

# The Holy Spirit

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Preacher: Prof Donald Macleod

[ 0 : 00 ] Let's turn again to John chapter 14 and the words of verse 18. Verse 18, I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you.

I feel a great sense of privilege as I read these words.

I will not leave this whole chapter because we overhear in this chapter Jesus speaking to his disciples in a very intimate way in conditions of very, very great solemnity.

The Lord's own words, a very special situation and very great teaching. He's about to leave them and the prospect terrifies them.

He's been with them all those months, some three years. He's been with them all the time.

[ 1 : 39 ] He is God, but he is God incarnate in our human nature. And they could see him and hear him and they could touch him.

Always such a reassuring presence. And now he's been taken away and their hearts are troubled. This fear of loneliness, of being leaderless, of being parentless, of having no guide. But he says to them, yes, I am going away.

But I will not leave you as orphans, lonely, in this world, and parentless. I will come again, he says. I will pray the Father and he will send you another helper. One who will take my place.

[ 2 : 49 ] Many years have passed since I first, with febration, spoke in this pulpit in the summer of 1962.

And since then, I have preached much. And preached mainly on the person of Christ.

On his suffering. And on his work. And I have no regrets about that. Because I've been called to preach Christ crucified.

But I know now, as my time runs out, that I've been negligent with regard to the Holy Spirit. And to his role in our lives as believers.

And that's why, more and more, I turn to chapters like this. What is so prominent. And for the Lord himself speaks so reverently.

[ 4 : 01 ] And so lovingly. Of this great helper. And I want for a moment tonight to explore with you. Some of the teaching.

Of this great passage. The Father will send another helper. Notice, he doesn't say he will send help. Or send comfort. Or send courage. Or send grace. But he says he will send a person. Not help, but a helper.

Not counsel, but a counselor. Someone to take my place. Someone who has a mind that knows.

And a heart that cares. And a will that forms purposes. He will come and take my place.

[ 5 : 03 ] This one who loves you. This one who shares my love for you. Who is committed so entirely to your salvation. He says will come.

I will send him. The Father will send him. And the Lord has a special name for him. He calls him the Paraclete.

I know it's a foreign word. But then so is Christ. The Anointed One. It's a very simple word, the Paraclete.

You can all remember it. A very, very precious word. It means someone who is called to be beside us.

To help us. Or who in this case is sent by God the Father. And God the Son. To be beside us.

[ 6 : 07 ] All the days of our lives. Always near us. Never out of sight. Never out of earshot.

Never abandoned by him. But they're beside us. All the time. There is a famous song sung by an English premier football club.

You never walk alone. You never walk alone. And sometimes they do. But you believers.

You never walk alone. There is always this one beside you. This one who understands. This one who cares.

This one who is able. This one who is always there. He is here tonight. In the heart of every believer.

[ 7 : 11 ] He is here. The person beside you. He is here in this building. He goes with us tomorrow. To our workplaces. To enable us with former duties.

Always he goes with us. Always. Beside us. We never walk alone.

Christ tonight. Is at God's right hand. In the glory. Of divine majesty. But the parablete.

He walks with you. He is beside you. And not only so. But we're also told. That he is in us.

Beside us. And in us. And that speaks of his condescension. That he lives in my heart.

[ 8 : 14 ] There is so much rubbish there. And so much nonsense. And so much sin. And he is so holy.

And he has come. And made his abode there. Beside us. And in us. Along with God the Son.

And God the Father. I have a growing sense of wonder. At what a Christian is. It's not only that.

You have beliefs and doctrines. And follow a certain code. And use a certain language. Language.

But you have.

This amazing situation. Where. God the Father. God the Son. God the Holy Spirit. Lives in you.

Walks with you.

[ 9 : 18 ] Is within you. You are so. Extraordinary. And that's why. Your lives. Your love. Your patience.

Your courage. Your energy. Are so extraordinary. Also. Because you have. This extraordinary. Empowerment. Through the indwelling.

Of the triune God. God. And he's there. To stay. He will. We are told. Abide. With us.

Forever. Never leave us. Never forsake us. Sometimes. Perhaps often.

We grieve. Him. Deeply. And he is very sensitive. A very. Very. Sensitive. Person. And often.

[ 10 : 14 ] Hurt. By the way. We live. And conduct. Ourselves. In his presence. And sometimes.

He seems. To withdraw. And leaves us. To our own. Frailty. And our own. Fallibility. And fragility. And then.

With the. Great. Hymn writer. William Cooper. We cry. Return. O holy dove. Return.

Sweet. Messenger of rest. I hate. The sin. That made thee. Mourn. And drove thee.

From my breast. Oh. For a closer. Walk. With God. A calm. And heavenly. And heavenly. Frame.

Because.

[ 11 : 11 ] We need. To stay. Close. And when we. Grieve. Him. We are so disoriented. And feel. So lost. But in grace.

He does return. Sometimes. That return. Is costly. But always. My soul. He doth. Restore.

Again. He comes. Back. And resumes. His presence. In our lives. And so there.

He is. Beside. You wonderful. People. And there. He is. Within you. You wonderful. People. There.

He is. With you. Always. To the last. Step. Of this. Particular. Journey. And in him. Christ.

[ 12 : 07 ] Himself. Is beside. Us. And in us. Every step. Of the way. I find. Myself.

In the words. That I. Do. As a text. At the limits. Of my own. Understanding. Because.

The paraclete. Is another. Than Jesus. He will send you. Another. Helper. And yet.

He is. Jesus. And I go. Back. At this. Point. In history. To. A great. Doctrine. Of the early.

Church. Of the fifth. Century. Which. Lay down. For us. That. Where the. One. Is. The three.

[ 13 : 01 ] Are. The father. Is in the son. The son. Is in the spirit. And so. Jesus.

Says. I will send you. Another. And in the other. Who might send. I will come. And I will not leave you.

Orphans. Parentless. Leaderless. And helpless. But I will come. Not the promise. On which we venture forth.

Into our own. Christian lives. Confident. That. The spirit. Of Christ. Is with us. Beside us. In us.

Every step.

Of the way. And what. Then is it. That he does. What. Is his work. I remind myself.

[ 13 : 58 ] First of all. That it did not begin. With the coming. Of Christ. Because. I meet him. On the very first page.

Of the Bible. The Holy Spirit. Hovering. Over the waters. We might call them. A chaos.

There was darkness. And formlessness. And emptiness. But God's spirit. The creator. He imparts. Form to it. And he. Brings. Life. Into it. And so. It's there. In the very beginning. In all. His omnipotence. Now of course. In those. Great processes. [14:53] As the spirit. Formed. The oceans. And the mountain ranges. And the rivers. And placed the stars. Each in its own.

Right position. Of course. There are other. Secondary agencies. And second causes. That he uses. But still. It is he. Who is the author. Of the order. And the source. Of life. This world. Was empty. But every life. Form. On this planet. Is the result. Of the spirit's operation. He. Creates. That. Greatest. Of all. Marvels. The living. Cell. With its. Complex. Mathematics. [15:48] With its. Astonishing. Information. Technology. And that. Living. Cell. Duplicated. In every. Living. Form. In. Terms.

Of one. DNA. Code. Or another. But. My point. Is this. That. This. One. Created. Atlantic. And. Pacific. Euphrates. Gunship. In the. In the. In the. In the. In the. In the. In the. In the. In the. In the. In the. In the. In the. In the. buckle up. In the man. In the. In the. Catching. cautious. You. One. In the. There. One. In you. That's. Why. We see. That grace. Is invincible. because God, the almighty maker of heaven and earth, is the one who walks with you. And so his work does not begin with Christ. [16:46] It goes back to the very first page of the Bible. And he is still active in the physical world around us. All the wonders that science explores.

All the laws it's able to identify. All of these are unmasking the mind and artistry of the paraclete in the first of its activities on this planet.

And then I also feel bound to say this. That his work is not confined to believers. He works in unbelievers too.

Because there are natural gifts that are not confined to those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, but are distributed in terms of God's general grace across the whole human spectrum.

And all those gifts and all their variety and all their glory come from the one source.

[17:59] It may be that some of you have great musical gifts or great artistic gifts or gifts as research scientists or gifts as carers, gifts as doctors or as nurses, people skills and manual skills.

You go back to Exodus and you find two intriguing men called Holiab and Bessalil and their craftsmen. Because God's Spirit gave them that gift, that skill, the joiner skill, the builder skill.

All those gifts come from him. And as we admire those gifts, at their most excellent and elevated, the music of the great master composers or men like Shakespeare or men like Einstein or many of them, so many of these, some of these men were believers and some were not.

that every single one of you here tonight, some of you who may be bored by the gospel, indifferent to its message, you have something that God gave you, that God's Spirit gave you.

You may have a wonderful ear or wonderful hands or you may have quick feet or keen vision or great sensitivity or great compassion.

[19:38] Whatever it is, those gifts have come from God's Holy Spirit. And we have to admire them in others because they do come from God himself.

Some of them in God's providence have been given to men who had no faith. to men. Nevertheless, we do also very much. But you who have those gifts, you must deploy them to the glory of God and the good of your fellow creatures.

We are all called upon to serve. And whatever God has given to us is not given for ourselves but for others and for our community.

So he's at work there at creation and at work even in unbelievers in terms of their gifts and their aptitudes.

But above all, he works in believers as their paraclete, as the one who is always beside them and always with them and always in them.

[20:59] And what does he do for us? Well, first of all, he is our teacher. And as a teacher, he has one great theme.

He, said Jesus, he will glorify me. He will show us the majesty of Jesus. And he does it through his word in the gospels, the epistles, the whole range of the Bible, the spirit there bearing witness to Jesus.

And speaking to us of his eternal divinity that in the beginning he was with God. And speaking to us also of his enfleshment that he took our human nature, my kind of body, my kind of mind, my sensitivities, my limitations, he took them and lived as a human among humans.

And constrained by love, he not only stands and suffers alongside us, but he takes our place on the cross of Calvary, the spirit tells us.

And in my place there, condemned, he stood, redeeming us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. And the spirit tells us that God raised him from the dead.

[ 22 : 46 ] And the spirit tells us that tonight as we worship here, he sits at God's white hand and has the whole world in his hands.

These are doctrines, these are facts from our catechism, things we can learn by rote, and they're precious and indispensable and I love them.

But the spirit also shows us the beauty of Christ. And that's more than a set of answers or of propositions, the loveliness of Jesus, a beauty that makes us desire him.

It's a matter of taste. It's something it does to our heart. It's the highest form of artistic appreciation to see Christ and to love him and desire him and want him.

To come to the point where believing we love him and loving we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

[ 24 : 07 ] A point where the very worst news we could hear is that there is no such a one as Jesus. That would devastate, that would annihilate all that we are.

And on the other hand, to know to realize that the glory of the universe and the glory of beyond the universe, the glory of the whole range of being, the glory of Godhead itself, is that in this realm of being there is such a treasure as Jesus.

This world has many treasures. It has St. Paul's, it has a book of Couch, it has a Mona Lisa, it has Shakespeare's place, it has so, so many treasures.

But here is the greatest treasure that the universe, the world, or being itself contains, this Son of God.

And not only this Son of God, but this incarnate Son of God with the marks of the cross in his hands. that's the glory of the world I inhabit, but it has such a treasure as Jesus.

[ 25 : 32 ] Not locked away in some little box or in the vaults of some bank, but offered to you here tonight because he is for you.

I have good news for you. This Christ is yours, this Christ is for you. The Spirit teaches about Jesus and the Spirit shows us the beauty of Jesus.

Removes the aesthetic scales that blind us to his magnificence and majesty and his sheer adorableness so that he is a must have.

Lord thee my God I rarely seek my soul doth thirst for thee. Do we know what that means? But then the Spirit of the Paraclete also does this.

He assures us of the love of God. That blessed assurance Jesus is mine, God loves me.

[ 26 : 41 ] And we've had such difficulty with this down the ages. When I was young it was very unusual and often frowned upon to assurance that God loved us.

And I learned in the years that followed that this was such a betrayal of the Reformation because to men like Luther and Calvin this assurance was absolutely fundamental.

The medieval church has said no you can never know that God loves you. And Luther said you can and you must because faith is said is assurance.

It is the sure and certain persuasion that God is my father and that God loves me and God cares so much that for me for you God gave his only son.

There is a love tonight offered to you in the gospel and it's yours to take and when you take it and step into God's family then you know this love and it fills your heart with joy and it becomes the oil the lubricant of your obedience.

[ 28 : 13 ] We love because he first loved us. See how it is in Romans 5 God has shed abroad the love of God in our hearts.

The spirit has done that. Shed filled says Paul filled every nook and cranny of your heart with a sense of the love of God.

You mustn't think that that is some kind of outrageous presumption or something for only a few believers.

It is of the very, very essence of our discipleship that we should be assured of God's love and driven by a sense of indebtedness and sometime one or other of us we stand amid the wreckage of life where all we treasured most is lost, where threats of the darkest kind hover around and over us and then there is but the one thing left, God loves me.

That assurance Galatians 4 Paul tells us that because we are sons and daughters of God he has given us the spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba Father you cried we would have said oh Father if you are my father we thank you for grace if I receive grace Paul doesn't talk that way he speaks to Abba to Father with the same assurance as your children tonight address you as mommy and daddy he was assured of his divine sonship as your kids are sure that you love them and that you came and had it not been so

[ 30 : 38 ] Paul could not have achieved what he did nor could Luther nor could Caldon nor could Knox that love sustained them in all the ministry yes there were days when they doubted but they always said yes we may doubt but faith never doubts faith is the assurance of God's love and so then he teaches us and he gives us assurance and the spirit he leads us as many are led by God's spirit they are the sons and the children of God and I don't mean that he leads you by means of hunches he gives or verses that speak to you or visions that you enjoy or revelations in which you can say God spoke to me and said there is a good deal of such talk

I have never had any such experience and it no longer bothers me he leads us by his word by its great general principles by the ten commandments by the Beatitudes there the spirit leads us and the spirit guides us as to how to live our Christian lives and he shows us what these great principles mean and how they apply in our own particular situation we do so need that wisdom what does it mean for me here and now to deny myself and to turn the other cheek what does it mean here and now to love my enemy that's the guidance that God is giving what does love mean in this particular situation and so by his word and by his own illumination he will lead us and he will guide us there are barriers that we must never trespass rules we must always obey and he guides us through those rules sometimes in response to a challenge or a call we say oh I'm happy here and I say well what has that to do with it it's God saying here in his word you must live this way you must do this he guides us by his word and by his spirit and this partly too helps us to cope with emergencies every life has them the unexpected and the unforeseen there are many such eventualities which there may be a technique and agreed a routine procedure if you're an airline pilot you spend hours on simulators learning what to do in a certain emergency at the very most elementary point if your aircraft stalls lose the speed yes you push the control column forward to pick up speed that's a technique but life is seldom going to come to us that way remember

Jesus teaching they will haul you before kings and mantelies and coats and charge you with all kinds of things and he said take no thought what you shall say you can't prepare you can't have an agreed procedure there is no manual for much that life throws at us but there is always the one the paraclete the one beside us and he will always know what to do and he is always there for us to call upon sometimes all you can do is cry see the psalms so often they're there in the depths they're there in the fearful pit in the miry clay and all they can do is cry and it's not eloquent it's not rhetoric it's not poetry it's simply saying help help help that's all because lord it's an emergency i need you because i'm not coping and because i am going under and it never seems to amaze me that god's people don't go under because so often life throws such awful challenges up to them and yet by god's spirit they do come through abraham leucon said once i go on my knees a hundred times a day because there is nowhere else to go so there he is in every emergency now i must bring this to a close just one final point the spirit transforms us yes we are forgiven we are justified all our sins cancelled our whole status before god has been revolutionized in the great divine act of justification but salvation is more than forgiveness it is transformation and it will be accomplished by god's invincible spirit and he has his own amazing prototype his own great blueprint he knows exactly what he wants to do with you and he has a very very clear picture of the kind of person he intends you to be and the role that he intends you to play he wants you to be conformed to the image of the son of god to make to make you

Christ like it's not what we want in terms of our own human nature's aspirations there's much more we dream of but this is the greatest dream of all and the spirit in your case as a believer is fully committed to making sure of its accomplishment you will be brought with gladness great and mirth into the king's palace and you will be exactly as the spirit intends you to be he will deal with a sin in me it's a long job it's a difficult job it's a slow job but he will deal we shall be faultless without spot or

blemish we shall be renewed transformed made perfectly christlike until at last god stands over us and says astonishingly it is very good exactly as i wanted and as i planned it and exactly as my son deserves who bought the church with his blood and he has earned it that they should be as glorious as this the dead are blessed who die in the lord but we forget sometimes one other thing the resurrection as an inherent element in our sanctification god is not done with us when he transforms us spiritually he will also transform us physically because the world to come is to be a physical universe different from this one in many ways but in that world we shall need physical strength and stamina and skill and he will raise us in glorious bodies that's what sustained men like Paul the apostle the reality the certainty of those impossible words that God spoke can these dry bones can they live and the word that says yes the breath will come the spirit will blow and the dead shall rise and each one of them with a body like the body of God's son in his glory and majesty we must cling to those aspects of our faith which are not simply part of morals or part of culture but which are in many ways so defiant of the world in which we live there's a secular world that says oh there is nothing but this one century the cyclical and the mountain that God gives us that's all there is nothing but the century and God is saying to us yes the one thing which you have plenty is time you have it in abundance an endless infinity of time that's what we have and we shall inhabit that world eventually in glorious bodies well

[ 42 : 14 ] I must close oh you say this is for special believers no the paraclete is for every single one of you who are in Christ I say to the youngest convert here tonight I say even to the most boxed and believer he's beside you and he's in you he walks with you you are never alone and what are those who think they are not believers I don't judge you but you judge yourselves they see for you too this paraclete and I say to you remember the words of Peter repent and you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit those of us who have the paraclete find life hard enough sometimes almost unbearably so in the case of some of you how could you cope if you had no paraclete beside you and shall you think contentedly oh

I'm not a Christian and you say that in the most matter of fact way I don't have Christ and I'm saying to you are you saying I want to walk alone and I want to face life and all its challenges in my own native and natural strength and overcome it by my own wisdom and my own genius or tonight I'm saying do you want someone to walk with you this creator spirit this loving spirit this compassionate spirit to walk beside you all the days into the valley of the shadow of death into the grave and beyond the grave let's join in prayer oh lord bless your world to us we stretch ourselves trying to understand it trying to grasp it trying to reach it lord you the paraclete the daily companion and helper of many in this audience tonight and for that we bless you others lord have no paraclete blow upon them breath of god bring them into your family and become their helper counselor guide and friend and may all lord whom you have offered the paraclete with a great sense of responsibility consider that offer and take him to be their counselor and their helper comfort her and encourage her now and ever more amen to forget to go and lift to another