"The Spirit of Truth"
October 25, 2026
John 16:5-15

I. Introduction

For 3 years Jesus had been with the men He had personally called to be His disciples. During those years He had taught them about God and His love for others. He had proved His deity through His miracles, His words, and His actions. He had fed them, lived with them, and trained them. He had protected them from storms and Satan and those who wanted to attack them. But now He was about to leave them.

Earlier, in John 13:33 Jesus had said**, "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come."** Both Peter and Thomas had asked where He was going, but their concern wasn't for Jesus, but about themselves. They were concerned about what Jesus' leaving meant for them. As Peter had said earlier in Mark 10:28, **"We have left all to follow you."** What would they do without their Teacher? The disciples felt like they were going to be abandoned and for that reason they were all filled with grief. It was necessary for Jesus to explain again why it was important for them that He return to the Father.

They hadn't yet understood that Jesus had to die sacrificially on the cross for their sins and our sins. And that He needed to ascend back to the Father where He would intercede for His children before the heavenly throne of grace—as Hebrews 7:25 says**, "Therefore he is able to save forever those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them."** Or as 1 John 2:1 says, **"My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense-- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One."** And, as Jesus had already said, if He didn't go away, the Counselor, the Helper, would not come to them. Until Jesus was gone, He wouldn't be able to send the Spirit of Truth in His place.

Earlier that evening, while they were still gathered around the Passover table, Jesus had talked about the Holy Spirit. In John 14 Jesus told them two things that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, would do: He would come and dwell in them (John 14:16-17) and instruct them (John 14:26). A little later, as Jesus and

the disciples walked along road to the Garden of Gethsemane, He said that the Holy Spirit would give them the power to witness to others (John 15:26-27). Now, in today's Scripture, Jesus gave 2 more activities of the Spirit of Truth.

II. Two More Activities of the Spirit of Truth

A. The Spirit of Truth comes to convict the world. In John 16:8, Jesus said, **"When he** (i.e. the Spirit of Truth) **comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment."** This is the 1st new activity of the Spirit of Truth: the Spirit of Truth comes to convict the world. The beginning of the Holy Spirit's saving ministry is summarized in the word **"convict."** The word "*convict*" can describe convicting in a legal sense, like a criminal who is convicted of wrongdoing. And in some sense, this is true; those who refuse the witness of the Holy Spirit will be sentenced to eternal punishment in hell. However, in this case, *"convict"* is not only to condemn but also to bring salvation. 2 Peter 3:9 says, **"The Lord … is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."** So, wanting everyone to come to repentance, Jesus said that the Holy Spirit convicts or exposes the guilt of the world concerning three things:

1. First, the Spirit of Truth convicts the world of sin. Jesus explained what that sin is; in John 16:9 He said, **"In regard to sin, because men do not believe in me."** It is the work of the Spirit to expose the unbelief of the lost world. This is the sin that sends people to hell; all other sins can be forgiven. John 3:36 says, **"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."** In John 8:24 Jesus warned the unbelieving Jews, **"If you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be; you will indeed die in your sins."** The one and only issue that determines a person's eternal destiny is how he or she reacts to the Lord Jesus Christ. A person could "clean up his life" and quit his or her bad habits and still be lost and go to hell. The sin that condemns is *"not believing in Jesus Christ,"* i.e., not making Jesus one's Lord and Savior. As Romans 10:9 says, **"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."** Jesus said in Matthew 12:30, **"He who is not with me is against me."** There's no third choice, no

middle of the road. Romans 6:23 adds, **"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."** *The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin.*

2. Second, the Spirit of Truth convicts the world of righteousness. This is the righteousness of Jesus Christ, the perfect Lamb of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, **"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."** God the Father testified to Christ's righteousness when, as Philippians 2:9 says, **"God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name."** Not only does the Spirit convict unbelievers of their sin, but He also exposes one's need of having the perfect righteousness of Christ. Isaiah 64:6 says**, "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags."** In the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:20 Jesus put it this way **"For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."**

It's not enough to have sins forgiven. No one can stand before the Almighty God if he or she is nothing more than a pardoned criminal. Such a person is forgiven but certainly isn't righteous. Turn to Romans 4:23-25. God doesn't only forgive a person's sins; He covers that person with Jesus' righteousness. As Paul wrote in Philippians 3:9, **"Not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ-- the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith."** God justifies sinners when He accounts their sins to have been paid for by Christ's death. Christ's righteousness is then credited to them by God's grace alone. Every believer is covered with Jesus' righteousness. *The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin and righteousness.*

3. Third, the Spirit of Truth convicts the world of judgment. In John 16:11 Jesus said, **"The prince of this world now stands condemned."** Satan was defeated at the cross; Colossians 2:15 says, **"Having disarmed the powers and authorities, he** , i.e., Jesus Christ, **made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."** What appeared to be Satan's hour of triumph was in reality the hour of his undoing. The prince of this world is a defeated prince. Satan has already been judged and the verdict announced. All that must take place is the carrying out of the sentence, and that will occur when Jesus

returns. The Holy Spirit's warning is for those who still belong to the world system, those who reject Jesus Christ: since the ruler of this world will not escape judgment, neither will those that belong to the world. Turn to Revelation 20:11-15. This is the final judgment for those not found in the book of life—those who never repented.

There are only two possible responses to the convicting work of the Spirit: repentance or rejection. Those who repent when the Spirit convicts them are promised of spending eternity in the glory and joy of heaven with the One who gave His life for them. Jesus said in John 14:3, **"I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."** From those who reject the Spirit's conviction will come hostility to the followers of Christ. But 2 Thess. 2:9 says that **"they will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of His power."**

B. The Spirit of Truth comes to guide believers into all truth. As He was coming to the end of His lesson and getting close to the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said, **"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear."** As the great Teacher, Jesus knew there were truths the disciples just couldn't bear or understand at that time. The disciples were physically and, more importantly, spiritually unprepared to handle them. Part of this was caused by their sorrow at His leaving them, but, more significantly, it was their inability to understand the significance of the cross, the resurrection, and the ascension before these events took place.

In John 16:13, Jesus finished this part of His teaching as He gave a second activity of the Spirit of Truth; **"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth."** The Spirit of Truth will guide believers into all truth. Turn to 1 Corinthians 2:10b-13. The Holy Spirit will guide all believers, not just the eleven disciples, into God's truth. BUT we must do our part, Christians need to study God's Word; as 2 Timothy 2:15 says, Be diligent—**"do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."** Peter wrote in 2 Peter 3:16, there are some things that **"are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people**

distort." The only way to study and understand the Bible is to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) and to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:25).

While Jesus was on the earth, He did the Father's will, in John 5:19 Jesus said, **"I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."** Now, as part of the Trinity, John 16:13 says that the Holy Spirit **"will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come."** The Holy Spirit doesn't speak apart from the Father or the Son. That is, the Holy Spirit's teaching or leading will never lead anyone to go against God the Father's or God the Son's Word. He will never "make up" a different message. As part of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit's words are God's words.

The Holy Spirit's ministry is to bring glory to Jesus Christ by revealing the truth about Him, just as Jesust glorified the Father by revealing Him. The teaching of the Spirit through the Apostles was not different from the teachings of the Spirit through Jesus Christ. The same Holy Spirit communicated the truths in the four Gospels, the Epistles, the Book of Revelation; He also wrote the history and doctrine found in the Book of Acts—2 Peter 1:21 says**, "For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."** Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the message of the entire Bible is consistent from Genesis to Revelation.

It is Christ's glory revealed on the pages of Scripture that the Holy Spirit uses to mold believers into the image of Jesus Christ—to guide believers into all truth. 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, **"And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."** As we study the Word of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we see Jesus, we get to know God better, and we are more able to glorify Him in our daily lives.

It's important to remember that the Holy Spirit comes to Christians—to the church—and not to the world. This means that He works in and through us and through the church—a collection of Christians. Just as the Son of God had to have a body in order to do His work on earth, so the Spirit of God needs a body in

order to do His ministries; and that body is individual Christians and the church as a whole. Our bodies are His tools and His temples, and He wants to use us to glorify Christ and to witness to a lost world. Through Christians, the Holy Spirit convicts **"the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment."** For example, when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, He empowered Peter to preach—Acts 2:41 says, **"Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day."**

III. Conclusion

So, here's the question for today: Who is Jesus Christ to you? If you say He is your Lord and your Savior, and you have given your life to Him, then you are a child of God. As a child of God, as a Christian, you have received the Holy Spirit along with the many promises found in God's Word. But at the same time, God has expectations for His children. He expects every Christian to go out and make disciples, and to baptize them and to teach them. This is the Great Commission found in Matt. 28:19-20. You are to be a witness in a hostile world. Jesus warned in **John 15:20, "A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also."** The Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit, the Counselor will use the Word He has taught you as you share Jesus Christ with the lost. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, **"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body."** You honor God with your body by being a faithful witness in what you say and in what you do. Remember: *actions speak louder than words.* There is nothing more important than the mission to tell others; this is truly a life and death situation. Romans 10:14 says, **"How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"** Your words and your life as a Christian may be the only witness someone may see and hear.