

The Gift Of The Spirit

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[0 : 0 0] Amen. Please take your Bibles and open them up this morning to John chapter 14. John chapter 14. We did the first half last week and we'll close it out this week.

Our passage will be John 14 verses 15 through 31. I do ask that you have a Bible open. This will help you to follow along. If you don't have your own Bible, if you didn't bring a Bible with you, we have Bibles in the seat backs there in front of you.

If you don't have a Bible at all that you can call your own, you can take that one home with you. It's our gift to you. So we want you to have a copy of God's Word. We don't think that there's any better way for you to grow in your knowledge and love for the Lord than to have a Bible open and to hear from His Word.

So John chapter 14 verses 15 through 31. When you've found that, I ask that you please stand in honor of the Word of God as I read. If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

And I will ask the Father and He will give you another helper to be with you forever. Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees Him nor knows Him.

[1 : 1 7] You know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me.

Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.

And he who loves me will be loved by my Father and I will love him and manifest myself to him. Judas, not Iscariot, said to him, Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world?

Jesus answered him, If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. And my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words.

And the word that you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me. These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 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.

[2 : 3 0] 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.

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. And now I have told you, before it takes place, so that when it does take place, you may believe.

I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father.

Father, arise, let us go from here. This is God's holy word. You would be seated, and let's pray once more. Lord, we thank you for this word that we've just heard, and we believe the promise that you've given us, that it does not ever return to you empty, but as often as it goes out, it always accomplishes the purposes for which you send it.

So we pray now, Lord, that your word would come with power, and conviction in the Spirit. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, we are focusing on four gifts this Christmas season.

[3 : 46] Last week, we saw the peculiar gift of Jesus' departure. As we anticipate his coming this Christmas season, during the Advent season, we talk a lot about the coming of Christ.

Well, last week, we saw that we should be just as excited about his departure. His leaving is no disadvantage to us. Why? Because his leaving secures our coming to be with him.

His leaving, it strengthens our believing in him. His leaving supercharges our working in him. That was last week, gift number one.

Here, this morning, in John 14, 15 through 31, Jesus tells us that with his departure comes another incredible gift. It's the gift of the Holy Spirit.

When I was growing up, one of my family members, and I have to be careful because you never know who is listening online to these sermons, every year without fail, one of my family members would gift myself and my siblings coins for Christmas.

[4 : 53] Now, some of you may collect coins. You may give coins out as a gift, and so I want to be clear. Coins are great. They can be an excellent gift. But for me as a kid, I had no earthly idea what in the world I was supposed to do with a bunch of coins.

And I knew that my parents had told me very clearly I was not to open the coins. I was not to play with the coins. I was not to touch the coins. And so in my mind, what good are the coins anyways?

It was a wonderful, generous, valuable gift that I simply did not understand. Well, in a similar way, believer, all of us have been given a wonderful, generous, valuable gift in the Holy Spirit.

But I'm afraid that if we're honest, many of us would say, well, we don't know exactly what to do with this gift of the Holy Spirit. Well, here in John chapter 14, Jesus, he teaches us four aspects of this gift.

This will be our outline this morning if you're taking notes. Four aspects of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Hopefully this will help us understand this gift that we've been given. First, we see that the Holy Spirit is a powerful gift.

[6 : 10] The Holy Spirit is a powerful gift. You know, I think it's necessary here just to remind us briefly of what we saw last week in the first half of this chapter. If you were here last week, and if you were paying attention to everything that we said, all of these benefits of Jesus' departure, I hope that you were on the edge of your seat waiting for me to say, all of this is only possible through the Holy Spirit.

I didn't say it last week. I had some self-control. I held it for us for this week. But we need to realize that all of the benefits of Christ leaving come to us by way of the Holy Spirit.

Our security, our assurance that we will go to the place prepared for us in the Father's house, that is a work of the Holy Spirit. Our faith, the gift of faith, our believing, that is a work of God through the Holy Spirit.

And our working, it is the Holy Spirit that empowers the work of the church. As we live in between the two comings of Christ, we live and we walk and we work in the power of the Holy Spirit.

You remember last week from chapter 14, verse 12, Jesus makes this incredible promise to us, the astounding truth that we, the people of God, now do greater works than Christ because of His departure.

[7 : 39] Greater in scope, greater in clarity, greater in power to save. Do you remember that from last week? How is that even possible? It's only possible through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the one who empowers the work of the church. You know, if you're still on track with our reading plan for the month of December, I won't ask you to raise your hands.

We gave out a reading plan to take us through the month of December. If you're on track today, you will read Acts chapter 1 through 8. And in that, you'll read Acts 1, verse 8, which says this promise from Jesus.

You will receive what? Power. When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, to the ends of the earth.

Church, we should realize that that is our mission. We're promised God's power for God's work, for God's glory.

[8 : 45] You know, last Sunday evening, we had what I think was probably the most encouraging members meeting I've ever been a part of. If you were there, it was just a sweet time. Everybody got to share.

Just recapping the year, what the Lord has done in and through us in the year 2023. Just about everybody in the room went around and shared something of what God has done. It was so deeply encouraging, but one part left me a little frustrated.

I asked you, Church, what is our mission? We've had a whole year to get this down. What is our mission? And we fumbled, and we bumbled our way through it.

We got there in the end, but I wanted to make sure we are crystal clear what our mission is, Church. Our mission is to magnify the glory of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That's our mission. to magnify the glory of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's our mission because we are convinced that that is God's mission.

[9 : 50] And the way that we plan to go about that grand mission is with God's power through God's appointed means. And so we're not reinventing the wheel here. We want to enjoy God as we gather and worship Him, as we worship Him, as we scatter, as we worship His families.

We want to enjoy Him. We want to equip the saints, one another, through discipleship, through encouragement, as we build one another up in love. And we want to evangelize the lost as we take the gospel from this gathering place and scatter it out throughout this community.

And Lord, what we want to see, Church, what we want to see the Lord do as we go about this mission, we want to see lives transformed by the gospel. We want to see sin put to death in one another's life.

We want to see faith strengthened in one another. We want to see God's glory magnified in us and in our community. But Church, let me be clear. None of this is possible apart from the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit is God's power for God's work, for God's glory. God's glory. Everyone should want this gift. Amen? But as we see, second, in our passage this morning, starting in verse 15, as we see, the Holy Spirit is a particular gift.

[11 : 17] The Holy Spirit is a particular gift. Meaning, not everyone receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. not everyone in the world has this gift.

It's very possible that you're here this morning listening to this sermon, listening to this text, and you do not have this gift. So the question we have to ask is, well, how do we know?

How do we know who it is that has the Spirit and who it is who doesn't? Well, look there with me to verse 15. Jesus, He helps us out. He says, if you love me, you will keep my commandments and I will ask the Father and He will give you another helper to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth.

Listen to this. Whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him for He dwells with you and will be in you.

See, Jesus here, He makes a distinction between His people who all of them will have the Spirit and the rest of the world who none of them will have the Spirit.

[12 : 29] Very clear distinction here. Jesus says that all of His people know Him, see Him, love Him, obey Him. Do you see that there in the text? All of God's people know Him, see Him, love Him, and obey Him.

Those are all spiritual functions. That's what sets God's people apart from the rest of the world. The rest of the world does not know God.

The world in general does not see God. The world certainly does not love God. The world certainly does not obey God. So Jesus says the world cannot receive Him because it neither sees Him nor knows Him.

This is a distinction that Jesus makes between those who are spiritual and those who are natural. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 2, verse 14, he says, the natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God for they are folly to Him.

He is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. It's a bit paradoxical, isn't it? He says the natural person cannot accept the things of the Spirit, only the spiritual person can accept the things of the Spirit.

[13 : 47] But how is somebody made a spiritual person? It's by the work of the Spirit. Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, no one can accept the things of the Spirit.

But when the Father sends the Spirit in power to save, you know what happens? The Spirit changes you from being a natural person who is naturally blind, naturally ignorant to the glory of Christ, naturally rebellious, naturally hard-hearted towards God, changes you from a natural person into something categorically different.

A new creation. A spiritual person who now sees and knows the Lord. The Spirit belongs to those who see and know the Lord Jesus Christ.

But it goes deeper than that, doesn't it? The Spirit belongs to those who love and obey the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said in verse 23, If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

[15 : 04] Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. Now we have to be careful here, don't we? Because at first glance, this looks a little bit like God's love for us is a response to our love for him.

Right? Is that how it reads to you? He says, If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him. But we know better, I hope by now, that we know better.

This isn't an order of operations. These are inseparable truths. If you love the Lord, that genuine love will necessarily be worked out in a life of obedience.

Not perfection, of course not. Not perfect obedience, but genuine love will result, will bear the fruit of obedience. And we can be sure that any who love the Lord and serve him and obey him truly are loved by God because if we're going to talk about order of operations here, we love because he first loved us.

We were dead in our trespasses and sins, Ephesians 2 tells us. But God made us alive together with Christ. God demonstrates his love for us in this, that while we were still sinners, God, Christ died for us, Romans chapter 5.

[16 : 32] And Jesus is telling us that one of the defining marks of those who have the Spirit of the Lord in them is love. The natural person, he does not love the Lord.

He's rebellious, hard-hearted towards the things of God. One of the primary works of the Holy Spirit is to take a heart that is cold towards God and replace it with a new heart that now loves God.

God. That's the difference between those who have this gift and those who do not. Friend, if you want to know what category you're in, if you want to know whether or not you have the Spirit or whether you belong to the world, ask yourself, honestly, do I love the Lord?

Do you love God? Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you love His Word?

Do you desire communion and fellowship with Him? Do you love the things that He loves? Is your life marked by the things that He is marked by? Are you obeying His Word?

[17 : 48] If so, praise God, that's a miracle of God's Spirit in you. This is what we read this morning from Ezekiel 36.

I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put within you and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh and I will put my spirit within you and I will cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

If anyone loves me, Jesus said, he will keep my word. Church, you ask the holiest person that you know. Get them in your mind. God, ask the holiest person that you know.

Why do you read your Bible so regularly, so faithfully? Why do you pray? Why do you live the way that you do? An honest, good answer shouldn't be just compliance.

He said so, although that's a valid answer. The answer ought to be because I love Him. Because I love Him. Because I've seen His love for me on the cross.

[19 : 00] Because I've seen His power in the resurrection. Because the Spirit has given me eyes to see and a heart to love Him. That's why I live the way I do. The Spirit is a powerful gift.

He is a particular gift. And third, we see the Holy Spirit. Church, He is a personal gift. A personal gift. gift.

Look at the promise Jesus makes to His people. He promises here in verses 15 and 16. He says, If you love me, you will keep my commandments and I will ask the Father and He will give you another helper to be with you forever.

Even the Spirit of truth. That's an incredible promise. But He goes a step further than that. He says, this Spirit will not only be with you walking alongside you, He won't only be with you, He will be within you.

He says, I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you in that day, verse 20. In that day, you will know that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you.

[20 : 06] Now Judas, John is careful to say, not Iscariot. Judas, he asked a good question here in verse 22. Do you see that? He said, Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, your disciples, and not to the rest of the world?

Do you still hear that distinction that's being made? How is it that we will see you, know you, love you, obey you, and the rest of the world will not? He says in verse 23, if anyone loves me, verse 23, he will keep my word and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him.

This is a promise of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God, not just with you, alongside you, church, but within you.

I hope you realize that this is the greater fulfillment of everything we celebrate at Christmas time. We celebrate at Christmas time the birth of Emmanuel, which means, what?

God with us. Galatians tells us when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law to redeem those who are under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons.

[21 : 40] And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. What we celebrate at Christmas is that God sent Jesus down to be born as a man so that we might rise and be born of God.

And if we are born of God, we can be certain that we are sons and heirs through God. What a hope that is. The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are sons of God, children of God.

And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified with him. You see, the whole story of the Bible, from beginning to end, from Genesis to Revelation, the entire story of the Bible, 66 individual books, is one overarching story of God making a way to be with his people.

You know, the book of Genesis as it begins, this is what was lost in the Garden of Eden. God made Adam and Eve a perfect creation, God with his people, perfect relationship, perfect community, perfect intimacy with God, their creator, and sin entered into the creation and caused division.

[23 : 12] That's what it continues to do today. Our sin is what separates us from God. We cannot dwell with a holy God if we are still guilty in our sin.

That sin issue must be dealt with. And so all through the pages of the Old Testament, God is putting systems in place. He's reaching down to us to be with his people.

He's putting systems of sacrifice in place to atone for sin. He's putting the tabernacle in place so he can dwell amongst his people. He puts the temple in place so he has a more permanent dwelling to be with his people.

But none of it is lasting. The sin issue still remains. So in the fullness of time I'd come.

Jesus Christ came. This is what we celebrate at Christmas that Christ came to put an end to our sin once and for all.

[24 : 12] So that all who know him by faith, all who love him, all who see him, all who obey him receive the Holy Spirit and are made new or adopted into the family of God.

As children, our sin is atoned for. It is finished on the cross. 1 Peter 3.18 says, Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.

So now, church, if you have received the finished work of Christ through faith in what he has done, we have the certain hope ahead of us.

At the end of the book in Revelation, chapter 21, which says, I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God. That's the great hope that every page of this book is leaning towards that God would be with us.

[25 : 22] No sin, no suffering, no guilt, no pain, no loss, no death, no grief. He will wipe away every tear from our eyes at his return.

But church, the good news that we celebrate today, we don't have to wait till then to be with the Lord. Through his spirit, he has come to be within us.

What should that truth do for us, church? If we truly understood the glorious gift that Jesus tells us that his spirit now lives within us, he says, at least one effect of that truth, at least one effect of that gift, and this is my prayer for us this Christmas, is that we would have peace.

Fourth, the Holy Spirit is a peaceful gift. Look there, beginning in verse 25, he says, these things I have spoken to you while I am still with you, 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.

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.

[26 : 50] 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. And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place, you may believe.

I will no longer talk much with you for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, but I do as my Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father.

Rise, let us go from here. Church, the Holy Spirit is a gift of peace to any who receive Him. And don't you long for peace?

Everybody longs for peace. peace. What Jesus tells us here, what kind of peace this is that He gives to His people, it's peace that is rooted in the truth.

See what He says, the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, what will He do? He will teach you all things, and He will bring to our remembrance all that I have said to you.

[27 : 59] Do you ever wonder how this bumbling group of disciples who can't seem to get their head on straight all through the Gospels, all of a sudden in the book of Acts and throughout the rest of the New Testament, they are filled with boldness to proclaim the Word of Christ.

Do you ever wonder how Peter can go from denying the Lord three times, I don't know him, I don't know that man, I don't know him, you got somebody else, to now being a pillar and a foundational member of the early church.

Well, they witnessed the resurrected Jesus and they received the promised Holy Spirit. The Spirit, He taught them and He reminded them of the words of Jesus.

It was the Spirit through the Word of God that comforted them and sustained them and empowered them to endure all sorts of horrible afflictions and persecutions.

Their lives were not peaceful, church, but they were at peace. We share the same Spirit with them.

[29 : 05] We share the same Word with them. Do we share the same peace with them? The Bible that we hold in our hands, that we read as we gather together, the Bible that we're preaching from this morning is a product of this promise fulfilled.

The Spirit inspired the pages of this book so that He might call to mind all the things, all the words of God as we hide His Word in our heart.

One of the primary ways that the Spirit helps us is by illuminating the Word of God in our hearts so that when we leave here, when we go out in the midst of the chaos of this world, we are of all people at peace through His Spirit in us.

True peace is found as the Spirit of God teaches us the Word of God so that we believe it and live it. Friend, if you want to see the Spirit move in your life, open up the Word of God and read.

Open up the Word of God and pray, Lord, give me the grace to see Your glory in these pages. Lord, give me the grace to obey where I once rebelled.

[30 : 22] Lord, give me the grace to love You where I once hated You. If you're seeking peace, church, do it with an open Bible. And whatever you do, do not seek it in the world.

Jesus says, Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you, not as the world gives do I give to you. Well, you think about what the world gives you. Where can you go to find peace in the world?

The world is nothing but anxiety and stress and anger and division and frustration and turmoil. Jesus says, not as the world gives do I give to you.

Receive my peace. You remember the announcement of the angels that Jesus is coming. Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased.

Friend, are you at peace this Christmas season? Is your heart and your soul at rest? Honest answers. Are you resting in the Lord or is your heart and your life marked by the chaos and frustration of the world?

[31 : 38] disciples here were likely experiencing a mix of emotions. Jesus is telling them the enemy is coming. The enemy is at hand.

He's coming. I'm leaving. I'm going to the Father. They thought they were losing Jesus. And yet here He is promising them this is good. This is good.

This is in the Father's hand. Be at peace. This is okay. I will not leave you as orphans. You will have peace. I'm certain that as much as they wanted to believe what Jesus was offering them here they probably were frustrated, anxious, fearful.

How could this be good? How can we have peace? I'd be willing to bet that some of you find yourself in a similar situation this Christmas. I know that for many of us the holidays, Christmas season is a time of great joy and happiness and excitement and delight.

It's an exciting time. We celebrate the coming of Christ but I know that for many of us the holiday season, Christmas, is a time when many of us are struggling with tremendous grief. Tremendous loss.

[32 : 52] As we grieve the loss of loved ones, I look around here I see others that are missing who I know are grieving the loss of those that they loved. The holidays can be a terribly painful time for many.

So my encouragement to you church as we close this morning lean in to the peace that we're given through the promised Holy Spirit. You will not find it in this world but you will find it in the Spirit of God through the Word of Christ.

Church, as we consider the miracle of Christ coming this Christmas season, the miracle of God becoming man coming to dwell among us, don't miss the beauty of an even greater gift that God became man to dwell within us through faith in Christ.

Let's pray. Lord, what a gift. What a gift.

Lord, we pray, Father, that we would, if we have not to this point, God, receive the Holy Spirit that if there's any here who don't know you, Father, send your Spirit forth in power now to save.

[34 : 11] And Father, we ask that as we walk through this Christmas season and anticipate the coming of Christ, fill our hearts with peace through believing in the Holy Spirit.

We love you, Lord. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.