

The Gift Of The Holy Spirit

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning. It's good to see you all. Our text today is in John chapter 14. We're going to continue in our series in the book of John. We're starting, we're looking at John 14, starting in verse 15.

This is Jesus' farewell discourse. This is the last week of his life. He's preparing his disciples for what is coming, which is both the reality of his crucifixion and his resurrection, but also the mission then that he will leave them with to bear witness to him in the world.

And so we'll see as we look at this passage this morning, Jesus exposes a problem that the disciples may face, a provision that he is promising, and then we'll look for a few minutes at what that provision will produce in our lives.

So there's my three Ps for you if you want, if you're doing an outline, a problem, a provision, and what is produced by that provision. So let's look at the passage together, and then we'll pray, and then we will dive in.

John chapter 14, verse 15. 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 : 30] 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 the Father, and you are in me, and I am 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?

And 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 who sent me.

Let's pray together. Lord, we come this morning to your word, and we ask for your help, because we know that in our human, natural minds, Lord, we are unable to understand what you are saying to us.

[2 : 47] But we praise you that we are not left alone. Lord, even in this passage, you promised the gift of your Holy Spirit, Lord, who illumines our hearts and our minds, and gives us understanding of things that we could not understand otherwise.

And we thank you that your word is not so opaque and not so confusing, that we cannot understand it with your help, but in fact that you have revealed yourself so that we might know you, and in knowing you that we might love you, and worship you as you deserve.

God, I pray for us this morning as we look at this passage that you will help us to receive your word. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. So there's a function in Microsoft Word that I've always wondered about.

You may have seen it. It's called the widow-orphan function. Do you know what it does? It means that when you're writing on a piece of page, and you have a word that might be the only word at the end of a paragraph, or the only line at the bottom of the page starting a new paragraph, word will automatically reformat it for you so that those lines or those words will not be alone.

They will not be left singular, isolated from the rest of the text, but that they will be seen as a part of the text, welcomed and gathered.

[4 : 13] Jesus tells his disciples in the verses today, he says, I will not leave you as orphans.

Now, we know that this is a feeling that maybe many of us have had during this pandemic, because during the pandemic, we have been isolated, alone, left as the dangling line at the bottom of the page in many ways.

And we feel that, don't we? We know that in many ways. Some of us have literally been left as orphans in this world because COVID has taken their parents.

Many of us have felt the pain of separation and distance and isolation. And some of it has also felt like abandonment, that even when we've been able to see some people, many who we love, we haven't seen and wonder, where'd they go?

And it's been hard, hasn't it? It's been a hard season. And maybe you feel that orphaned would be a decent word for how you've experienced some of the pandemic today.

[5 : 29] We often will feel this way. Sometimes personal disappointment, deep wounds, broken relationships, loss will create this emptiness and this sense of, I'm alone in this world.

Jesus says, I will not leave you as orphans. I think there might be another sense in this passage as well that Jesus is saying that to his disciples. If you remember back from, Pastor Nick preached last week about doing and what Jesus promised in verse 12, that the disciples would do greater works than the works that Jesus did.

This is a great promise that it's an amplification, it's an implied condition of Jesus saying, if you keep my word, if you love me, you will go and as you carry out this mission that I'm sending you on, you're gonna extend and build and see God build his kingdom in amazing ways.

Now we need to be clear on one thing. When we read these words, like verse 15, if you love me, you will keep my commandments.

Our most natural reading in English is that that's a causal effect. If this, then this. If this happens, that will produce something else. And we need to rethink how we read these sentences because I don't believe they're actually causal.

[6 : 57] I think they're correlations. It means if this is true, then this is also true. And these things go together. So loving and obeying his commandments go together. We'll see how important this is later as we look at it.

But recognize that Jesus is telling his disciples, you're gonna do great things. You're gonna love me and you're gonna obey my commandments. And the disciples are thinking, how is that gonna happen?

Judas has just left. Peter's going to fail. What in the world? And I wonder if maybe some of us feel that way in our Christian lives as well.

Maybe we've tried to be obedient. Maybe we've tried to love God. Tried to be a faithful follower. We've tried to read the Bible every day. We've tried to pray every day.

We've tried to be patient with our kids in every circumstance. And if you're a parent, you're starting to laugh because we realize that none of us can do these things perfectly.

[7 : 58] And it feels overwhelming and it becomes a burden. It feels like Jesus has said, you're gonna go and have to perform perfectly in the world and do all these great things for God.

And you're gonna do it on your own. And maybe the disciples felt abandoned, orphaned in that sense too. Like your high school teacher, it says, I want you to go write a six-page paper and tell me everything that is important to know about the country of China.

It's history, it's culture, it's language, it's politics, it's economics. It's an overwhelming task. How could I even begin to understand all that, let alone accomplish that and produce what you're asking for?

And sometimes in our Christian lives, particularly when we take it seriously, we feel the same burden. How could we ever do that? It's overwhelming and defeating.

Our failures then define us, our weakness defeats us, and we often despair. And we despair not only of trying, but we despair of God himself.

[9 : 12] This is a problem. That many of us have. But Jesus speaks to his disciples and to us saying, you are not alone in these things. Not so will I leave you as orphans.

And this leads us then, if this is the problem that we face, this feeling of being orphaned, both spiritually and just generally in life, Jesus says, here is the provision that I have for you. Look with me in verses 16 and 17.

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another helper to be with you forever, even the spirit of truth. Jesus says, I will not leave you alone, but I will send another one, another helper to come alongside.

Now, many of you probably know this, but the Greek word there is *paraclete*. And it's good to know because it's not an easy word to translate. Comforter, helper, teacher, guide, friend, advocate, counselor are all different English translations that try to get at what that word means.

And all of them capture some of it. At its core, it probably means one who comes alongside to give aid, to give encouragement, to give strength.

[10 : 26] One who is present and actually able to give help. And this is what Jesus is promising. And the passage itself gives us a lot of information about this one, this helper, according to ESV, who will come alongside with us.

Right? First of all, we see in verse 16 that he is not just a helper, but he is another helper. What does that mean? He is another one like Jesus. Jesus has been with his disciples.

How has he helped them? He has spoken truth to them. He has encouraged their hearts. He has taught them. He has given them examples. He has seen them and called them to take steps in exerting his power.

They have experienced amazing things. The disciples may be losing Jesus, but he's saying, you're not going to lose what you've gotten from me being with you because I'm going to send another one like me to come alongside.

And not only am I going to send one like me, but I'm going to reaffirm that he's going to come from the Father. I'm going to ask that God is going to come and provide all that you need.

[11 : 36] And not only that, but he will be with you forever. I'm not just giving you a temporary or conditional gift. And certainly it seems at times in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit might come and be on someone for a season or for a task.

But in the New Testament, the promise is that he will come and be with us forever. He will be a spiritual help that the world cannot receive nor see nor understand.

What in the world does that mean? Well, remember in John's gospel, the world is the system that has rejected Jesus and rejects God.

And so what Jesus is saying is the Holy Spirit, God himself, is going to come to the world and of course they're not going to receive it. They're not going to see it. They're not going to understand it. So they may dismiss everything they see as luck, circumstance, hard work, human ingenuity, just chaos.

Whatever it is, they're going to dismiss it and not be able to see the Holy Spirit for who he is and what he does. Remember what Jesus says in John 3, the wind blows where it wishes. You hear it sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes.

[12 : 48] So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit. But if you have eyes to see, and Jesus is saying, you as my disciples, because you know me, you will see this.

You will see the effects and you will know that it's the Holy Spirit. And he is not just a Holy Spirit, but he is a spirit of truth. He will come and remind you. We're going to learn more about this next week because it's the focus of the passage right after this.

But like a spotlight, Jesus is going to, or Jesus says, the Holy Spirit is going to shine all of his light on Jesus and Jesus' life and death and resurrection and his teaching to illuminate the truth for us as his followers.

And finally, we need to recognize that the Holy Spirit is personal. In verse 17, John explicitly uses personal pronouns. They are not impersonal.

They are not it. It is he in those verses to remind us that the Holy Spirit is not like the force, mysterious mitochondrians swimming around in our bloodstream, nor is it the effect of gamma rays that allow us to turn green and smash things.

[14 : 02] It is not all, there are lots of ways in which we think of these external powers and it's none of those things. The Holy Spirit is a person, the person of God who will come and in union with us, come alongside of us to work in us.

This is the doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that for all who have placed their faith in Christ at the moment of salvation, when God regenerates our hearts, when he declares us justified, when we believe and trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, we get the gift of the Holy Spirit that he comes and he is in us and with us.

Jesus says, I will not leave you alone, but the Holy Spirit will come and he will come alongside of you and be in you. And this is really exciting.

This is just the opening chapter. We have five sermons on the Holy Spirit in the next eight weeks. So hang on to your hat. It's going to be really fun as we explore different aspects of how the Holy Spirit is sent to come and what this is.

But what I want you to see is that in the fear of us living as orphans in this world, Jesus says, no, I will send the Holy Spirit to come alongside you and to be with you.

[15 : 24] And what does this produce in us? What does this produce in our lives? If those are the things that we see, what does it produce? Well, I think it produces three things. We see in verses 18 through 20, Jesus is saying, this is what's going to happen.

I'm going to go away and then I'm going to be raised from the dead and you're going to see me again for a little while because I live, you will live, you will experience the resurrection power of being joined with me but then I'm going to ascend to heaven and I'm going to ascend to the Holy Spirit.

And this is what the day of Pentecost is. This is what the prophecy that was read earlier by Tosin from Joel 2 was predicting and speaking forward saying, this is the day that's going to come and when the Spirit comes it's going to have this tremendous power that now is at work throughout the world until Jesus returns.

I think there are three things that the full effect of the risen Savior coming to us by the Spirit that we can see in this passage.

So we're going to unpack three implications, three produce. I'm gardening this. I'm trying to garden. Trying to grow things.

[16 : 32] And the hope is that they will produce things that we'll be able to eat. So what is it that the Holy Spirit wants to produce in us by His coming?

Three things. First, we've mentioned it but I want to spend a little more time thinking about it. Verse 16, He will be with you forever. The Holy Spirit will come to provide for His disciples and for us security.

I think often Christians live with a fear. Can I lose the Holy Spirit? what if I blow it? No, what if I really blow it? No, what if I really, really, really blow it?

The sin that's like beyond the sin that's acceptable. What about like people in the Old Testament like King Saul where the Spirit left him because of his unfaithfulness?

If I'm a bad enough Christian, will God abandon me? Friends, what Jesus says is, the Spirit is not being given because you are a good enough Christian.

[17 : 43] I am not sending it to you because you have performed well enough that I'm going to give you this second gift or this second blessing. The Holy Spirit is going to be given to you because I ask the Father and He will send it to you because you are connected with me.

This is good news. Ephesians 1, 13, the Apostle Paul says it this way, in Him, that is in Jesus also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and believed in Him, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of His glory.

This image is like a seal, right? A letter that then wax was dripped and then a signet or a seal was marked on it saying, this is from me and this is mine.

And that's what God does when He gives to His children His Holy Spirit. He says, these are mine. You are mine because of the Holy Spirit and the gift of it.

And this is the security that the New Testament promises to believers. And this then leads to the second thing, the second produce that we see from the Holy Spirit and that is a relationship.

[19 : 11] Look with me at 21 to 23. We are now swimming in the deep waters of Trinitarian theology and I am not going to be able to parse it all out for you today.

But we've talked at the beginning about how easy it is to feel abandoned, to feel alone like an orphan without anyone in this world. And these verses remind us in 21 through 23 that God is promising through Jesus something completely opposite.

They thought, the disciples thought, we know Jesus in the flesh in the person but what's going to happen when He's gone? Look with me at 21 through 23 again. He says, if you have my commandments and keep 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.

And then in response to Judas' questions He says, everyone loves me, keeps my word, my Father will love him and we will come to him and we will make our home with him. We will stay with him forever.

Jesus is saying the Holy Spirit, this helper will come alongside and He will mediate for us this incredible truth that when God calls us to faith in Christ He calls us into a personal relationship with the triune God who created the universe.

[20 : 40] It is a relationship of love. Jesus will love us. The Father will love us. The Holy Spirit will mediate this love to us by dwelling in us. And friends, I know it's trite and cliché to talk about having a personal relationship with God because it's been kicked around for 50 years and because certainly some people have made professions of having a personal relationship with God and yet their life shows absolutely no evidence of it actually being true.

So we want to acknowledge that. And yet, do you see how intensely personal this promise is in this passage? The spiritual presence of God is real.

We will make our home with you. And this is not just something that we should think about in our heads to parse out.

It is something to be felt. Have you known the presence of God in your life? Have you known the Holy Spirit whispering truths in difficult times?

Have you ever, as you experienced God's creation, felt that you weren't alone but that God was with you rejoicing in the creation that He has made? Have you known those times when you felt abandoned by all others in this world?

[22 : 14] When God has reminded you, I am with you always to the ends of the age. Now look, friends, I want to admit, I don't always feel it, but I felt it enough to know that it's true.

And on the days that I don't feel it, I can cling to the promises and the knowledge that it's true because I know and have experienced the reality that God is not just an idea but a person and He invites us into a personal relationship.

1 Peter 1, 7 and 8 says this about the believers in Rome. Though you have not seen Him, you love Him. Though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

This is the crazy thing about this, isn't it? Because when we want a relationship, if I want a relationship with Spondin, I will sit down and there's a person there and I can talk to him and he can respond to me and we can have that kind of relationship.

God is a spirit. Jesus and His disciples experience the kind of thing that I'm able to have with Spondin and now Jesus is saying, I'm going to go away and I'm going to send you a spiritual person of the Trinity to dwell with you that you're going to relate to.

[23 : 46] Not exactly in the same way but in a similar way, in the same sense of a personal relationship. And I know that we struggle with it. I know that it's hard to imagine and yet the witness of the church throughout history and the witness of my own walk with the Lord is that it is real.

That God is a person and that we can commune and fellowship with Him through His Holy Spirit. Have a great joy. And so the question then we must ask ourselves is do we have a relationship with God?

Or have we just agreed to a certain set of principles, affirmed a certain creed, or assumed that going through a certain set of ritual actions or acts of service have created a standing with God but not a relationship?

Friends, if that's true, don't let those counterfeits rob you of the real thing. Seek the Lord while He may be found. He is not far from you and He will respond if you ask Him.

So the first fruit is security and the second fruit is relationship. The third one, finally, is power. Power to enable us to obey and to love.

[25 : 14] You may have seen this. It's sprinkled throughout this passage, right? If you love me, you will keep my commandments. Verse 15. And then verse 21, He says again, whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.

In verse 23 again, if anyone loves me, he will keep my word. And again, it's easy for us to hear all these things as conditionals. Right?

You only have these things. You only have the Holy Spirit. You only have a relationship with me if you are good enough. But it's not a conditional statement. It's a cord. Jesus is painting a portrait of what it means to know him.

If you know me, my spirit will come to you. You will have security. You will have relationship. And you will have power to love me and to obey me.

We talked about at the beginning how easy it is for Christians to think, I'm trying to be good enough on my own strength that God will accept me and I can experience some of those good things. How easy it is to feel orphaned and feel the terrible burden of obedience that we carry around.

[26 : 27] The Spirit instead produces in us love and obedience. When we have a life-giving relationship with God, the Spirit comes and changes us.

He turns our affection so that increasingly we love God and the things that God loves and we hate the things that He hates. We pursue the things that God values and we find as less and less valuable to us, less precious to us, the things that aren't interesting, that are not of interest in God's kingdom.

We grow so that God becomes the greatest treasure. God becomes the thing. What do you want? If you could have one thing on a deserted island, what do I want?

I want God with me. He becomes my greatest treasure. He becomes my highest priority in all of my relationships.

And it's not just to love Him, but in this then comes the power to obey Him. Because as we love the things that God loves and hate the thing that God hates, we increasingly are transformed to have strength to do the things that God calls us to because living in His kingdom comes, puts us in a position of being parallel with what His commands are.

[27 : 52] As we love His kingdom, we will say, we want the things that God wants and we will pursue them and we will not do the things that lead to destruction and death.

When we have the Holy Spirit, He is able to teach us and change our hearts and empower us to have the fruit of the Spirit.

That's a whole other sermon. Go read Galatians 5. But that's something that God will produce in us. And yes, there is us striving for those things, but we are striving with all the power that God gives by His Holy Spirit.

It is us working out our salvation, but it is because God is at work in us that we can do these things. And this is what the Holy Spirit gives to us. not by performance, but by daily dependence on Him.

What does that look like? How do we pursue obedience and love for God? Well, just like we entered into a relationship with God, we do it by faith. We wake up in the morning and we affirm that God is there and that the Holy Spirit lives in us.

[29 : 02] We admit our need. We confess that we are unable to live the life that God would want us to live that day apart from Him. We pray for God's help and we ask Him.

And then we walk out into the world with confidence that God is with us and that God will empower us to live the life He wants to that day. And we don't just do it once in the morning and then leave it behind, but it becomes this thing that we do throughout the day as we have these moments of temptation, as we have these moments of fear and worry, as we have these moments of being overwhelmed and not being able to do what we think we ought to do to please God.

We stop again. We confess our need. We ask God to help us and then we move ahead in faith that God will be able to do us. And when we live a life like that, then pursuing obedience is no longer a duty, but it's a delight.

Then we no longer are working to build a resume so that God would accept us, but we do it simply to please the one that we have loved. We do it not to make ourselves great, but to make God great and not to look good in the eyes of others, but to let others see God in us.

Friends, this is a great hope. Just as He spoke to His disciples on that day, He speaks to us and He says, I will not leave you as orphans, but I will ask the Father and He will send you a helper, and that one will come and provide for you all that you need for security, for relationship, for love, a life of love and obedience that will bring glory to God.

[30 : 46] For those of you who are here this morning who are seeking to know Christ, ask the Holy Spirit to be at work in you. Let Him draw you to the truth of Christ and into the love of Christ.

Let Him lead you to faith, believe in Christ for your salvation. And if you're here this morning and you have known Christ but have been one who's carried great burdens, God has not abandoned you.

He has given you His Holy Spirit to empower you. Cultivate this dependent life, ask Him for your help, and believe that He has promised and that He is able.

Let's pray. Lord, we invite you now just as you promised your disciples to make yourself manifest to us through your Holy Spirit.

Lord, that we would know you. Lord, there's so many ways in which you are at work that we do not acknowledge. Lord, we pray this morning that you would help us.

[31 : 51] Help us to see your Spirit and help us to know, Lord, that rather than abandon, Lord, you have come. Come in your Holy Spirit to work in us for our good and for your glory.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.