

# Life in the Spirit

John 14:25-31

**Call:** Eph 3:14-21 (NIV)

**Scripture:** Apostle's Creed

## I. Intro

Good Morning! After a week off, we return to our studies in the Gospel of John, where we are in the upper room the night before Jesus goes to the cross.

Here at PBCC, we have a family value called, "Life in the Spirit through grace." As you may know, our guiding principle here is to "Know Jesus and Make Him Known," and the way we do that is through four key values: Devotion to the Word, Participation in God's Work, Discipleship through Relationships and Life in the Spirit Through Grace. Today we will focus on that last one, Life in the Spirit. On our website, we say this about life in the Spirit, "The Spirit is who connects us to Jesus, enables us to know him and empowers us to make him known." After exploring our text for today, we may need to re-word that description because as we will discover, the Spirit is doing much more than what we have listed there.

## Review

Two weeks ago, Jesus taught us a lot about the Holy Spirit. We learned that:

- Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the paraclete, not parakeet, paraclete.
- The paraclete is personal, the third person of the trinity, whom Jesus describes as "another of the same kind." He is another just like Jesus, such that his presence is just like the presence of Jesus along the way of discipleship.
- And, in fact, his presence is so intimate because he is not only with all of us, he is also in all of us. And, you can't get closer than in!

And, as Jesus says, after he returns to the Father, He will call the paraclete in alongside us to do a whole host of things inside of us. We discussed two of those things last time. He goes to work inside of us making us whole, just like the most whole person to have ever lived, Jesus himself. He also goes to work inside of us as the Spirit of truth, guiding us into all truth. Today we will discover more of what this truth work entails.

I invite you into our text today, John 14, beginning at verse 25.

## II. The Spirit's Ministry (25-26)

*[25](#) "These things I have spoken to you while I am still 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 have said to you.*

## **A. Introduction**

Jesus is going away. And, it seems he keeps trying to wake his disciples up to this fact, “Hey guys – I’m going away soon, and I’m not canceling my plans! Time is running out, so I’m speaking all of these things to you while I’m still here physically.”

Now, from the questions we’ve already heard from the disciples, it seems they have not been able to retain much of what Jesus has been teaching them for the last three years. So how in the world will they retain what Jesus is speaking right now? Answer: The paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, will come to be with them and in them, and he will help them. There is hope for these confused and frightened disciples because of the paraclete. He will help them, and he will help them in two specific ways: he will teach them all things and he will bring to remembrance all that Jesus has said. Let’s look at his reminding ministry first.

### **1. Help Disciples Remember**

He will help them remember. The paraclete will bring to remembrance all that Jesus taught them. In the absence of Jesus’ physical presence, the paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, will help disciples remember all that Jesus said while he walked the earth. It’s a wonderful promise isn’t it?

I agree with most people who see this promise primarily fulfilled in the writing of the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The Spirit of Truth helped the eyewitnesses remember all that Jesus taught, then helped those eyewitnesses write down what they remembered.

So, all the long discourses in John – the bread of life discourse, the good shepherd discourse, this upper room discourse – all are fulfillments of this promise. The parables in Luke – a fulfillment of promise. The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew – a fulfillment of promise. The Olivet Discourse of the Gospel of Mark – a fulfillment of promise.

How did the Spirit do it? I don’t know, but he did. And, what it means is that every time you pick up the Gospel of John, you are picking up the Gospel according to the paraclete through John. When you pick up the Gospel of Luke, you’re reading the Gospel according to the paraclete through Luke. The Gospels were written by human hands through the paraclete as the paraclete brought to remembrance all that Jesus said.

The Paraclete continues to do this for us as well. That is such good news for me because my memory doesn’t seem to work anymore. This explains those times when the words of Jesus seem to pop into our minds. It happened to me just last week when my friend was telling me about a neighbor who has been extremely hostile to him, but my friend keeps trying to make peace. The Spirit brought to my remembrance Jesus’ command to love our enemies. So, I reminded my friend that he is living the Jesus way by loving his enemy.

Now, it goes without saying that to be reminded of something *is* to have known it already at one time. So, it's another encouragement to soak in the words of Jesus, then rely on the Spirit to bring those words to mind at the appropriate time.

What a gift we have in the Paraclete?!

## 2. Teach Disciples

But there's more. The truth work of the Paraclete also includes teaching "all things" to his disciples. What does this mean? It means he'll teach all things concerning the revelation of Jesus. Primarily, I think this refers to teaching the implications of the world-changing events that are coming, the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. In chapter 16, Jesus says that he has many more things to tell the disciples, but they "*can't bear them now*" (16:12). In other words, there would eventually be a time when they would be able to bear them, sometime after the events happen.

So I see this promise primarily fulfilled in the writing of the letters of the New Testament, in the letters of Peter and Paul, of James and Jude, the letter to the Hebrews and all the others. What Jesus couldn't teach the disciples before going to the father, he taught through the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit after going to the Father. The teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit would enable those first disciples to begin to understand and write down *all* the implications of the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, Jesus' path to the Father. Jesus couldn't teach all the implications before they happened because the disciples wouldn't have been able to "*bear it.*" They would not have been able to understand any of it. The events had to happen first, then the paraclete could begin his truth-teaching ministry. Then, the disciples would begin to unpack and make sense of all that really happened in Jesus' dying, rising and ascending.

So every time we open one of the New Testament letters, we are reading the work of the Spirit of Truth. This explains why these words feel like they live. Yes, they are the words of Peter and Paul and John and James, but they are also the work of the Spirit of Truth. They have been breathed by the very breath of God.

And, the Spirit continues to teach us today. It may not be in the same way as he taught those first disciples, because we already have the truth of the New Testament. But, as we study the Word, don't we invite the Spirit to teach us, to illuminate our hearts and minds to the truth of Jesus? Of course!

So, as we live life in the Spirit, the Spirit is inside us going to work teaching us and helping us remember everything about Jesus. What a gift we have in the paraclete?! Life in the Spirit through grace.

But, there's more, verse 27.

### **III. The Spirit's Effect (27-31)**

*27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. 28 You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. 29 And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. 30 I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, 31 but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.*

#### **A. Introduction**

Life in the Spirit is characterized by the Spirit teaching us and helping us remember the Words of Jesus. But, in this passage we see that life in the Spirit is also characterized by peace, love and fearlessness.

#### **B. Peace**

Life in the Spirit is characterized by peace. One of the key effects of the indwelling Spirit is peace, and the desire to be a peacemaker. As we said last time, when the Spirit takes up residence in our lives, he puts us back together again, making us like the true human, Jesus Christ. He works in us to stamp the character of Jesus in us. It's a bit like a seal that imprints an image into clay or wax.

In the ancient world, a seal was used around documents to say who the document belonged to. The Spirit impresses the character traits of Jesus upon us so everyone knows who we belong to. Those character traits are called the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Those first three are especially key themes throughout this discourse. And here Jesus says, "Don't be anxious. Don't be afraid. The paraclete will stamp my peace inside you." Jesus intersects us on the road of life, inserts His Spirit inside of us and something happens, peace happens. But this peace is not of the world.

#### **C. World Peace**

In the Roman world, pax romana was the world's peace. And, as we all know, pax romana was a complete joke. It certainly wasn't peace for the little people. And, it certainly wasn't peace for the world, because Rome destroyed everyone that stood in its way. And, it certainly didn't reach the human heart.

Today, listen to any politician speak and they'll promise to bring peace and prosperity. Or, listen to any advertisement today, and they will promise you that their product will bring peace and happiness! Just buy their product and you'll have peace. The world's peace is based on outward circumstances, and therefore doesn't last.

#### **D. The Peace of Jesus**

The peace of Jesus is a peace that lasts. The peace that Jesus leaves his disciples will be the peace that comes from the cross and the resurrection. Is it any wonder then that in John, the first words Jesus says to his disciples after the resurrection is *"Peace be with you"* (John 20:19).

This is the peace that transcends circumstances. This is the peace that passes all understanding, because it is a concept rooted in the Hebrew word shalom. Shalom means a whole lot more than the English word peace. Whereas the English word peace connotes life without conflict, shalom refers to the fullness of life as God intended it. Shalom is a flourishing of life, a fully alive life, as St. Irenaeus said so long ago. This peace is unknown to the world.

There are four dimensions of this shalom.

It is first and foremost vertical. It is peace and harmony with God. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Sin has left a crimson stain on every single one of us, and that sin alienates us from the living God. So, what's the solution? The cross and resurrection of Jesus. The cross was the victory over sin, evil and death, and the resurrection was a confirmation of that victory. As Eugene taught us in Colossians 1, it is through Jesus' blood shed on the cross that peace is made with God. All those who believe enjoy shalom with God, and because of this shalom, there can be shalom in the other three dimensions.

Secondly, the shalom that Jesus gives is horizontal, peace with other persons. According to Ephesians, even the great chasm between Jew and Gentile is overcome through Jesus' peace.

Thirdly, the shalom that Jesus gives is personal, peace with self, and fourthly, with creation.

Shalom, the peace that Jesus gives, is where all four relationships work together the way they were meant to work. The peace Jesus gives is the flourishing of life in all four relationships. And, it happens through the paraclete working in us and through us! The Spirit enters our life and goes to work bringing flourishing in our relationship with God. He enters our life and goes to work bringing flourishing with others. He enters our life and goes to work bringing flourishing with ourselves. And, he enters our life and goes to work bringing flourishing with creation. What God desires for his image-bearers is that they would flourish by living a life of shalom in all four dimensions through the Spirit's work.

This is why we passed the peace this morning. It's a small gesture, but it shaped our heart ever so slightly into the shalom of Jesus.

#### **E. Love**

Another characteristic of life in the Spirit is love. We continue to return to this theme throughout the Upper Room Discourse. Last time, we talked about how the Spirit teaches us how to love. But, we can love, only because he first loved us (1 John 4:19).

In verse 31, we get the only passage in the New Testament where Jesus says he loves the Father. Jesus goes to the cross out of his great love for us, but also for his Father. This love is

given in words in the prayer of Gethsemane as Jesus comes to grips with his Father's will. The Son's will *will* be to please the Father, and the Father's will is to have all men honor the Son. This is the overflowing love of the triune God. The living God is good and his steadfast love endures forever raining down on us. And, it is the paraclete who makes this love real in our lives.

## 1. Baptism

We have a baptism coming up next Sunday. You are all invited! If you want to get baptized, let me know. One of the highlights of all the baptisms are the testimonies. As I was writing this sermon, the Spirit brought to my remembrance Margaret's story from last spring.

When Margaret shared, she was glowing with joy. And, she said this, "The Lord never gave up on me even though he should have..." Then, she said, "I came to faith when I was sitting in church and heaven opened up, and God's love just poured down over me."

The paraclete made the overflowing love of God real in her life.

So a friend of mine decides to meet with a spiritual director. On their first meeting, before he even sits down, the director asks him, "Geoff, what do you think is your greatest need?" And, Geoff responds with a good Christian answer, "I think my greatest need is to know the will of God and to do it." And, the director looks at him and says this, "No Geoff. Your greatest need is to know that you are loved, to know how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ (Eph 3:18). This is your greatest need."

This is our greatest need, to know the overflowing love of the living God. He should have given up on all of us, but he doesn't and he won't. Here's the thing. The living God doesn't just love you, it's his joy to love you. As one writer says, "Disapproval doesn't seem to be a part of God's DNA. God is just too busy loving us to have any time left for disappointment" (Boyle, 28).

And, the blessed paraclete is working in us to make that love real to us. What a gift we have in the paraclete!

## 2. "Greater Than I?"

While explaining these things, Jesus says a puzzling thing in verse 28. What does Jesus mean by "*the Father is greater than I*"? Does he really mean that the Father is greater than the Son? Well, no interpretation of this sentence can conflict with the other passages of this Gospel which unambiguously affirm the deity of Jesus, co-equal with the Father, but also the dependence of Jesus on the Father and the obedience of Jesus to the Father. This Gospel affirms all of those things. So, how are we to understand this statement? Over the years, the church has understood the "greatness" of the Father here as solely in the fact that the Father gives and the Son receives. CK Barrett probably

put it best when he said, “The Father is the sender and commander. The Son is God-sent and obedient” (Carson, 68). I think that’s the best we can do with this difficult statement.

## F. Fearlessness

The third characteristic from this text of life in the Spirit is fearlessness. If you remember, Jesus began this chapter by commanding his followers to not be troubled. Here, he commands them not to be troubled or afraid. In chapter 16, Jesus will command the disciples to have courage because he has overcome the world. To not fear is a theme in this upper room. Jesus wants to alleviate the fear of his disciples for when he will leave physically.

They (and we) do not need to be afraid because –

- The paraclete is with us and in us. The paraclete, the presence of the perfect, divine love, is in us, and as John will say later, *“there is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear”* (1 John 4:18).
- And, they (and we) also don’t need to be afraid because, as Jesus says here, the ruler of this world is powerless. Jesus knows that Satan is physically on his way toward him right now, in the form of the Judas mob, and Jesus also knows that Satan is bringing the cross tomorrow. And, though it will seem to those first disciples that Jesus will be defeated, and though it will appear darkness will win, things are not always as they seem.

As John Stott says, “Of course any contemporary observer, who saw Christ die would have listened with astonished incredulity to the claim that the crucified was a conqueror... Look at him there ... on his cross, strung up with nails or ropes or both, pinned there and powerless. It appears to be total defeat. If there is a victory, it is a victory of pride, prejudice, jealousy, hatred, cowardice and brutality. Yet the Christian claim is that the reality is the opposite of the appearance. What looks like (and indeed was) the defeat of goodness by evil is also, and more certainly the defeat of evil by goodness. Overcome there, he was himself overcoming” (Stott, 123).

Things are not always as they seem. The evil one has no claim on Jesus. The claim the evil one has on all other humanity is their sin and guilt, but Jesus is sinless and guiltless. The evil one has no power over Jesus whatsoever. Jesus will go to the cross not because he himself is worthy of death nor because of Satan’s power, but because the Father has commanded him to go for the sake of the world. Jesus goes as an obedient son in voluntary self-sacrifice. So, although it will appear that death will win, things are not always as they appear.

This is why it’s so important to soak in the paraclete-inspired New Testament scriptures each morning, so he can remind you again that Jesus is on the throne. Then, as you walk through your day and you see the brokenness of our world, he’ll remind you that things are not as they appear. Sin, evil and death are defeated foes. “When death stung Jesus Christ, it stung itself to death!” As Jesus lives the next awful 24 hours, he wants his disciples to know that the evil one actually has no hold on him.

And, because of the cross and resurrection, the evil one also has no hold on those who belong to him. Did you hear that? The evil one has no power over you. The evil one has no hold on you. No one can ever snatch you out of his hand as Jesus said in chapter 10.

So, for those first disciples, don't be anxious. Don't be afraid. Don't be confused when everything goes down tomorrow. The evil one is not winning. Things are not as they appear.

For those of us today, don't be anxious. Don't be afraid. Don't be confused with whatever happens tomorrow. As you seek to live for Jesus, have no fear. The paraclete is with you, and he will teach you and remind you of all things Jesus.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

What a gift we have in the paraclete! What a life we have in the Spirit through God's grace! Not only is he with us and in us helping us know Jesus and make him known, he is with us and in us teaching us and reminding us of all things Jesus. And, he is at work deep within us to bring us peace, to make the love of God real and to remind us that things are not always as they appear. The evil one has no hold on us. So, don't be anxious. Don't be afraid. The blessed paraclete is with you and in you, and he will never leave you or forsake you. Amen.

#### **Benediction**

Jesus, who indwells you through his Spirit, wants to do something in and through you. Believe this and go in his grace, his love, his peace and his power. And have no fear. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

#### **Resources**

Boyle, Gregory, *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*

Burge, Gary, *The Anointed Community*

Carson, Don, *The Farewell Discourse and Final Prayer of Jesus*

Johnson, Darrell, *Preaching the Gospel According to John* (Regent College Course)

Klink, Edward, *John* (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the NT)

Stott, John, *The Cross of Christ*