

The Holy Spirit's Ministry and Power (John 14.12-31)

I. REVIEW: LET NOT YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED

- A. On the night prior to his crucifixion, Jesus gave a dynamic and profound teaching to his disciples outlining truths that are intended to guard and stabilize their hearts in the midst of the coming crisis.
- B. Jesus exhorted his followers to not let their hearts be troubled (John 14.1) and promised them that he would give them peace as they walked through trials and testing (John 14.27).

'Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me... ²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled. (John 14.1, 27)

- C. The *means* that Jesus gave to them for engaging their trouble hearts in the midst of crisis and hardship was to *believe in God* and *believe in him*.
- D. Jesus relates the truths of John 14-16 to standing firm, without offense. A troubled heart is often the seedbed for offense; and offense is the seedbed for deception and stumbling.

'I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away (*stumbling, NASE*). (John 16.1)

- E. Jesus did not leave us to ourselves in the face of such dynamics of the heart. He gives us storehouses of truth that we are to seek to lay hold of in the midst of our troubles. He promises to release peace as we engage the truths he has revealed to us.
- F. One of the glorious truths that Jesus outlines for his disciples is that he will send the Holy Spirit to them when he departs. This section of Scripture outlines many various ways that the Spirit will minister and empower believers while Jesus is absent from them in the flesh. These truths are beautiful realities that all believers are called to experience, cultivate, and receive freely as a gift from God.

II. EMPOWERED FOR GREATER WORKS AND PRAYER

¹²"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. ¹³Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. (John 14.12-14)

- A. Jesus begins the section on the Spirit's presence, ministry, and power by declaring that his disciples would walk in his authority by doing the same works he had done — even greater works.
- B. **The works of Jesus:** the Gospels outline the nature of Jesus' works. The power of his works is related to the *manifestation of God's kingdom* in the world.
 1. **Healings:** Jesus was given the power over sickness and disease. This was a demonstration of God's kingdom through *compassion* (Matt 14.14).
 2. **Deliverance:** Jesus possessed power over the works of darkness (Satan, demons, etc.). Jesus declared that he had bound the strong man through his ministry (Matt 12.29), and John tells us that he came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3.8).
 3. **Proclamation:** Jesus was anointed to *proclaim* the good news of the coming of the kingdom of God. This was like seed cast throughout the world (Luke 4.18).

- C. **Greater works:** Jesus promised that because he went to the Father, because of the sending of the Spirit, that his disciples would perform *even greater works* than he accomplished. This could be understood in several ways:
1. **Scope:** Because Jesus went to the Father, the Spirit now dwells in all those who call upon the name of Jesus and follow him. The ministry of the Spirit now moves to the ends of the earth through the church.
 2. **Magnitude:** Some believe that this speaks of the potency of the miracles. However, this is unlikely as Jesus demonstrates absolute authority over sickness, the forces of evil, and even death itself (cf. John 11.38-44).
 3. **Type:** It is possible to believe that the *greater works* that Jesus speaks of here is the self-giving love that the disciples will display among one another (cf. John 13.34-35).

³⁴A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13.34-35)

- D. We should not let our experience (or lack of) of sign gifts determine what we believe and desire in relation to the authority of God’s kingdom in the life of the church. We long for everything that God has for us, and seek to pursue *demonstrations* of the Spirit’s power as a church family.

¹And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. ²For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, ⁴and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. (1 Cor 2.1-5)

²⁰For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. (1 Cor 4.20)

- E. Jesus then tells his disciples that he answers prayers offered in agreement with the Father’s leadership. Jesus desires that his people partner with him in his work of kingdom proclamation throughout the world.
- F. Prayer is not simply about informing God of things or trying to persuade him. Rather, it is about connecting with him in intimate relationship. Persistence (or perseverance) in prayer does not earn an answer from God. Rather, we position ourselves to grow in union with him in a way that brings transformation.

III. EMPOWERED FOR OBEDIENT LOVE

¹⁵“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. (John 14.15-17)

- A. Jesus connected answered prayer (and greater works) with the power to love and obey him by the help of the Holy Spirit.
- B. Two times in the previous verses (14.13-14) Jesus emphasized that he would do *whatever we ask* in his name in order that the Father would receive glory. The most important work of the Spirit is empowering believers to love Jesus.
- C. After telling his people to ask anything in his name, Jesus focused on the grace to love him more. This is the ultimate thing that we ask him for.
- D. Jesus had defined loving God as the *first* and *great* commandment. This is the highest priority to God. It is what he desires most. The grace to walk this out is the thing he desires to give most to his people.

³⁷And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.
³⁸This is the great and first commandment. (Matt 22.35-38)

- E. Jesus defines love as connected to *obedience* to his commandments. As we saw in John 15 with abiding, Jesus defines the way in which our "love" is expressed. To love God is not *primarily* about experiencing feelings of affection, desire, or tenderness toward God (although we pray for each of these feelings). The primary expression of love for God is seeking to walk in his commandments with a spirit of obedience.
- F. Obedience to Jesus does not earn God's love, rather it is the way we express our love to him.
- G. The power to walk before God in obedient love is the *primary* idea of this section. Jesus mentions this five times in John 14 (vv. 15, 21, 23, 24, 31). The most striking reality that Jesus demonstrates his love to the Father through obedience to his commands.

¹⁵If you love me, you will keep my commandments... ²¹Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me... ²³If anyone loves me, he will keep my word... ²⁴Whoever does not love me does not keep my words... ³¹but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. (John 14.15, 21, 23, 24, 31)

- H. It is important for us to recognize that seeking to faithfully deny our sinful desires and walk in obedience is the *primary* place that God has chosen for us to express our love for him. This matters immensely to Jesus.
- I. Obedience here is not about perfection. Rather, it is about faithfully and intentionally seeking to walk in a spirit of freedom that is experienced from a heart of love to Jesus. Even though this will be weak throughout our lives, it is sincere and genuine to the Lord.

⁵Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God. (1 Cor 4.5)

- J. We must intentionally and consistently seek to wage war against sin and ask God to release the *help* of his Spirit (i.e., grace) to walk in a spirit of obedience.
- K. To walk in a spirit of obedience consists of several elements:
 - 1. **Repentance:** we humbly acknowledge sin in our lives without excuses. We repent by turning toward God rather than away from him.
 - 2. **Setting of our heart:** we actively set our heart to walk in obedience as we are convicted with sin. This includes taking necessary (radical) steps to deal with places where we experience increased opportunity or temptation (cf. Matt 5.29-30).
 - 3. **Asking God for grace:** Jesus promised that whatever we ask in his name the Father will give to us. We ask for more grace to walk in obedience. Grace does not necessarily make obedience *easy*, rather it makes it "doable".

IV. EMPOWERED FOR UNION

²⁰In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹Whoever 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."
²²Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" ²³Jesus 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." (John 14.20-23)

- A. Jesus also connects the presence of the Spirit and his ministry to the life of union that is to be enjoyed and experienced by those who follow him.

- B. Here Jesus tells his disciples that it is through the Spirit that they will participate in the same type of union that he had with his Father. The glorious outcome of the gospel is the fact that we are invited to participate in loving union with the Triune God. This is the glory of our inheritance as believers.

¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit (2 Cor 3.17-18)

⁴he granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet 1.4)

- C. Jesus declares that all who are born-again are now *in him*. To be in Christ means that we are now recipients of all of the benefits of his salvation and life. This is a summary statement of all the blessings of the gospel.

³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God (Col 3.3)

- D. We are also recipients of the Spirit of Christ and he dwells *in us*. He lives in us by the uniting presence of the Spirit dwelling in our spirit. The Spirit now releases his activity in our mind, heart, will, and works.

¹⁷But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. (1 Cor 6.17)

- E. Jesus promises that believers will experience manifestations of the Father's presence in their lives *in this age*. We do not experience the fullness of this but seek to align our hearts with him in agreement (belief and obedience) in order to experience more of his presence.

- F. God's presence is spoken of in different ways throughout the Scripture:

1. **Omnipresence:** God is in all places at all times (Ps 139.7-12)
2. **Covenant:** God is united with his people by the Spirit at new birth (John 3.3-8; Eph 1.13)
3. **Ecclesial:** God is present with his people when we gather (Matt 18.20; cf. Ps 22.3)
4. **Manifest:** Times when the Spirit gives *recognizable* expressions of the presence of God

- G. Our capacity to receive expressions of his manifest presence increases over time as we increase our agreement with him. As we seek to love him (spirit of obedience) our minds and emotions are brought into greater alignment with the heart of God.

- H. There are many ways that we experience the manifest presence of God:

1. **Works of God:** healing, deliverance, salvation
2. **Gifts of the Spirit:** prophecy, tongues, words of wisdom and knowledge, discernment of spirits, etc.
3. **Revelation of truth:** the Spirit makes the truth alive to believers (Eph 1.17-18; John 14.26)
4. **Peace of Christ:** the Spirit guards and deposits Christ's peace on our mind and emotions (John 14.27)
5. **Conviction:** Godly sorrow that leads to repentance (2 Cor 7.10.; John 16.8)
6. **Grace for obedience:** the ability to put to death the works of the flesh (2 Cor 7.1; Phil 2.12-13)