

3. The Spirit of Truth

John 16:4b-15

Daily Bible Meditations

Jennifer Lewis-Berg

Sunday

Proverbs 29:12-18

The essential thread that connects the Old Testament with the New Testament is prophecy. The prophecies that told what would happen for Israel culminated in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of God's Son. Through the prophets, God made mankind aware of His plan for them. Prophets came forward at times when Israel needed discipline and consequences for their sins. Otherwise, they would never have been drawn closer to God and would never have seen how essential God's restraints were. Prophecies brought hope for righteousness just as the Holy Spirit brings it for us today.

Monday

Isaiah 29:8-14

God was speaking to Jerusalem through Isaiah. The people had become unfaithful to God, turning away from Him and becoming blind to what He wanted for them. They had kept the outward signs of religious living, but had lost their desire for holiness and piety. Because of the lives they were living, their thirst and hunger for God could not be satisfied. In a time when the prophecies were so important, God's people would not be able to see what was essential for them. Our own lives have to connect with God at the deepest level. We need to concentrate fully on what the Holy Spirit is showing us that He wants for us.

Tuesday

1 Samuel 3:1-10

Samuel was chosen by God to be His servant—the essential prophet for God's people. Despite his young age, God purposed Samuel's vocation and the seriousness of Samuel's connection to prophecy. It must have been remarkable for this young child to be literally "called" by God to be His voice on earth. Samuel did not yet know what God had planned for him. Yet God continued to call Samuel by name until he recognized what was happening. We may not have a helper like Eli to let us know that it is God calling to us. But we need to be open and ready to hear His voice. We want God to know that we, too, are listening when He calls to us.

Wednesday

1 Samuel 3:11-21

God used Samuel to fill the gap that would be left when Eli's sons were punished for their sins. In Samuel, God was restoring His

confidence in His prophets. It was essential for God to speak to Israel through someone He trusted. Samuel opened himself up completely to being a true prophet for God. He dedicated his life to God's work. Samuel would speak the words that were necessary for Israel to be able to follow God's desires for them. The prophecies would once again be entrusted to someone of integrity. God wants us to be people of our word and to be open to His desires for us. God wants to place us at the center of His work here on earth. He needs us to focus on Him and to be attentive to His guidance.

Thursday

Psalms 31:1-8

Since we cannot get through this life without God, it is vital, and also reassuring, that we can take refuge in Him. Not only should we depend completely on His righteousness, but we can be sure that He will give us His complete attention and protection. That is the marvelous solution to all our problems as human beings. The snares and traps of our enemies will always be there. But if we commit ourselves to God and depend completely on Him, He will rescue us and stabilize us. We can trust God in all things. He sees everything and will always remain faithful.

Friday

John 4:21-26

The time of which Jesus spoke to the woman at the well—time for believers to worship God in spirit and in truth—has already come. God has sent the Holy Spirit to dwell within us and to bring His truth to our lives. There is no longer a need for a holy temple or a holy mountain for worshipping God. Worship does not require certain rituals and ceremonies. Our relationship with God, drawing ourselves close to God, and drawing God close to the spirit within us is now the true worship.

Sabbath

John 16:4b-15

Jesus had to die and leave His earthly life so that He could send us the "Advocate." The Spirit is that part of God who "stands in" for Jesus' personal presence. There are many aspects and functions within God: God the Father is the beginning of all of it; Jesus the Son was sent to us by the Father; Jesus sent the Spirit to us so that He could be powerfully present with us. Jesus has sent the Spirit as our Guide to all the truth about God. The Spirit honors the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is now our delivery system of all that God wants us to know.

StudyJohn
16:4b-15**Background**John
16:4b-15**Devotional**1 Samuel
3:1-10**Key Verse**

“But 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 go, I will send Him to you” (John 16:7).

Heart of the Lesson

It may be difficult to maintain a direction in life when a mentor is lost. How do people find the resources to carry on when the strength and vision of someone close to them is no longer available? Jesus promised His disciples that the Holy Spirit would be as real a presence to them as His physical presence was while He lived with them on earth.

Questions for Studying the Text

1. Describe a time when someone you looked to for guidance was removed from your life. What emotions did you experience? Where did you notice it impacting your life? In what ways did you appreciate any support you received during this time? What helped you to move forward?
2. What negative impact would Jesus' departure have on them? What did Jesus promise would be advantageous about His departure? What benefits do we reap today from the fulfillment of that promise?
3. What does it mean that the Holy Spirit would convict the world concerning sin? Righteousness? Judgment? How do you see these things happening today? How do these convictions provide direction and encouragement for us as believers?
4. Describe the Spirit's role in term of being “the Spirit of truth” (v.13). What confidence do you receive from knowing you are being guided “into all the truth?” In what practical ways does this impact your life?
5. Compare and contrast the presence of God the Son (in the flesh) with the presence of God the Holy Spirit. If you had to choose one or the other, which would you choose and why?

Understanding and Living

Norman Fearon

Dealing With Sad News

In last week's lesson, we looked at Jesus' promise to give the Holy Spirit to His disciples. This week focuses more on how the Holy Spirit would work on behalf of the disciples. It is a wonderful thing to be informed of such an offer, but it is also important to be informed of the pros and cons—how will it work on my behalf.

Jesus went into more details of the Holy Spirit's ministry so that the disciples would know exactly what to expect. After promising His disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit, He admonished them to remain in Him (15:4) because they could not bear fruit on their own. He also told them about the challenges they were going to face as they continued to bear witness for Him (15:18-25; 16:2-3). This now laid the foundation to other important information regarding the Holy Spirit's role.

Our lesson today begins with Jesus' reason for not telling His disciples before, the things He was telling them now. I can only imagine how surprised they were to be hearing all this disturbing information: “You mean we are going to be persecuted

and even killed? Why were we not told this before?” Jesus' response was, “I was with you” (v.4). Whenever one is working on a project, certain details, though pertinent, may not be helpful at certain stages of that project. But eventually there comes that stage when those details cannot be avoided.

This information Jesus was now giving to his disciples would not have been helpful to them before. But now that Jesus was about to leave them, it became necessary for them to know. This served two purposes: 1) that Jesus told them before it happened meant when they witnessed the fulfillment, their faith would become stronger; 2) the information of those troubling times ahead would help the disciples to see their constant need for the Holy Spirit.

Although Jesus told His disciples He was going away, none of them asked him, “Where are you going?” (v.5).

Their grief was so overwhelming that they did not care to know where He was going. It is usually very difficult to let go of someone we have become attached to. Therefore, the knowledge of losing them before it happens is tormenting. Christians and non-Christians

alike have to face the grief of losing the ones they love, but the Christian has the help of the Holy Spirit to take them through that time of grief.

Jesus understood their grief, so instead of rebuking them, He explained how important it was for Him to go: “[F]or if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you” (v.7, ESV). It is not certain whether this explanation was sufficient to calm their grief or not but it was sure helpful as they anticipated the future.

The Holy Spirit's Effect on the World

The Holy Spirit, as promised, would be sent to the disciples to help them carry out their mission effectively (v. 8). However, the Holy Spirit would not only affect the lives of Jesus' disciples, He would also have an effect on the world (v.8-11)—though not in the same way as the disciples. Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would “convict the world” (v.8, ESV) when He came. The word convict is about declaring someone guilty or showing that someone is wrong. It takes more than persuasive arguments to prove the world guilty of breaking God's perfect law (Psalm 19:7).

The age we live in is probably not much different from

the ages past. People find it so easy to determine their own truth to live by and become totally numb to the absolute truth of God. So many are becoming convinced that “truth is relative” as they unapologetically defy God in just about everything. But it does not matter how much they barter themselves in unbelief, the Holy Spirit never fails to bring about their conviction; “[H]e will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness” (v.8, ESV).

I often wonder about the motivation behind the various non-Biblical apocalyptic movies that have been filmed over the years. All of them seem to agree on one thing—the earth is about to experience such destruction that will greatly diminish the life forms that exist. Could it be that this is a distorted version of God's judgment of which the Holy Spirit has been convicting the world?

It is so easy to be frustrated, especially when we are putting out every effort to convince a world in total defiance to its Creator. But dead or alive at His appearance, the world will face His Judgment. We should never feel like we have failed once we do what God wants us to do. We are not alone—the Holy Spirit is

with us and He is effectively accomplishing His job of convicting the world.

Not for Himself

Information, though important, can sometimes be overwhelming. Jesus had a lot of things to tell His disciples, but He also knew that they could not “bear them now” (v.12, ESV). But there was no need to be concerned that He would leave with the information He wanted to give the disciples because the Holy Spirit would be guiding them into all truth (v.13). It must be noted that Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as “the Spirit of truth” (v.13; 14:17; 15:26). This means the Spirit cannot present anything but the truth. Not the truth of man but the truth of God.

This leads to another important point: the Spirit did not come in His own authority (v.13, ESV) and He will bring glory to Jesus (v.14). Our ultimate aim as Christians is to faithfully serve our Lord Jesus in an environment that is ever hostile to God's divine plan for mankind. The only way we can be faithful to our call is to follow the guide of the Holy Spirit, who will lead us to bring honor to our Lord Jesus Christ and not our selves.

Hints for Teaching

Lesson Goals

1. Learn what Jesus says about how the Holy Spirit works on their behalf.
2. Express feelings about the loss of those close to them and the subsequent support received.
3. Find ways to tell others about how the Holy Spirit works on their behalf.

Teaching Activity

List all the things Jesus said the Holy Spirit would do when He came. Discuss each item and its significance for believers today. Design a worship service that gives thanks and praise for the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers.

Looking Forward

Having evaluated the presence of the Spirit of Truth in our lives, we next consider the power provided by the Spirit to enable us to fulfill our mission.