



# INTERPRETING THE SIGNS

READING JOHN'S GOSPEL

SESSION 27:  
THE HOLY SPIRIT  
JOHN 16:5-15

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All Bible references and quotations are from the English Standard Version (ESV).

# **THE HOLY SPIRIT**

## **SESSION 27**

### **SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE**

1. What has been your experience with the wide varieties of perspectives regarding the Holy Spirit?
2. How have you understood the Holy Spirit? What things have you attributed to him that are not taught in the Scriptures?
3. Has this message clarified anything in your mind in regards to the Holy Spirit?

# PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

Few books of the Bible give as thorough a treatment of the Holy Spirit as John's Gospel. In fact, Jesus addresses the role of the Holy Spirit no less than four times in these chapters describing Jesus' preparation of his disciples for their work once he has gone. We would expect as much from Jesus. He is leaving, but his work in the world has just begun. As we saw in the previous passage, the Spirit and the disciples will continue Jesus' work through their witness of Him (15:26-27).

In my experience, the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the disciple and in Jesus' mission to the world is one of the most misunderstood teachings in the church today. A whole spectrum of thought exists, from churches that hardly ever address or emphasize the important work of the Spirit to those churches and leaders that seem like all they ever talk about is the Holy Spirit. With such an important area of teaching, the churches cannot afford to be negligent or in error. While John's Gospel does not provide all we need to know and understand about the Spirit, it does provide a very comprehensive framework for us to understand the Spirit's work in us and the world on behalf of Jesus. We're going to take this opportunity to bring together and summarize Jesus' teaching on the Holy Spirit in these chapters.

## STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

### Read the Passage:

John 16:5-15

### Think Through the Questions:

1. Why does Jesus need to go? Why is it beneficial for the disciples that the Spirit comes?
2. What will the Spirit be doing?
3. By whose authority will the Spirit be working? What boundaries does this place upon the Spirit?

**Using the questions, summarize the teaching of the passage.**



King would be anointed by the Spirit (Isaiah 11:11, 42:1, 61:1). Additionally, Israel had been looking forward to a time when God would supernaturally change their hearts in order to serve Him faithfully (Deuteronomy 30:6), which would happen through the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 36:25-28). Baptism literally means “immersed.” The baptism of the Holy Spirit is simply the complete immersion into the Holy Spirit. The result of which is a new heart and a new Spirit. As the Ezekiel passage says, “You shall be clean,” which should draw the reader to quickly remember Jesus’ statements to his disciples, “You are clean because of the word I have spoken to you.” (15:3) Belief in Jesus’ words cleanses the heart and opens the way to the indwelling Spirit.

### **3:5-8**

This passage simply reflects the ideas earlier mentioned. As those who believe in Jesus’ words are baptized in His Spirit, birth in the Spirit is required for salvation into the kingdom of God. It is simply another way of communicating the Spirit’s role in the salvation of the he who believes. The one who believes is given a new heart and spirit through the Holy Spirit.

### **4:23-24**

True worshippers of God worship in spirit and truth. Again, only those cleansed and given a new heart can truly worship God. Worship requires sincerity and devotion of heart, which the Spirit provided through his indwelling.

### **6:63**

Again, this statement reflects the requirement of the indwelling Spirit to change the heart and give life. The flesh, which is humanity’s natural state of sin, blindness, and corruption provides no power to experience life. Only through the indwelling Spirit of God does one find life.

### **7:37-39**

Through belief in Jesus Christ, people can experience the indwelling Spirit, which is like a spring of water flowing from the heart. The heart is made new. The spirit is made new. These waters clean, refresh, empower, and give life.

To this point, the Spirit’s work is a work of cleaning and renewing the heart and spirit of those who believe in Jesus and his words.

This work was spoken of by the prophets of Israel from its earliest Scriptures and fulfilled in the coming of Jesus and his baptism in the Spirit through faith. The passages in this final discourse build on this understanding. We're going to summarize each of these passages and draw them together in an effort to provide a framework for accurately understanding the Holy Spirit.

#### **14:16-17**

Jesus' first statement about the Holy Spirit in this discourse initiates a new idea into the disciples understanding of the Holy Spirit. It is that of the Spirit as Helper. This Helper is the same spirit that will indwell them, and as Jesus is the truth (14:6), this Helper is the Spirit of truth, which calls to mind the earlier passage describing the Spirit's work to give us a heart of truth as worshippers of God. But how will the Spirit help us? Jesus' earlier words provide us the answer. Jesus has already said that "whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do, which are the works of God (14:12-14). These works are characterized by love for one another and keeping Jesus commandments (13:34, 14:15). Jesus' statements are clear. The Holy Spirit helps those whom he indwells to do God's works of keeping Jesus' commands and loving one another. Believers in Jesus can follow him confidently knowing that the Spirit is not only living inside of them, but is also supernaturally working to empower them to carry out God's works. Jesus does not leave us alone or without help and power.

#### **14:26**

One of the ways the Holy Spirit helps is in regards to the words of Jesus. First, the Holy Spirit is a teacher and will teach "all things" to those who believe and follow Him. We will learn later that these teachings are not his own, but are from Jesus himself (16:12-14). Additionally, the Spirit helps believers in Jesus remember his words. This ministry of the Spirit is one that I experience often. On many occasions when speaking to non-believers, when praying, or when preaching or teaching, the Spirit calls to mind Scriptures suited for just the occasion. This is a very real and powerful ministry of the Spirit, for belief in Jesus words are essential to life, and as followers of Jesus are called to testify about Jesus and his words, it is quite helpful to have the Spirit helping us remember those words.

#### **15:26**

Jesus teaches that the Spirit will bear witness and testify about

Jesus. This testimony will be of truth and will be towards the world. This ministry is further explained in the final passage.

### 16:5-15

In an effort to again comfort his disciples who are still discouraged from Jesus' statements telling them that he is leaving, Jesus again tells them that is necessary for him to leave in order for them to receive the Helper. If Jesus would stay, the Spirit could not come, which would greatly minimize the experience of knowing the Father and the disciples' ministry in the world. Only upon the coming of the Helper will the disciples fully experience the indwelling God and the power of the Spirit at work in their lives. Jesus states that the Spirit will come and bear witness of Him. In this work of bearing witness about Jesus, the Spirit will convict the world of three things: sin, judgment, and righteousness. To convict is to correct, call to attention, or pronounce blame. The Spirit is going to pronounce blame upon the world for its sin. This is necessary because the world remains in its sin because of its unbelief in Jesus. The Spirit will work in the hearts, minds, and spirits of men to show them their sin and draw them to faith in Jesus. The Spirit is to pronounce blame upon the world in regards to righteousness because Jesus is no longer on the earth to demonstrate the perfect standard of righteousness, and so the Spirit must provide that witness. Through the Spirit, the world will have a sense of right and wrong, of good and bad, and through this sense, will know that there is a higher standard of living required by God. This knowledge of a higher standard will convict all who dwell on the earth. The Spirit is also going to impress upon the world its impending judgment. The ruler of the world, Satan, has been judged and the same judgment will come upon those who remain under his rule and have not believed in Jesus.

Jesus concludes his statements regarding the Holy Spirit by again explaining to them that the Holy Spirit will teach them all things when he leaves. They are not going to be without their teacher. In this instance, Jesus states that there is more teaching than what he has already given them, but that they are not ready to receive it. There are several dimensions to this teaching. First, the Spirit will teach them those things that he hears from Jesus. The Spirit is under the authority of the Son and Father. He does not work independently. Second, these teachings will be in regards to "the things that are to come." The new order of the kingdom of God characterized by love for one another will be fully explained and taught by the Spirit to the disciples. Jesus calls

them to obey these words and to teach them as they are witness of Jesus and his words. In this way, the Spirit will glorify Jesus. This ministry of the Spirit produced what we call the New Testament. After Jesus left, Jesus spoke through the apostles and prophets, teaching them about the new household of God, the church, which is the means through which God is working in the world at this time and is the new community that is to be characterized by love and witness in the world.

To summarize, we know these things about the Holy Spirit from John's gospel.

1. Jesus is the sender and giver of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit teaches what he receives from Jesus and works in the authority of Jesus as Jesus works in the authority of the Father.
2. The Spirit indwells those who believe in the words of Jesus. This indwelling Spirit cleanses and gives life to the believer in Jesus. This life-giving power refreshes, purifies, and makes new the person who has believed in Jesus.
3. Through his indwelling, the Spirit empowers and helps the believer in Jesus fulfill the works of God, characterized by loving one another and keeping Jesus commandments.
4. The Holy Spirit testifies about Jesus in the world and convicts the world of their sin and draws them to belief in Jesus in order to save them from the coming judgment.
5. The Holy Spirit helps the believer remember the words of Jesus and teaches the believer the words of Jesus, much of which was to come after Jesus' departure. The New Testament is the product of this ministry of the Spirit.

## **THINK THROUGH THE ISSUES**

Great misunderstanding exist in regards to the baptism of the Spirit. Many teach that it is a second experience that opens the believer in Jesus to a greater experience and indwelling of the Spirit, which will then provide the believer with the power to heal, speak in tongues, prophesy, and other signs and wonders.

Additionally, many believers view the Holy Spirit as a reckless provider of ecstatic spiritual experiences unregulated by the Scriptures, which are the words of Jesus. To many, it is considered "unspiritual" to put boundaries on the Holy Spirit. From here, many false, sensual







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