

The Spirit

Part 1

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[00:00:00] to you, the first of which is John's Gospel, chapter 14 and verse 1. John 14, verse 1.

The Lord Jesus speaking, let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.

Verse 8. Philip said unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

[00:01:05] Jesus said unto him, have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then, show us the Father. Verse 16. I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. Verse 26. But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, [00:02:01] he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Chapter 15, verse 26. For when the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me, and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning. Chapter 16, verse 7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you. Verse 12. I have yet many things to say unto you, but he cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of [00:03:09] truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. Chapter 17, verse 5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they are, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word. Verse 15. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, [00:04:08] but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. Thank you for your patience. Last night was the first of three sessions looking at what I was bold enough to call [00:05:18] Christianity proper, or the fullness of the Christian revelation.

Necessarily, with only three sessions available for the moment, it was necessary to paint with a very broad brush, and to lay down essential principles, and there wasn't a lot of time for detail. It will be the same again tonight. Last night we started from the point that in our original needs, we needed consolation and assurance that something had been done for us that we couldn't do for [00:06:06] ourselves, namely that our sins might be dealt with. We needed, we had to have our needs attended to, and we took account of the fact that in Scripture, some portions begin with our need, and having had our needs attended to, we are drawn on to an appreciation of all the good things that God has in mind for those whose sins are forgiven. A growing up in the knowledge of God. Other scriptures, we noticed, start with God himself, the truth about God, what he has in mind, and then it comes in a descending order of the greatness and the goodness of God who stoops down to meet us in our need. And we used words of English to distinguish between God's revelation [00:07:11] of himself, starting from himself, and our apprehension of an aggrowing ascending way of what he has done for himself and for our blessing. And this took us into the realm, necessarily, of considering that if God is to be glorified and man is to be blessed, the only one who could meet both the claims of God and satisfy the heart of God and meet our every need is the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son. And we spent some time considering the qualifications of the Lord Jesus in being the only one competent to act for God and on our behalf, [00:08:08] and we took account of those phrases that come in a recurring way in the book of Revelation, speaking of the Lord Jesus as the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. And as an amplification of those phrases, we took Hebrews 1, relative to the Alpha and Omega, that he's the only one who's fully competent to speak for God because he is God. We took Colossians 1, as an amplification of the term, the Beginning and the End, he's the only one that's fully competent to act for God because he is God. And then we looked at John 1, briefly, that he is the only one who is competent to express God because in his own being he is God. [00:09:04] Now, there's a wealth of truth in those few sentences and that was where we paused at the end of the meeting. John's writings fill out in a large way the truth that was suggested in a few phrases last month. But we need to move on, and having satisfied ourselves that if what God has in mind reaches its fulfilment, it can only be in the person and through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's beloved Son, we then have to move on into the kind of scripture that we looked at tonight. Christ having come, the Son having become incarnate, the Word having become [00:10:07] flesh, was with his disciples for that period of about the three and a half years of his public ministry and they learned to love him, of course they did. They learned to rely upon him for everything. He asked them the question once, didn't he? Lacked he anything? A good one-word answer, nothing. They lacked nothing while he was with them. But the time came when it was necessary for him to leave them and this is where we pick up the text in John 14. He tells them, and there's no time to expand all these verses, but he says to them, now look, you believe in God, you've never [00:11:01] seen him, he's the object for your faith, he's in heaven, you're on earth, you know what it is to trust in a God that you can't see. And he says I have to go back there and you're going to have to trust me in the same way that you already trust him. You'll be able to see me no longer, I'll no longer be on earth and he adds the great personal comforting touch, I will go away, I will go and I will come again and receive you unto myself. Just pause there. How long is it since, with a well-known text like this, we hear it as from his personal lips, addressed personally to me as an individual, to you as an individual. Irrespective of how many others there will be involved in the [00:12:08] blessing, it's as pertinent, it's as personal as the Lord puts it here. He says to each of us who trust him, I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there ye may be also. The Lord intends that we don't consider this as a group matter or an assembly matter, but it's something addressed to each of us as an individual, the assurance that he knows us personally, he loves us personally, he'll come for each of us as individuals and take us to be with himself. But of course there are other implications of that. If the one in whom God has expressed himself, if the [00:13:05] one in whom the will of God is to

be brought into full effect, if having come into the world, having become man for that express purpose, is the will of God to be put to one side? Is the blessing to be dissipated? Is everything to end in disorder because the one in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen has to go away again from the world? Well these questions arise and of course the Lord Jesus takes these matters up. So if we turn to verse 16, he says I will pray the Father and he will give you another comforter. Canst thou speak Greek? I have enough trouble with English, [00:14:15] never mind a foreign language. But those who can understand Greek tell me, common knowledge to all of us who have Bible dictionaries, expository dictionaries of New Testament words, lexicons, there they are on the shelves, and they tell us that there's something absolutely special in what the Lord says. There may well be several words that are translated other or another in the New Testament, but there are two very special words. One means another of exactly the same kind and a [00:15:03] different word means just that, another of a completely different kind. No time to go into the second one. But what an encouragement, what a confirmation, what a blessing to the disciples, what instruction for us to understand what's involved when the Lord said I have to go away. But don't worry, someone's coming to take my place who is of the same quality, the same calibre, someone who can take my place because he's one with me. A tribute among other things to the co-equality and the co-deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit of which he was speaking. He said, [00:16:02] oh, he said, it's expedient for you that I go away. And he said because of that, he says, then I will send another comforter that he may abide with you forever.

As long as there is a need, as long as we need help, as long as there is something to do on our behalf, as long as there is something to understand at which I haven't arrived yet, the Holy Spirit will be available in dwelling me. Marvellous promise, isn't it? Never to be superseded, never to be removed, never to fail, always to be available, always taking the place [00:17:11] with me that the Lord Jesus personally and physically took with the disciples in the days of his flesh. And that's what he's saying here. Now when we, and we must keep moving, when we get towards the end of the chapter, I am aware these are very well known concepts, but I intend to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. In verse 26, notice it says, the comforter, well, let's just pause there. When the Bible was written or when it was translated into our language in a comprehensive, assured manner, the word comfort not only mean providing sympathy and care to meet [00:18:10] every need, but it was a double-barrelled word, wasn't it? And it additionally meant to make strong. All the disciples needed to be made strong. They'd been strong when he was with them, not in themselves, but in him. And when he was going away, he said, the way that I have strengthened you and supported you and provided every resource that you could ever require, he says the Holy Spirit is going to take that same role. And then in chapter 40, he says, whom the Father will send. Chapter 15, he says, whom I will send. And in chapter 16, when he is come of his own volition.

[00:19:03] That's an important thing. I haven't got to the end of my studies yet, but so far I've found upwards towards a hundred occasions in the New Testament where something important needs to be done. And the importance of the job to be done, and the assurance that it's been done effectively, is that the work is attributed to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. Now, this is not just a neat thing. This is not just something for the academic mind to notice and enjoy. Everything that's important for God and for us, everything that's concerned with the fulfilment of the will [00:20:02] of God, and everything that's necessary for our blessing, has this consolidated foundation. It rests upon the work of the Father, and the work of the Son, and the work of the Holy Spirit. Let's just go back to last night briefly. Until Christ came into the world, the Word became flesh. God had been powerful on behalf of his people of the day. He had acted on behalf of them, and for them, and he revealed himself in the names of himself that he made known to them. All those names, all those revelations,

were partial. They were less than complete. Only in the coming into the world of God the Son was the full revelation of God brought to light, and it is when the full [00:21:06] revelation of God is brought to light that we see the role of the Father, the role of the Son, and the role of the Holy Spirit. When we get down to it and examine Scripture, we find that either God as such, or the Father as such, is the source of whatever needs to be done. The Lord Jesus the Son is the active agent on behalf of the Godhead, and the Holy Spirit is the power by which and by whom the work is done. Now here, the coming into the world to take the place, an equal place, with what the Son had previously done in person, it is attributed to the work of the Father, the work of the Son, and the work of the Holy Ghost. Something to look for. If you want to satisfy yourself that [00:22:08] something that's being recorded in Scripture is an important concept, you check and you'll find that somewhere in the New Testament it will be attributed to the Father as such, to the Son as such, and the Holy Spirit as such. And so it is here. Now then, we must move quickly on. Time goes.

We'll move just now for the moment to chapter 17. Verse 5. The Son praying to the Father. A neat point, but excuse me once more. Some use the term the Lord's Prayer about what some of us, I suppose, [00:23:09] would prefer to call the disciple's prayer. In fact, some who like to be precise would say that's not the Lord's Prayer on the Sermon on the Mount. The Lord's Prayer is in John 17. Some of my friends who are present, if I dare to say that, soon as the meeting was finished they'd come to me and say, quite rightly, don't you think that the prayer in John 17 is not so much the Lord's Prayer as the Son's Prayer? And of course I would agree with you. Isn't it worthy of note that the way that God is spoken of, the way the Lord Jesus is spoken of, the way the Holy Spirit is spoken of in Scripture [00:24:05] is significant. The right term, the right emphasis, whether it's a personal name or an official title, these things don't come by chance. As we read in Corinthians, the words that the Holy Ghost teaches are exceedingly important. Well, in this Son's Prayer, as is clear in the text, the Son mentions his Father's name at the beginning. He says, Father, the hour is come. Gets a bit further down in verse 5, he says, O Father, speaking in that personal way about personal matters. When he gets to verse 11, thinking of his disciples in a wicked world, [00:25:03] he prays, Holy Father. And then when he thinks of the wicked world in which the disciples and their successor would have to live, he then in verse 25 prays, O Righteous Father. The terms are precise. They are significant. The Holy Spirit selects them with care in recording the substance and the detail of what the Lord has to say. Now, in these verses, verses 6 to 19, he prays specially for that holy apostolic band, that nucleus that would be used of God to inaugurate in the power of the Spirit [00:26:01] the preaching of the Gospel on the day of Pentecost and to supervise God's witness on earth in those vital formative early years of the Church. And so the Son, before he departs out of the world to be with the Father, he prays specially for them. Now, let us see how the revelation of God has moved on. If God was to be known, it must be personally in the Son. The Son came into the world. He revealed God. He declared God. He made God known. And then if any others were to be brought within the scope of the blessing, it was necessary for him to depart out of the world unto the Father by way of the cross in order that the work might be completed that would be the basis on which [00:27:06] others might be brought into relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ himself. That would leave a gap that was to be filled by the Holy Ghost, another comforter of the same calibre, of the same sort, co-equal with the Son. But he was to come not manifested in flesh, not incarnate. The Son became incarnate. The Word became flesh. That is never said of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would indwell this little nucleus from which the Church would grow and grow and continue to develop until the rapture, well, until that promise of the Lord at the beginning of chapter 14 [00:28:04] would be fulfilled in what Scripture speaks of as the catching away. If the witness was to continue, if the revelation of God was to be made known, there must be living people on the earth indwelt by that other comforter whom he would empower to act for God and to make God known by way of witness. And this was the holy apostolic band. Well, in case

we feel out of it and say, well, they died about 18 to 1900 years ago now, what about now? We can be thankful that in the Son's prayer in chapter 17 that the mood changes in verse 20. Up to verse 19, the Lord, the Son, is praying for those the Father had given him [00:29:10] as that wonderful band who trusted him, who followed him, who obeyed him, who served under him as long as he was with them. But when we get to verse 20, we get, neither pray I for these alone. Up till then, he had been praying for those alone. But now he says, I pray also for them who shall believe on me through their word. That includes you and me if we've trusted the Saviour. In the mercy of God, the Holy Spirit, who moved holy men of old to record God's thoughts, not only in overall thought, but in the very word, [00:30:06] using human vessels, so that having preserved it down the ages, we still have in our hands substantially that what we consider to be the canon of Holy Scripture, the teaching of God committed to a form that we can have in our own language and so by reading it and believing it, again we've had this week, haven't we? Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God and this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you. And the marvel is that having done that, we are included in those for whom the Lord Jesus, God the Son, was praying this [00:31:01] wonderful prayer. Let me just read it again and let us exult in the fact that when the Lord Jesus was praying to the Father these words, he was praying for you and me in person. I pray for them also who shall believe on me through the Apostles' words. Isn't that marvellous?

A prayer uttered out of the communion of the Son with the Father, the one whom he'd fully revealed that he prayed that prayer for you and for me. What a dignity it puts upon us that the Lord Jesus singled us out, that we in our day, believing in God through the apostolic witness, that we should [00:32:02] be the subjects of such a prayer. Now that's really why I read those verses. Now back again to chapter 17, verse 14. I have given them thy word. Verse 17. Sanctify them through thy truth through thy truth thy word is truth. Verse 19. For their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Now that's a special use of the term sanctification. Sanctification, setting apart for the service of God. The Lord here says I sanctify myself. Now this is what we would speak of as a positional sanctification. The Lord Jesus was about to set [00:33:06] himself apart from earth to go to heaven to take up a new position of exaltation and he was doing it on their behalf. And as he says in chapter 16, he says to the disciples, and it applies to us as well, it was expedient for them and for us that he went away, that he sanctified himself, set himself apart from earth, took up heavenly glory, sending the Holy Spirit to dwell within us that we might be brought into all truth. Now notice again those words that I've read. I have given them thy word, sanctify them through thy truth thy word is truth. It's been true in every age and dispensation.

[00:34:09] The longest psalm, psalm 119, almost every verse has a reference to the word of God, the statutes of God, the testimonies of God, the commandments of God. Perhaps there are 10 separate words or thereabouts which are used. Different facets of the word of God. The interesting thing there is, well the vital thing there is, that that longest psalm which has such a consistent thread running through it of devotion to and obedience to the word of God is the psalm which is split up into 22 sections of 8 verses each. And each of those [00:35:07] sections begins with a certain letter of the alphabet. And it was a 22 letter alphabet so if you like it covers what we would say it covers the A to Z of holy living. And it's significant surely that for those who live right according to God are those who are governed by the word of God. No need to quote examples, it's in every verse of that psalm. And here with a new age about to dawn, the age of Christianity, the age of the fullest possible revelation of God in the person of the son, consequent upon the death, resurrection, exaltation of the Lord Jesus and the descent of [00:36:04] the spirit that he says the agent that will be used to bring them into an understanding of what God has revealed of himself is in the precious written word. Now again going over familiar ground but it's worth going over once again. The Lord's words give sufficient

testimony to what is obvious. We need all the scripture of truth. And while we need all the scripture of truth, it all has its place. In particular we need all the New Testament. I have my favourite little bits, my favourite books, my favourite chapters, my favourite verses, my favourite phrases and I'm sure we all have. But we need the reminder that if we are to be well rounded in the spiritual and [00:37:05] moral sense that we need all the scripture. Notice the way the Lord Jesus emphasises this. In chapter 14 and verse 26 he says, the Comforter, the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you. In case I didn't pinpoint it sufficiently, look at the way the verse starts. The Comforter, the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name. Let's work the other way. If it's important all the persons of the Godhead will be involved. We start, take it the other way now. If I happen [00:38:01] to notice that in a verse, in a paragraph, in a chapter, in verses close together that all three persons of the Godhead are referred to, it should trigger off in my mind the response, there's something important, something I need to learn. And here the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, the Father, in the name of the Son, he shall teach you all things and here in particular, bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I said unto you. This gospel closes with a reminder that everything that Jesus did and said was recorded, the whole world would not contain all the books that might be written. The Holy Spirit has been selective. Choosing those things that the Lord did and the Lord said that are of particular importance in the revelation of God and making us mature Christians. And in [00:39:10] this verse what is highlighted is that bringing all things to your remembrance whatsoever I said unto you. It's a happy thing, isn't it? That in the order in which these verses come to us, we get first of all this indirect reference to the fact that we need the Gospels. Bringing to our remembrance whatsoever the Lord Jesus said unto us. Chapter 15, verse 26, notice again the activities of the Godhead in concert. Verse 26, the Comforter whom I, the Son, will send from the Father. Notice again the Father is the source, [00:40:03] the Son is the active executor or agent, the Holy Spirit is the power by which and by whom the Godhead acts. The result of that will be he shall testify of me, ye also shall bear witness a neat summary of what we find in the Book of Acts, isn't it? Then in chapter 16, verse 13, when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, oh you say we don't get a reference to all the persons of the Godhead. Well, let your thoughts go on to verses 14, he shall glorify me, he shall receive of mine. Verse 15, all things that the Father hath. Then verse 13, the Spirit of Truth. It's no accident. It's no mere academic consideration. It's important to notice when the Godhead are acting [00:41:08] in concert. Perhaps you grammarians will tell me that I should have said when the Godhead is acting in concert. Three persons in Godhead acting as one and here we have it once again. Well, here in chapter 16, verse 13, he will guide you into all truth. How often I hear the phrase which sounds all right but doesn't really bear examination. It sounds all right, don't give me doctrine, give me Christ. If you want Christ, you'll need the doctrine of Christ as John's epistle says. But the Lord here says we need the truth. We don't [00:42:01] only need the Gospels, precious as they are. We don't only need the record of the early days of the church, the early Christian witness, as in the book of Acts. We also need to be guided into all truth and the way that we are guided into all truth is as we meditate upon the New Testament epistles. And it says he will guide you into all truth. He shall not speak of himself. Well, we have to treat the prepositions in the New Testament with care, haven't we? These little words of and from and with and so on. If we examine a translation which attempts to translate literally and faithfully, it doesn't take us long to find out that here [00:43:06] and also in chapter 5 where the Lord says a similar phrase of himself, the son said, I do nothing of myself. And here the Holy Spirit says, is spoken of as he shall not speak of himself. More accurately, in both cases, it should be the preposition from, not of. Quite clearly, the Holy Spirit does speak about himself. In these chapters, the Holy Spirit places on record what the Lord Jesus said about the Holy Spirit. So it cannot mean that. But what it does mean is that neither the son nor the spirit act independently of the Godhead. That the Godhead is at one, acting in concert for the glory of God, the blessing of man,

[00:44:07] and as far as this week's study is concerned, as to the making known of God, the revelation of the heart of God. So here he will guide you into all truth. And then I suppose when he says he will show you things to come, the prophetic element of the epistles, particularly the second epistles, and also the book of Revelation. The whole of the New Testament is covered. And the things that are foretold and prefigured in the Old Testament, I'm sure, are still included. Second Timothy, you know, we are told that Timothy was well acquainted with the Old Testament, which was the scriptures of that day. But then Timothy was also advised that when the New [00:45:04] Testament was brought into being, it would have the same character, it was the word of God, God's word speaking to the soul, to be made good in the power of the spirit. And then I like this overall term in which the section finishes, verse 14, he shall glorify me.

Old Testament, New Testament, Gospels, Acts, Epistles, prophetic portions, devotional portions, doctrinal portions, all come under this grand work of the Holy Spirit, he shall glorify me.

[00:46:04] The Son incarnate was here to glorify the Father, his special role, to make the true excellence of the Father fully known. The Holy Spirit came into the world to make the true excellence of God the Son fully known and appreciated. Again, the revelation has been made, has been given, coming down from God's side, that we, on the line of apprehension, might learn it, might grow into it, might develop in the understanding, in the enjoyment of it, with this intent that the Holy Spirit is ever worthy of the work of the Godhead. May the grace of Christ our Saviour and the Father's boundless love, with the Holy Spirit's favour, rest upon us from above. [00:47:07] Number seven. May the grace of Christ our Saviour and the Father's boundless love, with the Holy Spirit's favour, rest upon us from above.

Thus may we abide in union with each other and the Lord, and possess in sweet communion joys which earth can never afford.