

Dependence on the Holy Spirit

Introduction

Welcome to this edition of My Thoughts and the sixth of our eight-week series on “**The Cost of Discipleship**.” In this week’s segment, “**Dependence on the Holy Spirit**,” we will hear Jesus talking about the Father sending the Holy Spirit and how dependent we will be on the Holy Spirit in the future. We will be using two passages from the Gospel of John. Open your Bible and turn to the Gospel of John 15:26-27 and 16:4-15.

Practically everyone has a smartphone. We can look at our emails, and scores from sporting events, and social media outlets, and place events on our calendar. They have become our virtual assistants. Many people cannot live without smartphones and will go into sheer panic if they misplace them. Many people would struggle without our technology today.

With a simple click or a tap, we obtain immediate guidance, information, and help in a variety of ways. We type a few words into an online search engine and quickly receive multiple suggestions for gaining more information on any subject. Software developers produce applications to help people lose weight, exercise, keep schedules, and assist them in every activity of life.

Access to the Holy Spirit

Would it be great to have instant access to guidance, counsel, and power in the Christian life? We do, and it is the Holy Spirit. God knew believers would need divine assistance to live the Christian life, so Jesus spoke to His disciples on the promise of the Holy Spirit coming to live with them. In John 15:26-27, and 16:4-15, Jesus teaches us to depend on the Holy Spirit to instruct others on discipleship.

Passage Text - John 15:26-27, 16:4-15

²⁶ “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.”

²⁷ “And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

⁴ “But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.”

⁵ “But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’”

⁶ “But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.”

⁷ “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.”

⁸ “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:”

⁹ “of sin, because they do not believe in Me;”

¹⁰ “of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and you see Me no more;”

¹¹ “of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”

¹² “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

¹³ “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”

¹⁴ “He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”

¹⁵ “All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore, I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.”

Entered the Holy Spirit

Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as the Helper. The use of a masculine pronoun about the Holy Spirit underscores that the Spirit is a Person. Jesus sent the Spirit, and the Spirit proceeded from the Father. John simply pointed to the unity of the Father and Son in sending the Holy Spirit to aid believers.

The Holy Spirit, known as the Spirit of truth, identifies important assignments He will carry out. He will proclaim the truth about Jesus and testify about Him. The Holy Spirit will provide evidence to the world to convict lost people of sin and their need to trust Jesus as Lord and Savior. Convincing unbelievers of the truth about Jesus does not come from logical argumentation alone but requires spiritual conviction by the Holy Spirit. Our responsibility is declaring the Gospel, and the power of the Holy Spirit, bringing salvation to those who believe.

These disciples waited in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came upon them. Only after the coming of the Holy Spirit would they have the power to fulfill the Great Commission. The early church was built on the Spirit-filled testimony of those who had been with Jesus from the beginning of His ministry and had seen Him resurrected. Christians today still must depend on the Holy Spirit’s power daily.

Warning of Persecution

Jesus reminded the disciples that He had forewarned them of persecution. He was sending His disciples into a spiritual battle where they would face attacks by Satan and the world. Jesus sought to keep them from faltering in the heat of battle by telling them what to expect and how to meet the challenges.

Jesus warned them that the unbelieving Jews would ban them from the synagogues. The synagogue was the center of Jewish culture as a place of meeting, worship, and fellowship. To be banned from the temple often included being shunned in business and social relationships too.

Persecution for the faith could include the threat of martyrdom. The disciples would encounter those who believed that killing Christians was doing God's will. Jesus' followers would continue to face these same attitudes when they proclaimed Jesus as the risen Christ. Jesus wanted His disciples to know how dangerous their task of missions and evangelism would become.

Comfort in Persecution

Jesus attributed the persecution of Christians to persecutors' ignorance of the Father and of the Holy Spirit. The religious zeal of first-century Israel, leading to the slaughter of innocent lives, is too common in our world. In some places, Christians, mostly Missionaries, are in direct line with the violence. The time of persecution would come.

Yet Christ's followers could be comforted, knowing that He knew about it and was in control. They would have the Holy Spirit to help them in these critical situations. Christians today can also depend on the Holy Spirit to give us courage and clarity to talk about Jesus even in costly circumstances.

Leaving So Soon!

Jesus would soon share how His departure would provide even greater resources for them through the indwelling Holy Spirit. Believers often look at losses in our lives with despair. Through the Holy Spirit in us, however, God can use such events as the doorway to greater blessings.

Jesus assured His followers that they could trust what He said. His return to the Father was both necessary and to their advantage. It was essential because His departure from being with them in the flesh opened the way for the coming of the Holy Spirit to live in them.

The inauguration of the new covenant through Jesus' blood would pave the way for the modern age when the Holy Spirit empowers the church to carry the gospel message to all nations (Acts 2:16-21). Today, we as Spirit-filled believers can depend on the Holy Spirit to live in us, to comfort us in times of sorrow, and to propel us forward in the gospel mission.

Conviction by the Holy Spirit

From that time forward, the ministry of the Holy Spirit during the church age would include bringing the truth to the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. The conviction of the Holy Spirit accompanies the reading or hearing of the gospel by unbelievers.

The Spirit uses God's Word to reprove or convince sinners of the reality of sin and their accountability for it. The Spirit also convinces sinners of the good news, Christ, who gives His righteousness to those who believe in Him. Finally, the Spirit convinces sinners of the reality of judgment and the need to prepare by accepting Jesus Christ as Savior.

I Have More, but...

Jesus spoke of having much more that He wanted to tell His disciples to prepare them for the future. However, they were having difficulty grasping what He had just taught them. Although Jesus predicted the events, the disciples had not yet experienced them or fully realized what they meant. Likewise, believers today can have difficulty fully grasping certain spiritual truths.

Jesus taught that the Holy Spirit's ministry includes helping us understand more of the truth. Since the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, His ministry to believers logically includes guiding them into the truth. Guiding involves revealing the truth and then assisting believers by illuminating the truth to them and helping them interpret and apply the truth appropriately.

Conclusion

Because the Spirit lives in believers, He assists them in understanding and applying spiritual things (1 Corinthians 2:14). Jesus promised that the Spirit would focus on helping the disciples recall and understand the words and actions of Jesus (John 14:26).

Just as the Son taught what the Father gave Him, the Spirit would reveal what He hears from the Son and the Father. All three Persons of the Godhead are coequal in sovereignty and purpose. They operate in complete unity. It is why we can depend on the Holy Spirit to help us understand, apply, and tell others about all the truth Jesus reveals, Amen!

I am Dale Van De Bogart and I fully agree on God's Word!

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