



John 16:4b-15

“The Creeds And The Holy Spirit” (3rd in a series of 3 on the Great Creeds)

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“Following Christ From City Center!”

JOHN 16:4b-15 "THE CREEDS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT"

Part Of Farewell Discourse, Prepare To Depart, 2000 Years Now

2') 16:4b-15 THE COMING AND MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT// 14:1-31.

Highly Trinitarian Passage: Divine Revelation Unfolded

a) vv.4b-6 What Jesus Says And Does Not Say. Revelation Unfolds

4b 1 I did not *say these things* to you from the beginning, *because* I was with you. //14:1-31: Departure, Spirit, Challenges
 Not Fitting Then, Jesus Localized
 Do Not Understand Prior To Death & Resurrection

5 2 But now I am going to him who sent me; To The Father, Farewell Discourse

2' yet none of you asks me, "Where are you going?" Departure //13:36a, 14:5
 Focus On Themselves, Not Him

6 1' But *because* I have *said these things* to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Change Of Relationship: Weaned Away
 Do Not Comprehend Meaning Of His Departure

b) vv.7-11 The Coming Of The Holy Spirit And His Three-fold Ministry To The World.

7 Spirit After Glorification, Spirit's Relation To The World
 Solemn Asserivation //14:16-17, 26; 15:26-27

1 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: Only With Spirit Do Disciples Understand Jesus In Depth Over Time
 Hard For Them To Believe!

1 it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, Spirit Will Be With Them Always, Everywhere

2 the Counselor (Advocate) will not come to you; Paraclete = One Who Comes Alongside, 7:39, 11:4
 Counselor Here Does Not Mean Modern Therapist, Legal Term

1' but if I go, He Goes In Cross, Resurrection, Ascension, Session = Glorification Of Jesus
 Not Until The Deposit Of Revelation Is Completed Does The Spirit Come

2' I will send him to you.// 20:22, Risen Jesus Sends Spirit, Born Again 3:5
 Spirit As Prosecutor In A Cosmic Trial: 3 Counts
 Benefit 1: Prosecutes The World

8 1 And when he comes he will convince (expose) the world 3:20, 12:45-47, Light, Hostile Cosmos In Hiding
 concerning sin, 14:24, 2 Tim. 4:2, Spirit Creates Personal Crises!

2 and righteousness, Sin = Problem, Righteousness = Cure, Judgment = Spiritual Warfare

3 and judgment: Continues The Revealing/Judging Work Of Jesus

9 1' concerning sin, Legal Ethos, Trial Language, Grounds Of Conviction, Revelation Exposes
 because they do not believe *in me*; Unbelief In Jesus = The Very Essence Of Sin, 12:48a, 8:44-47

10 2' concerning righteousness, Jesus Vindicated (Shown Righteous) By Resurrection/Glorification

11 3' concerning judgment, 1 Jn. 2:20, 3:7, 1 Tim. 3:16
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 Sin Is Rejection Of Jesus, Justice Is God's Verdict On Jesus, The Evil One Is Routed

a') v.12 What Jesus Says And Does Not Say.

12 I have yet many things to say to you, //v.4b, Jesus Promises To Continue Speaking
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b') vv.13-15 The Coming And Teaching Ministry Of The Holy Spirit.

13 1 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all (the) truth Relation Of The Holy Spirit To Believing Community, 14:26
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-2 for he will not speak on his own authority; The Deposit Of Revelation Is Already Present
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+2' but whatever he hears he will speak, Pneumatology Subordinate To Christology
 3:32-35, 7:16-18, Just As Jesus Did, 5:19-30

1' and will declare to you the things that are to come.// (3x) Announce, Spirit Interprets Past, Predicts Future
 Spirit Not Offer New Revelation Independent Of Christ
 Spirit Is The Communications Link With The Risen Jesus

14 1 He will glorify me, The Spirit Shines Light On Jesus The Son
 //Odes Of Solomon 3:10

2 for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 14:26, Holy Spirit Is Son's Agent
 Spirit Does Not Offer New Revelation Independent Of Christ

15 1' All that the Father has is mine; Astounding Personal Claim, Given All By Father: 1:18, 5:22, 26, 13:3, 17:2, 7
 Benefit No. 2 = Keeps Church In Truth

2' therefore, I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15:15
 Spirit Gives Gifts For Service (1 Cor. 12-14), Grows Jesus' Character In Us (Gal. 5)

THE CREEDS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.”

J O H N 1 6 : 1 3

There are some odd jobs out there! One I’d never heard of was featured in an article titled "Sober Companions Shadow the Stars." It told how- in order to guard their investments- movie companies and concert promoters assign *sober companions* to stars with addictions. With all the money involved, they can’t afford a production to be scuttled by an out-of-control star. Also known as *minders* or *clean-living assistants*- the politically correct title, these folk make sure the star is never alone or around any who might slip them drugs or alcohol. Tim Tankosic- one of this elite profession- explains, "The point is to be a rock, a friendly face, a reminder of recovery, a safe person."

On a typical movie location, Tankosic lives with the celebrity away from the rest of the cast and crew. In the morning they meditate. He then accompanies them to the set, then to a support group meeting. During off-hours, Tankosic tries to make sure the star has fun, but steers them clear of *slippery places*: any locale drugs or alcohol are available. Another *minder* said discretion is critical. "I'm like a wisp of smoke," he said.¹

Now with some obvious differences, this is one of the roles of the Holy Spirit in the church. The Spirit is our companion, our minder and reminder, our clean-living assistant, steering us- if we are cooperative- away from *slippery places*. Left to ourselves, we decline and devolve because of what’s *in us*- an inbred taste for sin and rebellion, and what’s *around us*- a world organized by its current ruler to distract and turn us away from devotion to Jesus Christ for some supposedly better deal. P.T. Forsyth was right, “Unless there is *within us* that which is *above us*, we shall soon yield to that which is *about us*.”²

A lack of spiritual vitality and courage, as well as ethical compromises, are all symptoms of a lack of attention to the Holy Spirit. Jesus is not just an ancient teacher whose wise principles we follow apart from a relationship; he is a living Lord available to us now through the mediation of the Holy Spirit who is his alter-ego: *another Comforter, another*

¹ Rachel Abramowitz and Dana Calvo, "Life In Hollywood: 'Sober Companions' Shadow the Stars," *Chicago Tribune* (4-2-02).

² PreachingToday.com search under John 16:4b-15.

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Advocate, another Defender and Teacher. The risen Jesus is now at the Father's right hand- the place of rule and authority, and the Holy Spirit is our immediate supervisor. To ignore the Spirit is to dismiss Jesus and his wisdom. We Methodists are not unitarians, the Father only; nor are we binitarians- the Father and the Son only; we are fully Trinitarian- the Father, the Son, *and the Holy Spirit*, and this is why the Creeds are organized in three articles in unfolding historical order. We say *I believe* of each person, and the church has taken great care to defend against the idea that the Son and the Spirit are less in deity than the Father. Jesus is more than an errand boy; the Holy Spirit is not the Star War's impersonal *The Force be with you*. The Spirit and the Son are worthy of worship, and to them prayer is made.

It was the mission of the Jews to learn the ways of the one God who rescued them from Egypt and made them a people. Over time they learned this One was not like the *many gods and goddesses* of ancient paganism and not just the *high God* of a tribe but the *one and only God who made it all*. This is the revelation of the Father in the Old Testament with the Son and the Spirit hinted at but not fully shown. As one thinker of the early church put it, "The Old Testament proclaimed the Father clearly, but the Son more darkly; the new Testament plainly revealed the Son, but only indicated the deity of the Spirit."³

God was patient in revealing the internal relationships of the divine life lest his own people be overwhelmed. First the Father, with the Son and the Spirit in the shadows, working mostly invisibly. Then, in Gospel times, the full display of Jesus the Son showing the Father's kingdom with the Spirit as an invisible source of guidance and power. Finally, based on Jesus' teaching at the end of his life, the Holy Spirit was put on full display as our living link with the risen Jesus and the ground-level superintendent of the church's operations.⁴ To the church is given the revelation of the rich interior life of the God of the Jews, one God with a relational heart of three persons who indwell one another so that the work of one of the work of all. When the Father is named as the actor, the Son and the Spirit are his two invisible hands;⁵ and where the Son is named, the Father wills the action and the Spirit provides the spiritual energies; and where the Spirit is highlighted, there the Son and the Father are fully implicated. But here it stopped. A long, slow unveiling of the Father from the call of Abraham to the conception of Jesus, and then- in comparatively quick succession, a bit over thirty years, the Son and Spirit. The secret is now out and entrusted to the church. The Trinity as trio, not quartet or quintet. For all her honors, Mary does not

³ Gregory of Nazianzus in *Oration 31.10*, as quoted in Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Creed* (New York, N.Y.,: Doubleday, 2003), 217.

⁴ Peter Kreeft, *Fundamentals of the Faith*(San Francisco, Ca.: Ignatius, 1988), 141.

⁵ A favorite image of the Eastern churches.

get in, neither does the church.⁶ Mary is her Son's first disciple, and the church are all his followers across the ages, but with God it stops with *the three who are one*, God in a category of one. The full showing of the persons of the Trinity was completed at Pentecost. It then took the church over three hundred years of rigorous debate and reflection to come to a consensus statement on how to speak about what God had revealed of the complex relationality of the divine life, and that document is the *Nicene Creed*, which is not often used in our churches. *Yahweh*, the Lord God of the Jews, is our God, and the proper name of the one God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Jews in all their pain and mystery remain family to whom we are ever-grateful, but we claim to have more revelation from God than they do, thus a New Testament as a supplement to an Old, and if that sounds arrogant, so be it, because if God did not turn on new lights in Jesus and then secure it with the Holy Spirit in the church, our vision of God is fraudulent and the church a mass deception. We didn't ask for this fresh deposit of revelation. God did it, and then we had to deal with it, thus the long debate, and finally the Creeds as meaty summaries of what we teach and do not teach.

It seems odd to say because it's so obvious, but Jesus is not with us; no one has seen him except in dreams and visions for two thousand years. He is- as the Gospels teach- risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, glorified at the right hand of the Father- the place of cosmic rule and authority, but he is present to us now through his Spirit sent as a living link. What you know of Christ you know only through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, even if you don't know how you know. No one can come to faith and make the confession *Jesus is Lord* without the immediate aid of the Spirit.⁷ All knowledge of Jesus is mediated. Our companion is the one Jesus sent as our Helper in his absence. The Holy Spirit is the spirit *of* Jesus and the Spirit *from* Jesus. The Holy Spirit is with us for multiple purposes:

- to guide us towards the good and away from the evil,
- to inspire us to moral courage in the face of injustice and lies,
- to illumine Scripture so that we hear God's address to us in the Bible,
- to push us towards speaking of Jesus and into his mission,
- to disable the patterns of sin which have cut such deep grooves of habit in our hearts,
- to built into us new habits and reserves of goodness that we call the fruit of the Spirit,

⁶ It remains a disappointment in some systematic treatments for the Holy Spirit not to receive equal attention with the Father and Son. Examples include Roger Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief* (Downer's Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2002) and Justo Gonzalez, Aida Perez, *An Introduction to Christian Faith* (Nashville, TN: Abington, 2002), 6, where the pattern is to jump from Jesus to the church without a chapter on the Holy Spirit. Is this, possibly, a bad effect of the *filioque* which downgrades the person of the Spirit?

⁷ 1 Cor. 12:3.

to give us his multiple gifts and empowerments for service,
to inspire and guide our prayers when we are in the dark,
to bolster our faith to ask for great things from God,
to enliven and inspire our worship with divine energy and holy love,
to remind us that the Jesus who set us free is the only one who can keep us faithful.⁸

The Holy Spirit takes Jesus' stuff, all he received from the Father, and teaches it so we can apply it in new circumstances. The Holy Spirit is the immediacy of God breathing light and joy, courage and toughness into the awareness of God's children. And if you don't want someone observing and meddling with your thoughts and desires, then you simply do not understand who you are, what you are capable of, and how our world and its culture are currently organized to separate you from the ways of God.

We do not live in a safe and entertaining spiritual theme park but on a field of battle where casualties are all too real. I often feel like a combat medic. Now because God regards our freedom so highly, we can resist our *minder*, what the Bible calls *grieving the Holy Spirit*⁹ - who can be offended because the Spirit is personal in the supreme sense,¹⁰ but the results are never good. My heart grows hard to God; I lose my way because I choose to keep my Protector and Teacher at a distance. Listening to the Holy Spirit and learning from our *divine coach* the ways of Jesus is the path to abundant life and to having a good effect on people around us. A life filled with the Spirit makes a person different in delightful ways as every human capacity is sharpened. You become quick to forgive, eager to show mercy; you develop new desires and see God in places others ignore. The Holy Spirit never abandons the believer, but if consistently grieved may back up a half-step from our awareness, just enough perhaps for life and the enemy to ring our bell and get our attention! God the Holy Spirit uses whatever consequences come from unwise actions to turn us back to fresh cooperation. We do not follow Jesus on our own; we have a helper, a very wise teacher.

The realm of the Holy Spirit is the great unexplored territory of the spiritual life, but it must be plunged into like a dive into a deep pool. It's why Jesus referred to being *baptized in or with the Holy Spirit*.¹¹ You are engulfed in a new reality. We are speaking about God

⁸ For a summary of the Spirit's work as highlighted in Scripture, see Johnson, *The Creed*, "We Believe ... In The Holy Spirit," 219-223.

⁹ Eph. 4:30.

¹⁰ On the Spirit as personal, see Gerald O'Collins, *The Tripersonal God* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1999), Chapter 9, "The Personal Existence of the Holy Spirit," 165-173.

¹¹ See the appendix on the baptism and filling of the Holy Spirit.

the Spirit, bringing the riches of Jesus Christ into the core of human person and there setting up a permanent residence as a life-giving fountain.¹² As John portrays it on Easter Eve with only the ten present-because Judas is now dead and Thomas absent, Jesus blew his breath into them and announced, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained,”¹³ Just as God blew life into a little clay Adam and awakened him, so Jesus blew the winds of divine life into his friends. And with the Spirit comes authority to set people free or else leave them in bondage if they are not ready to be rid of their sins. Jesus gives his Spirit to his people so his ministry continues through them, and that *them* is *us*! We are his ambassadors. His wind is in our sails.

Now because Jesus was limited in space and time and in the number of people with whom he could have primary relationship, his deep reach was limited to twelve associates- and on occasion a larger group of seventy and up to one hundred twenty at the end.¹⁴ But now that he’s been freed from the limits of space and time by his resurrection from dead and his return to invisible realm from which he came- what John calls his *glorification*¹⁵ or his being *lifted up*,¹⁶ he and the Father now send the Spirit upon the church as our invisible companion with visible results. He is with us as our minder, our clean- living assistant, able to take the things of Jesus and apply them us on a constant basis. The reach of Jesus is now global. God the Father *above* us; God the Son *beside* us for a season of revelation as Jesus, and now the God the Holy Spirit *within* us as a living link with the world above and its vast resources. What an amazing gift God has given, not to leave us alone with four books about Jesus- good as they are- but to put his alter-ego within each and all of us to plunge us deeper into his living truths. The Holy Spirit enabled God the Son to be *with us* as Jesus in his conception; the Holy Spirit enabled Jesus to be *for us* during his lifetime by revealing to him the Father’s will and applying divine power;¹⁷ and now the same Holy Spirit is now *in us* and

¹² John 7:37-39.

¹³ John 20:22.

¹⁴ Luke 10:1-2.

¹⁵ John 6:14.

¹⁶ John 3:1, 8:1, 12:32.

¹⁷ John 5:19-30 is Jesus’ description of his lived reality. He only did what he was shown and only spoke what he heard.

among us as a link with the world above and its operations here below.¹⁸

Someone has said, “If you want to know about water, don’t ask a fish,” but I have found a fable that challenges the proverb a bit. It’s the story of the shark and the whale. Both were swimming the deeps when the shark cruised up for a conversation, “You are so much older than I, and wiser too. Could you tell me where the ocean is?”

“The ocean is what you are in now.”

The shark would not believe, “Come on, tell me where the ocean is so I may find it!”

The whale repeated, “The ocean is here, now; you are in it.”

The shark swam away searching for the ocean.¹⁹

Could it be that we are *in the Spirit* now and know it not? But what if we asked the Spirit to make the truths of Jesus contemporary? What if we prayed every morning, “Come, Holy Spirit. Plunge me deeply into Jesus today. Let me see through his eyes, feel what he feels. As I read Scripture, let it speak.” After all, it is the Spirit’s assignment to take what it our Lord’s and declare it to us. This is the meaning of the second half of verse 13, “...but whatever he hears he will speak, and will declare to you the things that are to come.”

There is much more to this faith that we’ve experienced. It is more supernatural than the Methodists are want to allow these days! The Pentecostals and Charismatics- for all their sometimes wacky excesses and blind spots- are right about making room for the indwelling of the Spirit and welcoming his gifts that make all the difference in the life of a church. A church run on human energies may be a well-intended institution, but it will not be a church with power to rescue people from the kingdom of darkness because that takes more than ideas and programs; it takes the immediate power of God’s Spirit. To survive and thrive Main Street will have to fling open its windows and pray, “Blow, Spirit, blow, that these old coals and smoldering embers may burst into flame again.” You want a church it takes God to explain, not just a new pastor with lots of neurotic energy and a good library!

Classic Christian faith is Trinitarian, not just at the level of who God is but at the level of experience. The Father sent the Son as accompanied by the Spirit in the incarnation; God the Son assumed flesh in Jesus, as the Creed summarizes, “who was *conceived by the Holy*

¹⁸ Built on a quote from Gerald O’Collins, “We can sum up much of the activity of the Spirit as bringing Jesus to be ‘with us, for us, and in us.’” Through empowering the whole Jesus story, the Spirit makes him *with* us through incarnation, *for* us in his life and ministry, and *in* us as risen from the dead” (ital. ad., *The Tripersonal God*, 168).

¹⁹ Found at <http://answerpot.com/showthread.php?290388-Fwd%3A+Sermon+Resources+for+May+23%2C+Pentecost+-+Part+1>.

Spirit....” Jesus the Son then revealed the kingdom of his Father in the power of the Spirit during three years of public work after his baptism; his every word and deed were heard and seen from above and acted out in front of both sympathetic and hostile witnesses.²⁰ His disciples stood within that circle of power and saw its operations as Jesus’ apprentices. And now that the deposit of divine revelation in the story of Jesus has been completed, the Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit to indwell each believer and keep the church grounded in the truth.²¹ The Holy Trinity is not just a dry doctrine or mathematical conundrum; it is the living reality of God about which the church had to find something to say because it cannot remain silent.²² The church came to birth through the Spirit who sets us apart for God, is open to all people, and binds us together by giving all a share in the riches of God’s grace. *Holy Spirit, holy church, people being transformed in God’s direction. Do you see it?*

Now when the Lord wanted his disciples to understand the Holy Spirit, he chose a special image. In Greek the word is *Paraclete*- not *parakete*! and it comes from two words that mean *to call someone alongside*. So if I say, “Come walk with me,” I have asked you to be my *Paraclete*, and if you carry a shield and sword, you will be my Defender, and if a book my Teacher, and if a candle my Guide- all of which are apt images for facets of the Spirit’s working with us. So if you ever believe you are alone and there is no help, then you have already swallowed two of our Great Enemy’s most potent lies, because if Jesus is a truth teller you are not alone, and the one who is with you is a Helper and an Advocate and a Warrior without equal. Learning to interact with the Spirit makes the Christian life an adventure and gives us the prospect of victory with ourselves and of good effects on others.

“I’m going away,” Jesus said, “but another will soon follow.” Grown men were on the edge of tears. Jesus was about to go through a series of events he called *being glorified*

²⁰ John 5:19-30.

²¹ Whatever the decision on the *filioque* added to the Nicene Creed by the Western church, it is clear that John envisions a joint sending of the Spirit by the Father and the Son to the church after the resurrection, i.e. the Father sends the Spirit (14:16-17, 26), the Spirit is bestowed by Jesus (7:39, 9:30, 34; 20:22), and- in an integrative sense, 15:26, “When the Paraclete comes *whom I will send you from the Father*, the Spirit of truth who *proceeds from the Father*, that one will bear witness about me.” For a discussion of the biblical, theological, and ecumenical issues, see Johnson, *The Creed*, 228-248.

²² Good treatments are Marianne Meye Thompson, *The Promise Of The Father: Jesus And God In The New Testament* (Louisville, KY: WJK, 2000); Ben Witherington & Laura Ice, *The Shadow Of The Almighty: Father, Son, And Spirit In Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002); Craig R. Koester, *The Word Of Life: A Theology of John’s Gospel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), Chapter 6, “The Spirit,” 133-160.

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or *lifted up*. *Lifted up* on the cross in agony, *lifted up* from the grave in new life, *lifted up* in ultimate glorification, and each a step farther away from them. For three years they enjoyed the greatest education ever, 24/7 on the road with Jesus, watching him teach and work and pray down the resources of the kingdom through his rich cooperation with the Holy Spirit, and now all that teamwork is about to end. It wasn't fair; they left everything, and he's about to abandon them. The center of life becomes a gaping hole. You get to know men well on a three year road trip. You bond like a combat unit, because that's what they were, and now he says it's about to end. This is the moment we have in the first scene: "I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' But because I have said these things to you, *sorrow has filled your hearts*." Pain, grief, anger, bewilderment.

Jesus told them it was a good thing he was going away. If he didn't, the one they most needed to thrive without him would never come, "Nevertheless," he continued, "it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Paraclete- that is the Helper, the Counselor, the Advocate, the Defender and Professor- will not come to you, but if I go, *I will send him to you*." Since the deposit of revelation is complete, Jesus has to leave because his job is done. God has shown all we need to come home to God, as Jesus shouted from the cross, "It is finished!" But behind him comes One who will take what he revealed and makes it compelling in every age. Jesus trod the path and blazed a new trail, and now the Spirit is the permanent tour guide. Jesus has been an *external* presence; he would now become an *internal* presence as the Holy Spirit comes to indwell them.

I live inside my skin; you live in yours. We interact as separate selves. So it was with Jesus who lived within our limits. But what if the human spirit is permeable to the Holy Spirit so that it is possible for two persons to indwell one self, say me as the host and the Holy Spirit- or by extension an unholy spirit- as a guest. So when we speak- as we often do- of inviting Jesus into our hearts, what transpires is that the Spirit comes to indwell us and from inside the control room of personality provides a communications link with the risen Lord who now dwells at the Father's right hand. God invisibly above us- *the Father*; God visibly beside us- *Jesus the Son*; God invisibly within with visible effects- *the Holy Spirit*.

In verses 8 through 11 there is a brief catechism on the Spirit's work, that begins, "And when he comes he will convince- *or expose*- the world..." The Holy Spirit is at work everywhere on everyone at all times. And the first work of the Spirit is to expose sin in all its forms, the divine policeman issuing citations. Seeing my dark side is a motivator to seek relief in the one place it can be found. The purpose of spiritual pain is to make me seek the Great Physician. And the final sin, it's most virulent and deadly manifestation, is to be confronted repeatedly by the Holy Spirit with what God has done for me in Christ and not trust him with the whole of life, verse 8: "And when he comes he will expose the world concerning sin, *because they do not believe in me*." Unbelief is a bad habit with no future.

A second work of exposure concerns *righteousness*, meaning the issue of who is rightly related to God, and this case it's only one person, and not any of us. On the cross of Good Friday Jewish leadership and Roman government said No to Jesus and what he had to offer. Jews had every right- according to their Scriptures- to believe that Jesus died cursed as a false prophet.²³ But what do you do when this is the very one God's raises and stamps approved? He is not cursed but blessed, not ultimately cast down but lifted up into God's glory. Jesus is the only one fully certified by God, and it is the Spirit's job to expose the world to this event. If you wish to know and be rightly related to this God, then Jesus is the approved way back into his Father's world. God says, "You are in right relationship with me by placing your trust in who Jesus is and what he's done for you. Verse 10, "And when he comes, he will convince the world concerning righteousness (i.e. how to be rightly related to God) because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more." The Spirit shines light on Jesus Christ as *the righteous one* and the one through whom we come home to God.

A third dimension of the Spirit's work is where Jesus' viewpoint differs sharply from conventional wisdom. He sees *what* and *who* we do not. We feel the world's pain and want relief; Jesus sees the enemy of all and wants him crushed. There is only one foe Jesus had to utterly defeat, and it's not a human being. It's a angel fallen into evil, the devil, Satan, the Evil One, one who delights in misery of all sorts and who orchestrates all that is opposed to God's good plan. That he has considerable reach is indicated by the title of respect he receives from Jesus; he is *the ruler of this world*, a ruler whose government Jesus has come to utterly undo. With tongue in cheek- but only partly! Mark Twain wrote:

"We may not pay [Satan] reverence, for that would be indiscreet, but we can at least respect his talents. A person who has, for untold centuries, maintained the imposing position of spiritual head of four-fifths of the human race, and political head of the whole of it, must be granted the possession of executive abilities of the loftiest order."²⁴

In his every true word, Jesus displaces the lies of the enemy, and in his every kind deed old cruelties are reversed. When spiritual darkness was expelled from people, the anti-kingdom takes a hit as control is wrested away in spiritual hand-to-hand combat by Jesus the Liberator. But it was only when Jesus engaged in his final battle, and when he overcame Satan's most powerful weapon of death, that our Enemy was publicly exposed for the beaten and despicable thing he is. And it is the delight of the Holy Spirit- having shown us our sin and having displayed to us a risen Jesus worthy of our trust, to now display the victory of

²³ Galatians 3:2.

²⁴ PreachingToday.com search under John 16:4-15.

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Jesus over the one who has held the world so long captive, verse 11: “And when he comes he will convince the world concerning judgment, *because the ruler of this world is (already) judged.*” It’s time to switch allegiances.²⁵ My need is exposed by the Spirit. Jesus is the Savior; his righteousness is displayed by the Spirit. The devil is a liar and now dethroned; his defeat is celebrated by the Spirit. Because of universal sin and its deadly effects, I need to be restored to a healed relationship with God; the trustworthy Jesus shows the way and is the way. I have an enemy I cannot defeat; Jesus is my champion. It is a good thing our first baptismal vow sums it up so clearly, “Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin”²⁶ Ours is a multi-dimensional problem: a real foe, a world and culture which reflects alien values, and within each of us a sin problem around which our Enemy can erect a life of rebellion, shame, unbelief, and finally a darkness so deep no one can see. For this cosmic mess there is only one solution- Jesus Christ in his fullness, and it is the delight of the Holy Spirit to shine light on him at every opportunity. God wrote the play, Jesus is the chief actor, and the Holy Spirit keeps him in the spotlight. We are invited to come on stage and find a part in the great drama.

One of the big issues in the church today is overtly theological, and it is the question, Is there fresh revelation from God? Is God showing us new truths which- if they do not outright cancel old truths- at least help us to re-read them and set them in a new context?

If I read verses 13 through 15 correctly, God the Holy Spirit is not revealing new truth which cancels old understandings; God the Holy Spirit is, however, shining light and updating our application of the secure deposit of truth that was laid down and secured in Jesus Christ, so if it is not compatible with him and what he taught- and no form of immorality ever is- then it cannot be new light.

The work of the Spirit is to push the church deeper into the person and work of Jesus Christ, period, and on my read of his larger intentions he does not leave us in our sins but breaks their power and leads us out of them. Charles Wesley taught the early Methodists to sing, “He breaks the power of cancelled sin; he sets the prisoners free; his blood can make the foulest clean; his blood availed for me.”²⁷ Jesus is more interested in our holiness and

²⁵ It is noted by observers that while the Synoptic Gospels contain multiple exorcisms, John contains none in the conventional sense. This does not mean they disagree on the underlying problem, only that John 16:11 casts the whole of Jesus ministry as a single cosmic exorcism. The best treatment of this topic is Graham Twelftree, *In The Name of Jesus: Exorcism Among The Early Christians* (Downer’s Grove, ILL: IVP, 2007).

²⁶ *U.M. Hymnal*, 33.

²⁷ *U.M. Hymnal*, No. 57.

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our long term capacity for joy than in our immediate happiness, but we live in a world that loves good feelings and demands immediate gratification. Whoever, however, whenever, so long as I want it, and who cares, and what business is it of yours anyway? The work of the Holy Spirit is to make us holy and restore our integrity, and apart from Jesus he simply has nothing to say. Is this not the clear meaning of verse 13? “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth, for he will not speak on his own authority; but whatever he hears he will speak, and will declare to you the things that are to come,” so if it’s not the echo of Jesus, it’s not the Holy Spirit and not new light. Contemporary tastes and modern obsessions are not to be equated with divine revelation which constrains and limits us all. We want to do whatever we want whenever we want, and to us all God says No!

The Trinity is undivided. The Holy Spirit is not revealing new truths that goes beyond Jesus. The Father is not now blessing what has been unbleasable. All that the Father has belongs to the Son as his agent in the world, and it is the delight of the Spirit to display in the world the work the Father accomplishes in the Son. “He will glorify *me*,” said Jesus without a hint of reserve in verse 11, “for he will take what is *mine* and declare it to you. All that the Father has is *mine*; therefore, I said that he will take what is *mine* and declare it to you.”

The story of Jesus is found in Four Gospels, and how that core revelation was worked out by the Holy Spirit in the rough and tumble world of the early church is the subject of the rest of the New Testament, and that written record is the raw material with which the Holy Spirit works to maintain the church in the truth, and any church that drifts from this deposit of divine revelation in Scripture, theologically or morally, will eventually be swallowed and rendered spiritually impotent by the culture around it, and that is the battle we face today.

The “ruler of this world” has received a fatal wound, but he is still lashing about to lure God’s own people away from a pure devotion to Jesus Christ and the new life he offers. As circumstances change across time and the church faces challenges, the Holy Spirit leads us into new appropriations of the truth that is in Jesus, and this Lord never leaves us as he finds us. Under his influence the greedy become generous, addicts sober, the immoral chaste outside of and faithful within marriage, the demonized are freed, the heartless become compassionate and the foolish wise. The Holy Spirit is an utterly ruthless exposor and an expert teacher; the Spirit is not for religious thrills; the Spirit’s work is to conform us all to the image of Jesus Christ, because in the next world what is not conformable to him is not allowed. Other arrangements have been made. God’s grace is free; it is also utterly demanding because the goal is our deep and total transformation. It’s how God saves us.

**Phil Thrailkill
Main Street UMC, Greenwood SC
November 25, 2012**

**THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PROMISED HOLY SPIRIT
Multiple Images For A Complex Religious Reality (Talbert, Acts: 8)**

From The Divine Perspective

Image/ Word Picture	Texts	Theological Intent
Baptism/Immersion	Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5, 1 Cor. 12:13	We are surrounded by and plunged into a new spiritual reality which opens us to a new world of knowledge, power and communion.
The Spirit as given/gift	<i>Luke 11:13</i> , Acts 5:32, 8:20, 10:45, 11:17, 15:8	God is the initiator; we are the recipients. Grace/gift dominate. A gift is also actively received.
Spirit is poured out	Acts 2:17-18, 2:33, 10:45	The image is of something being filled up internally from an outside source (e.g. pouring water into a cup). The experience of the Spirit is not only a new set of surroundings but an internal and subjective presence which inhabits and fill the person. A repeatable experience with each new group that comes to faith (Tannehill: 13)
Spirit comes on people	Acts 1:8, 19:15	Spirit as a surprise from divine initiative. Spirit is under God's control, not human manipulation. God is free.
Spirit falls on people	Acts 8:16, 10:44, 11:15	

From The Human Perspective

Image/ Word Picture	Texts	Theological Intent/ Question	Common Testimonies
Spirit is received	Acts 2:28, 8:15, 17, 19; 10:47, 19:2	It's like receiving a gift. Am I receptive?	"When I said Yes, something happened."
Filled with the Spirit	Acts 4:31, 9:17, 6:5, 11:24	New internal presence Am I aware of my need?	"I felt such peace within," "I felt clean and new on the inside," "I have new joy."
Baptized with the Spirit	Acts 1:5, 11:16	New environment, access Am I alert to the Spirit?	"It felt like electricity." "I was surrounded by love," "I felt energy move from my head to my feet."
Experience of power	Acts 1:8	The Spirit enlivens, energizes, gives direction. Do I use the Spirit's gifts?	"I have new desires," "I wanted to testify," "Scripture came alive"

Summary: "These various modes of expression are referring to the same experiential reality: for example, in the story of Cornelius, five of the terms are clearly used interchangeably" (Talbert, Acts, 8):

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|----|-----------------------|--------------|---|
| 1. | "give the Spirit" | 10:45, 11:17 | Divine initiative |
| 2. | "pour out the Spirit" | 10:45 | Envelops people |
| 3. | "Spirit fell on" | 10:44, 11:15 | Surprising, overwhelming presence |
| 4. | "receive the Spirit" | 10:47 | Welcome, reception is required |
| 5. | "baptized in Spirit" | 11:16 | Immersed in holy presence, outward and inward |

We are designed to be inhabited and live in intimate communion with God. In Jesus' giving of the Spirit, this latent and lost capacity is restored and put back into proper usage, individually and in community for our common mission.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION QUESTIONS

vv. 4b-6

1. Why does Jesus wait until the end to give instructions about his departure?
2. What would it have been like to be *with Jesus* 24/7? Then for it to end?
3. How is Jesus like a good parent who knows the right time for family secrets?

vv. 7-11

4. Why the solemn introduction, “Nevertheless, I tell you the truth....”?
5. Why would his “it is to your advantage if I go away” be met with, “Yea, right!”
6. There is a sequence in the unfolding of the divine drama. The Spirit has been in Jesus, but cannot be in the disciples until Jesus goes. Why is this?
7. How would you explain the three-fold work of the Spirit in vv.8-11?
8. Does it bother you that Jesus names Satan as “the ruler of this world (present age)”?

vv. 12-15

9. Why is it wise for Jesus not to tell them everything now?
 10. What does v.13 say about the Holy Spirit as the master communicator?
 11. How tightly are the risen Jesus and the Holy Spirit linked in communication?
Is it right to think of the Spirit as Jesus’ exclusive press agent?
 12. If it glorifies something other than Jesus, then can it be the Spirit at work?
 13. How is v.15 a fully Trinitarian statement?
 14. What are the riches given to the church?
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A PRAYER BASED ON THE SERMON TEXT .

**O Lord our God,
it is a wonder how you leave your fingerprint on all creation,
how you called the Jews to be your showcase to all the nations,
how you came among us in the person of Jesus,
whose life was a perfect cooperation with the Holy Spirit.
You are our Father, high over all and yet near to every soul.
Because your Son has been glorified at your right hand,
you have given the Spirit as our teacher to keep us in the truth.
So may the light of the blessed Holy Spirit shine upon us today,
to illumine the Scriptures as they are read and preached;
and the fire of the Holy Spirit fall down upon us,
to kindle a flame of sacred love within our hearts;
and the power of the Spirit's gifts be distributed among us,
that your truth may be heard in many voices.
We are a dry people, parched and barren in our souls.
Drench us in a fresh outpouring of your presence.
Refresh us, O Lord, that we may proclaim all your mighty works with joy.
Amen. (Wait before the Lord in listening and silence.)**

**A HYMN ON THE HOLY SPIRIT,
"Come, Holy Ghost, Our Souls Inspire"
U.M. Hymnal, No. 651 (8th - 9th Century)**

**Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire, And lighten with celestial fire.
Thou the anointing Spirit art, Who dost Thy seven-fold gifts impart.**

**Thy blessed unction from above, Is comfort, life, and fire of love.
Enable with perpetual light, The dulness of our blinded sight.**

**Anoint and cheer our soilèd face, With the abundance of Thy grace.
Keep far our foes, give peace at home: Where Thou art guide, no ill can come.**

**Teach us to know the Father, Son, And Thee of both to be but one,
That, through the ages all along, This may be our endless song;**

Praise to Thy eternal merit, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
