

When He Comes

As we continue our study of Jesus' teaching to His apostles in the Upper Room, we come to another section in which He teaches His disciples that His departure is for their good, for after His ascension He will, with the Father, send His Spirit.

John 16:4b-15

4 But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

"I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. 5 But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' 6 But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7 Nevertheless, 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 when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; 11 concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. 12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15 All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

It is a daunting task to make disciples of all the world when Jesus has told His disciples that He will be physically departing; however, He here teaches them that He will send the Holy Spirit, whose presence in their hearts is of more value than Jesus' physical presence with them. In these verses, Jesus teaches them several essentials about the Spirit:

I. We must receive the Holy Spirit (vv. 4b-7).

The Old Testament predicted that in the Messianic age, God would give His Spirit in fullness (Cf: Isaiah 42:1-4; 44:1-5; Ezekiel 36:24-27; Joel 2: 28-32). Jesus had already taught His disciples that the Spirit would not come until He departed (see John 7:37-39). Jesus emphasizes the necessity of His disciples' reception of this great gift. We see the results of the apostles' reception of the Spirit through the pages of the Book of Acts.

II. We must depend upon the Holy Spirit (vv. 8-15).

Jesus shows us in these verses how the Spirit works in the world, among His disciples, and for the name of Christ.

A. The Holy Spirit convicts the world (vv. 8-11)

The word "convict" is found 17 times in the New Testament, most commonly to speak of the exposure of sin and darkness. Here we are told that the Holy Spirit convicts the world of three things:

1. Sin (v. 9) — Jesus teaches that the greatest sin of all is not believing in Him. The Holy Spirit alone convicts the world of this sin (see Acts 2:36-41).
2. Righteousness (v. 10) — Once again, only the Holy Spirit can convict the world of the need for righteousness that only Jesus can give. In Romans 10:3, Paul says of his countrymen: "For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness." The Jews of Jesus' day sought righteousness through keeping Judaistic traditions; the Holy Spirit will convict the world of their need for the perfect righteousness that Jesus has won for us.
3. Judgment (v. 11) — Caiaphas and Pilate had judged Jesus to be a guilty criminal, but the Holy Spirit will convict the world that Jesus is the judge and that they are the ones being judged. In John 3:18, Jesus says, "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but

whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only son of God.”

B. The Holy Spirit guides believers (vv. 12-13).

Here Jesus teaches that the Holy Spirit will guide us into all the truth. In John 14:26, He had taught His disciples that the Holy Spirit would bring to their remembrance everything He had said to them, but here He promises that the Spirit will declare the “things that are to come.” Indeed the apostles did just that, when they wrote the Holy Scriptures, and we have now come to believe in the glorious resurrection of all Jesus’ brothers and sisters.

C. The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ (vv. 14-15).

Here Jesus teaches that the Holy Spirit’s primary function is to glorify Jesus Christ. As J.I. Packer once said, “The Holy Spirit is the shy member of the Trinity.” The Holy Spirit points not to Himself but to Jesus Christ.

As we come upon our World Missions Conference this week, it is important for us to realize that we cannot carry out the great commission of Jesus Christ apart from the fullness of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Discussion Questions

1. Why must believers receive the Holy Spirit? (vv. 4-7)
2. How does the Holy Spirit work in the world? (vv. 8-11)
3. What does the Holy Spirit do for believers? (vv. 12-13)
4. How does the Holy Spirit exalt Jesus Christ? (vv. 14-15)
5. How does one receive the Holy Spirit?
6. How can you tell if someone has received the Holy Spirit?

Going Deeper

1. Have you received the Holy Spirit? How do you know?
2. In what ways have you experienced the Holy Spirit’s power and blessing?