistance in every way all along the way. He's our spiritual lifeblood and life support sustaining our spiritual life. He comes alongside us to help. He's not some impersonal force, He's a person. Notice v. 17 uses personal pronouns 'him' and 'he,' not 'it.' So don't think of the Spirit as a power to help, think of Him as a person to help. The Holy Spirit is a 'he' not an 'it.' In the beginning of John's gospel it explains Jesus was with and was God and was the Creator of all. In the beginning of the Bible, it says God created the heavens and the earth, and the next verse says the Spirit of God moved over the waters and was involved in creation as well. In that chapter God as Father, Son, and Spirit says *Let us make man in our image...So God created* [plural noun/singular verb] *man in his own image* [*his*=1 God/*our*=persons]

The first use of the word 'helper' is woman made a fit or suitable helper for man (2:18). Helper isn't an inferior role or implying lack in the helper, it actually implies lack and need for the one who needs help. Virtually every other time that Heb. word *helper* is used in the OT it speaks of God's role as helper of man, so let that encourage you wives: the calling to be a helper to your husband is part of God's image and there's no higher greater role in the universe than to be a helper like God. It's not a lowly role, that's God's role, and it's a way to reflect God's image relationally. And notice in v. 16, Jesus says the Spirit will be '*another Helper,*' the idea is another helper like Jesus.

[In Isa 9:6 Jesus is called *wonderful counselor,* Spirit is *another counselor*]

Just as Jesus helped His disciples on earth, the Spirit will when Jesus leaves. The Father was Israel's helper, so is the Son and Spirit for us. One writes: 'the Spirit's presence with the disciples will replace Jesus' encouraging and strengthening presence with them while on earth ... "helping presence" captures the import of the term better than any other ... the dominant idea is of someone who offers assistance in a situation in which help is needed."<sup>3</sup>

[Rom. 8:26 says '*the Spirit helps us in our weakness...*']

Jesus had physically come alongside the disciples to help for 3 years now, caring, comforting, counseling, challenging, convicting, conforming us to His image, calling for love and obedience -- now spiritually the Spirit will come alongside the disciples beginning at Pentecost to continue that work. Earlier John's gospel said the Spirit had not been given yet because Jesus had not yet been glorified when He went back to heaven (7:39). As Jesus is about to go back to His Father in heaven, He promises in v. 16 to ask Him to send them another Helper who will be with them forever, not just 3 years. Acts 2:38-39 says the promised Spirit is now for all believers at saving faith

The Greek word for Jesus *asking the Father* here is different than the word in v. 13-14 for us asking in prayer. Every time Jesus talks about us praying to God, He uses a specific word in their language for a request from a lower position to a superior like in v. 13-14. But the word in v. 15 for Jesus asking of His Father is a specific word for asking among equals, and it's always the word used for Jesus asking His Father.<sup>4</sup> Jesus is equal to God the Father and in v. 16 He makes clear the Spirit is also equal to Him, too, as *another equal*

The Greek language also has different words translated 'another' in English. One is *heteros*, which means 'another of a different kind,' like heterosexual means different genders, or heterodox means doctrine of a different nature. Paul uses *heteros* for the law of sin and another law of God (Rom 7:22-23) and 'another gospel' (Gal 1:6-7), it's another of a different kind and quality.

But here in v. 16 Jesus uses the Greek *allos*, a word often meaning 'another of the same kind,' ex: other brothers in the same family (Mt 4:21), *turn the other cheek* is the same face (5:39), another hand just like the other (12:13), other seed of the same nature (13:5), another parable like the rest (13:24), other sheep He'll equally save (Jn 10:16), another member of the disciples (Jn 18:15). That's the Greek word in v. 16 for the Spirit from the Father: another of the same kind and nature, another equal member of the Trinity.

We can also see the Trinity in what Jesus says in v. 15: *If you love me, you will keep my commandments.* Only God speaks that way, and that wording is straight from the Ten Commandments where God promises blessings to *'thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.'* (Ex 20:6). Jesus is God, and He applies to His commands the very words of God's Ten Commandments, as if to say 'I Am the same God who spoke from Sinai.' 1 God in 3 persons. Mt 28:19 *'baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit [not "names"; 1 name of all 3 on equal level in grammar], and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age'* (NIV).

The Holy Spirit is an equal part of that commission to obey everything that Jesus commanded. Mt 28:19 basically reiterates Jn 14:15 before He goes to heaven. And when He says I'll be with you always I think He's reiterating v. 16, the promise of the Spirit to be with them forever. How is Jesus always with His people throughout this age of the church? Not physically, but thru His promised Spirit, who helps us fulfill obeying everything He commands.

This was promised in the OT, a new covenant where the Lord would write His law on hearts, in other words loving obedience like v. 15, and all would know Him in that covenant in a saving way like v. 17 (Jer. 31:33-34). It was at this last supper in the upper room that Jesus announced the new covenant was about to come through His blood poured out for many, and the Spirit to be in them, and the OT connects that to obeying like v. 15 here. In Ezekiel's parallel promises of the new covenant, Ezek 36:27 promises God's people in the future: *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you...to obey my rules* That's the New Covenant ministry of the Holy Spirit, and it's here in v. 17 that Jesus says the Spirit will be in you, which is what we need to obey His commands in v. 15. Notice in v. 15 obedience flows from love for the Lord. What is the fruit of the Spirit? Gal 5:22 says *'the fruit of the Spirit is love...'*

The first and foremost fruit of the Spirit is love, and that's what comes first and to the forefront of our passage in v. 15 setting up the need for the Spirit in v. 16. Loving the Lord with all of our heart, soul, and strength is first and foremost, the first and greatest commandment. Loving Jesus in v. 15 comes before obeying His commands so it's our first and greatest need for a Helper to help in what we can't on our own. We need the Spirit whose fruit is love. The *agape* love God calls us to we can't do without the Spirit as our Helper.

The word 'love' is used 8x in just a few verses (v. 15-24), so it's key to this whole section. Love is the fruit of the Spirit, and in v. 15 obedience is fruit of that love. The old Scottish preacher Alexander MacLaren explained: 'The principle that underlies these words, then, is this; that love is the foundation of obedience, and obedience is the sure outcome and result of love.'<sup>5</sup> Or in Mr. Spurgeon's words, love is first in v. 15 'because it is first in importance and first in experience... Obedience must have love as its mother, nurse, and food. The essence of obedience lies in the hearty love which prompts ... if the heart does not beat with love, religion falls to the ground like a withered leaf in autumn. Love is the chief jewel in the bracelet of obedience.'<sup>6</sup>

In Jesus' words in v. 15: '*If you love me, you will keep my commandments.*' One scholar points out this word for keep or obey means 'watchful care, to cherish and to hold as a treasure, to take all pains not to lose ... whose heart thus cherishes the precepts will, of course, "keep" or "obey" them, although this is more the resultant effect ... love, obedience...is both a mark of the Spirit's presence in us and of our knowledge of what and who he really is.'<sup>7</sup>

How is the Spirit our Helper in this love? How does He help us love Jesus? Rom 5 says '*God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us... God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*' (v. 5, 8). This is where this love starts, Christ shows His love for us on the cross and 1 John 4:19 says *we love Him because He first loved us*. The love we have isn't natural to us, it's the love of God poured into our hearts through the Spirit God gives us, Rom 5:5 says and the Spirit opens eyes to see His love shown in dying for us on the cross. The love of Christ compels us, Paul says in 2 Cor 5, knowing He died for us

How do we love Jesus more? A little girl once asked an old preacher that question. And the wise old preacher told her to think of Jesus' love for her on the cross all that week. The next Sunday she told the preacher how much she loved Jesus, because He first loved her. The Spirit was at work in her as she focused on His love for her, and that bore the fruit of the Spirit in love, which bears the fruit of obedience. Hosea 12:6 says '*So you, by the help of your God, return, hold fast to love...*' Ask for the help of the Helper, 'O for grace to love Thee more!' By His help, pray 'more love to Thee, O Christ!'

The Spirit is our Helper to Love and Obey Christ, that's our #1 need of Him  
 2<sup>nd</sup> way we desperately need Him: **As our Teacher in the Truth of Christ**  
<sup>17</sup> *even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive ...*

That's talking about the unsaved world, natural men who can't see the Spirit and can't know or receive supernatural truths. 1 Cor 2:14 *'the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned'* (NKJV) But He says to believers in v. 17 *'you know him...'* Do you know the Spirit?

Notice v. 17 calls Him *the Spirit of truth*. That's His essence and His nature. Earlier in John 4:24 Jesus said *'God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth'* (NKJV). This is essential to true worship. Eph. 5 says *'be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father, and be subject to one another'* (v. 18-20 NASB). That's what Spirit-filled worship looks like: it's not about whether hands are down or up, it's not about how revved up the music is, it's about whether true thankfulness and praise is going up to God the Father for the glory of Christ's name. It's not about style, it's about singing from the heart to God. It's not about if we sing hymns hundreds of years old in hymnals or psalms that are 3000 years old or newer spiritual songs written 3 years ago.

Paul says when we're filled with the Spirit we minister to each other in a variety of ways. If we're filled with the Spirit, we're not giving complaints about the worship, we're giving thanks to God in it, Paul says. Being Spirit-filled is being yielded to God, not our preference, being submitted to others. The Spirit isn't limited to one tradition or our experience. The mark of God's Spirit isn't externalism or emotionalism, though we can use more passion in worship. It's not about saying amen in sermons, though that wouldn't be bad. How do we know when the Spirit of truth is at work? Jesus doesn't leave us to wonder in these words from the upper room. Look at 15:26 where it says: **15:26** *when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me*

So the Spirit of truth points people to the truth about Christ. The Spirit bears witness of Christ's truth, draws attention to Christ. The Helper helps point us to Christ, not point us to crazy experiences. He helps point us to Christ. His goal isn't us emphasizing or focusing on the Spirit, His goal is focusing on God's Son, emphasizing Christ. His work is to bear witness about Christ, and when He's at work in us we'll witness for Christ, too (v. 27, Acts 1:8).

As the Spirit came at Pentecost these disciples bore witness of Him (Acts 2) and the mark of that Spirit-filled church was focus on Christ's Word (2:42). Eph 5 and Col 3 give the exact same results when Christ's Spirit fills us and when Christ's word richly fills us. The Spirit-filled life is a Word-filled life.

**16:13** *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth ...* I experience that every week of my life as I study the Word, I trust the Spirit guides me to God's truth. Not by mystical feelings, but prayerfully reading the Spirit-inspired Scripture, making sure it's true as He guides me to other truths and passages, knowing the truth will be consistent with all the truth of God's Word. The disciples didn't have the NT yet, but the Spirit came and guided them and guarded them from error while the NT was being written. Now we have all the truth and the Spirit guides us in His all-sufficient Word

If you want to hear God speak, don't close your Bible. I don't experience God's Spirit of truth when I go away from His Word of truth. Jesus says the Spirit of truth guides us back to the truth, and the Word is truth, Jesus says in 17:17. If things distract from or draw away from the Word the Spirit gave us, that's not the work of the Spirit Jesus gave us. The Spirit is our Teacher, and as a human teacher or preacher, I don't think it's more spiritual for me to have no notes or study and just trust the Spirit's leading for 50 minutes or so up here, 'as the Spirit leads.' I trust the Spirit's leading during the week for 15-20 hours or so of study guiding me to truth as I sit, not just the time I stand up. I also trust what the Spirit inspired to Timothy 'study/be diligent'<sup>8</sup>

16:14 says the Spirit will glorify Jesus. If he's glorified, the Spirit's at work. Look at 14:26: *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 the teacher He helps us remember the words of Jesus] I trust you've experienced that as you witness or share with people, things Jesus said come to your mind, you remember verses or principles, maybe not word-for-word and maybe you never consciously memorized that text, but the Spirit brings His truth to mind and to bear in ways and you knew it wasn't just you. When that happens, thank God for the Spirit, glorify Christ, which is what the Spirit does and wants you to do. When the Spirit prompts you to speak truth to someone, don't quench the Spirit, trust Him as Helper. Some of us need to apply this point by relying on the Spirit more in prayer, others need to be reading the Spirit-inspired Scripture more, most of us need more of both. By way of application, here's verses to pray with open Bible:

-Ps 143:10 *'Teach me to do your will...Let your good Spirit lead me'*  
 -Pray like Paul in Ephesians for God to *give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe ... that he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being* (Eph 1:17-19, 3:16)

We desperately need the Holy Spirit as our helper to love and obey Christ, and as our teacher in the truth of Christ, 3rdly finally we need the Spirit as:

**Our inner source of life for Christ**

End of Jn 14:17: *...You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.*

God's Spirit has always been *with* God's people, since Genesis (6:3, 41:38). Even before Pentecost in Acts 2, no one could be saved without the Spirit of God. That's why earlier in John 3 Jesus told Nicodemus he'd never enter the kingdom unless he was born of the Spirit, meaning regenerated by the Spirit as Jesus explained *"...that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit"* (Jn 3:6-9). In the end of John 6 Jesus said *'no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father...It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all.'*

Salvation is a sovereign work of the Spirit of God to give life to a spiritually dead child like a second birth, a spiritual rebirth from above, a supernatural work our natural flesh would and could never bring about. Our flesh is no help at all, so fallen man has always needed the Helper, the Spirit of God *with us* quickening, convicting (16:8), converting by the Spirit (Titus 3:5). If the Spirit wasn't with them or us, we would never be saved. But notice at the end of v. 17 the prepositions and verbs: *dwells with you* [present tense] *and will be* [future tense] *in you*. This was part of the new covenant promise in the OT, God would put His Spirit in His people. After Jesus leaves, His Spirit in the book of Acts and the rest of the NT is now *in* every believer, a more intimate internal relationship, sealing an eternal relationship, Eph 1:13 and end of v. 16 here says it's forever. Rom 8 makes clear all who have the Spirit will never be separated from the Spirit of God or the love of Jesus. In the new covenant age of the church, the Spirit is with and *in* every believer.



Acts 1:8 is where Jesus reiterates this promise to receive power when God's Spirit would come on and in His followers, and that's what happened. Peter by this inner source of life was changed from a being a chicken before a girl (at a fire as he fearfully denied Jesus) to a man bold as a lion before crowds who killed Jesus in Acts 2. Thomas who doubted the Lord's resurrection is in Acts giving powerful testimony of the resurrection (4:33). Self-seeking James becomes self-giving James, the 1st apostle to die. John is transformed from son of thunder to an apostle of love. How? All by God's Spirit in them

### **1<sup>st</sup> application: Rely on His transforming power in you**

Do you need change? Trust the Spirit as your inner source of life you live. As He convicts you, take steps of change. Ask His help to renew your mind. If you aren't sure how to pray in struggle, He intercedes for you, Rom 8:26. 2 Cor 3:18 says of our transformation '*this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*' Gospel Transformation Bible: 'we share great blessings through the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit, whom we received the moment we believe in Jesus (Rom. 8:9, Gal 3:2). The Spirit is the consummate Helper. He frees us from trying to live the Christian life in our own power. The gospel is not "do more and try harder,;" rather, it is "see Jesus and surrender to the Spirit"...The Holy Spirit constantly draws attention to Jesus--nestling the gospel into our hearts and applying the finished work of Jesus to our lives (Rom. 8:16). To see and enjoy grace is the supreme work of the Spirit, as he bears witness to the truth and comfort of God's Word in our hearts.'<sup>9</sup>

### **2<sup>nd</sup> application: Remember He's holy so be holy**

1 Cor 6:19 *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is **in you**, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?*<sup>20</sup> *For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.*

If the Holy Spirit is *in you*, that should affect our holiness outwardly, purity.

### **Last application: Rejoice in the Spirit in you forever**

The Spirit helps us fulfill our chief end to love God and enjoy Him forever. The fruit of the Spirit is love and then joy. Paul in Romans says salvation's kingdom is about '*joy in the Holy Spirit*' and prays God '*will fill you with all joy...so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope*' (14:17, 15:13). The Thessalonians were even in '*much affliction, with joy in the Holy Spirit*' (1 Thess 1:6). Let me encourage you to a renewed interest in learning about the Holy Spirit and rejoicing at all He does for and in you.

For Thy Gift of God the Spirit, With us, in us, ever to be,  
 Pledge of life and Hope of glory, Saviour, we would worship Thee.  
 He who in Creation's dawning, Moved across the waters deep,  
 Still across our nature's darkness Moves to wake our souls from sleep.

Moves to stir, to draw, to quicken; Pierces heart to sense our sin;  
 Then, Himself, the Pledge, He seals us— Saving Advocate within.  
 He, the mighty God, indwells us: His to strengthen, help, empow'r;  
 His to overcome the Tempter—Ours to call in danger's hour.

He it is, the Living Author, Wakes to life the sacred Word;  
 Reads with us its holy pages, And reveals our risen Lord.  
 He it is who works within us, Teaching rebel hearts to pray;  
 He whose holy intercessions Rise for us both night and day.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*, (IVP, 1973), p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Carson, *John*, p. 499.

<sup>3</sup> Kostenberger, *John*, p. 436.

<sup>4</sup> The Greek verb is *aiteo* in v. 13-14 and *erotao* in v. 16.

<sup>5</sup> MacLaren, *Expositions of Holy Scripture*, vol. 7, part 2, p. 315.

<sup>6</sup> Spurgeon, "Love's Law and Life," *MTP*, 32:652-53.

<sup>7</sup> Lenski, *John*, p. 995, 1001.

<sup>8</sup> 2 Tim 2:15.

<sup>9</sup> *Gospel Transformation Bible*, p. 1437

<sup>10</sup> Margaret Clarkson, "For Thy Gift of God the Spirit."