

### **He Will Be With You Forever**

Would your life be “normal” without your smart phone? Before you answer that, listen to this list of ‘items of the past’ that your smart phone has replaced:

1. 50 lbs. of books
2. Newspaper
3. Pocket camera
4. Radio
5. Foreign language dictionary
6. Foreign language translator
7. Bank ATM
8. Boarding Pass
9. Road maps
10. Hand written grocery list <sup>1</sup>

And the list could go on. What’s my point? When Jesus left this earth, He promised to give to every believer something that would change their pattern of life more radically than the smartphone has changed ours. What Jesus promised wasn’t a ‘device’ or a superfood or a source of information, though what He promised would be all those things. He promised a person. Here’s His promise:

**“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth.”** (John 14:16-17)

How do you feel when you misplace your smartphone? Most of us feel lost, right? Do you feel that way when you lose touch with the Holy Spirit? Do you even notice when you’re out of touch with the Holy Spirit? Every day, the enemy of God wants to separate you from your spiritual smartphone, the Holy Spirit. Today, we want to see why he does that, why you shouldn’t let him do that and what benefits are yours if you keep him from doing that. First, we need to see...

#### **I. How the Holy Spirit Comes**

Jesus said:

**“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor...”** (John 14:16)

We must get very clear about this – the Spirit came to us at the request of Jesus. Which means that you did nothing to cause this to happen. He doesn’t come only after you have spent a week fasting and begging Him to come. He doesn’t wait to come until after you’ve proved how sincerely you want Him to come. No, he comes when you enter into a committed, humble, relationship with Jesus through your repentance and acknowledgement of your sin. But it’s not your repentance that “causes” the Holy Spirit to come to you. He comes at the request of Jesus. Jesus is the cause of this gift coming to every new believer. You are not the cause.

Why is this important? It’s important for two reasons. First, it’s important so that we understand that there isn’t a “class structure” among believers. There aren’t “first-class,” “second-class” and “third-class” Christians. Some Christians are more mature than others, some are wiser than others; all Christians have different gifts, different abilities than others, but before God we’re all equal. Paul makes this clear in Gal. 3:26-29:

**You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave**

**nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**

We have different assignments, different roles to play in building His kingdom, but Christianity is a "classless society." Every Christian is a 'front-row' Christian. The giftedness that the Holy Spirit gives you (and that is who gives you your giftedness) does not give you greater or lesser standing in the eyes of God. We are all equally Abraham's seed. We are all equal heirs 'according to the promise.'

However, this is not true with regard to non-believers. Some people want to claim today that, "All people are sons and daughters of God." No, we're not. We're all "created" by God, but we're not all "sons and daughters of God." Only those who have received the gift of the Holy Spirit through faith in Christ are sons and daughters of God. Listen again to Jesus:

**"The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you." (John 14:17b)**

**You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. (Gal. 3:26, 27)**

People can only be called 'sons' or 'daughters' of God, through Jesus. So, the second reason it's important to know that Jesus is the CAUSE of people receiving the Holy Spirit, is because without the Holy Spirit, we will get lost in this life. We will be deceived, we will be confused and we will eventually despair of life itself. Which leads us from how the Spirit comes to us, to...

## **II. Why the Spirit Comes to Us**

We really have to understand that life without Jesus is a very, very dangerous existence. It really is like traveling alone in a strange country without a smartphone or without a working smartphone. Have you ever been in a situation like that? I have.

On one of our mission trips to Ukraine, three men and I decided to take a walk down by the Dnieper River early in the morning. We saw fishermen fishing, the sun coming up over the river; it was a beautiful, tranquil sight. But as we walked behind an unfinished building, we were stopped in our tracks. There was a half-naked dead body. We had no smartphones, but we had Ed Wahlberg who had experience traveling in the Soviet Union. Ed took charge of our safety and said, "All right, listen to me. We're going directly back to the hotel. Go to your rooms and don't speak about this to anyone. I will go and report this to the police." Ed contacted the U.S. Embassy who said that they couldn't find the town we were in on their map. (Don't put your faith in government!) But God had prepared Ed to deal with this situation and though he had to spend most of the day with the police, the Holy Spirit used Ed to prevent us all from being embroiled in an international incident.

Why did Jesus have the Father send us the Holy Spirit? In John 16, He tells us. He says: **"When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned."** (John 16:8-11)

Okay, we need to unpack this. First, when it says that He will "convict" the world, it doesn't mean 'to pronounce judgment.' It means 'to convince of the truth' regarding these three realities. Just as Ed convinced the Ukrainian police of the truth concerning us as tourists,

the Holy Spirit convinces the people of three realities. The first is the reality of people's sin and one sin in particular – their disbelief in Jesus as God.

There are some today who think it isn't very "Christian" to talk to people about their sin. They say that it's offensive or rude or arrogant. But that's not what Jesus says. Jesus says that it's the most loving thing you can do and, in fact, it's the one topic you can know the Holy Spirit will help you communicate. Why? Because the only thing that separates me and you from God is our sin. It's not my race or my gender or my age or my emotional or physical strength; it's my sin that separates me from God. So, Satan will constantly try to discourage you from talking to your friend about his or her sin, because he is desperate not to let the Holy Spirit have an opportunity to tell them the truth about how they can become a son or daughter of God. And please notice something – where is Jesus sending the Spirit? Is He sending the spirit to float around in the world and mysteriously convict people? The Spirit can do that but please notice what Jesus emphasizes here. He says:

**"...Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come TO YOU; but if I go, I will send him TO YOU."** (John 16:7)

And in verse 15, Jesus says:

**"...That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known TO YOU."**

Friends, the Spirit was sent to us. We're the primary vehicle through which the Holy Spirit will do His work!

The second reality that the Holy Spirit is sent to show us, Jesus says, is *"in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father..."* (v. 10) What does He mean by this? Jesus means that the Holy Spirit comes to convince the world, non-Christians, of Jesus' righteousness; that He is, in fact, fully God. He's the only completely righteous man and the proof of this is that He now is with the Father, on the throne at His right hand, as we saw Peter verify last week in His sermon at Pentecost.

I don't know if you're aware of this but there's a growing debate within the Christian community over whether or not Muslims and Christians worship the same God. This debate is raging even at my *alma mater*, Wheaton College in Illinois. Friends, there are similarities in the God of the Koran and the God of the Bible; for example, both religions claim that their God is the God of Abraham. But there are also many significant differences, the biggest of which is that Muslims do not believe that Jesus is God. Jesus says, here in John 16, that He is sending the Holy Spirit for the express purpose of people knowing that He is on the throne in heaven because of His perfect righteousness. Knowing that you are a sinner will not save you. You must also know and believe that Jesus is Lord. Our first prayer for our Muslim neighbors must be that they will be convinced by our words and our loving friendship that Jesus is not just a prophet, but that He is God.

The last purpose for the Spirit coming, according to Jesus is, *"in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned."* (v. 11) He's not talking about the Spirit judging sinners. Do you see it? The Spirit isn't sent to judge anyone. He's sent to convince people of their sin, but not to judge them. Jesus will oversee one judgment at the end of time, but the judgment that the Spirit is coming to convince the world of is Satan's judgment.

Friends, Satan has already been judged and He is condemned to Hell. He isn't incarcerated yet, but he's already judged and condemned. And Jesus knew this. Now let me point something out to you. Look at the last verse of chapter 14. What does he say there?

**...“Come now; let us leave.”** (John 14:31)

So, these words about Satan being already judged are not spoken in the Upper Room. So, where are they spoken? Apparently, He says this while they're heading for Gethsemane. Jesus is on His way to His final earthly battle with Satan where through the soldiers, Satan will physically beat Him. Through false witnesses in the Sanhedrin, Satan will falsely accuse Him. And through weak Roman rulers, Satan will kill Him on the cross. On His way to all that, what does Jesus say about Satan? *“He now stands condemned.”* Jesus is saying to His dearest friends on earth, *“I'm going now into my final battle. It may look to you like I will lose and lose big. But don't believe what you see. I will emerge the victor!”*

Why did Jesus send the Holy Spirit to us?

- So that we can be used by Him to convince lost people of their separation from God by their sin.
- So that we can be used by Him to convince lost people that Jesus is the only Son of God, fully righteous and on the throne today ready and willing to save them.
- So that we can be used by Him to convince lost people that though it may look like Satan and his demons are winning; in fact, they have already lost and lost everything. Now, finally then...

### **III. What Is Possible Because the Holy Spirit Comes?**

John 14 and John 16 record at least ten benefits to you, the believer, directly from the Holy Spirit. They are:

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1- You will know the Holy Spirit      | 6- He will teach you all things                |
| 2- He will live in you                | 7- He will remind you of everything            |
| 3- You will know Jesus is in you      | 8- Your heart won't be troubled                |
| 4- You will have Jesus' peace         | 9- He will tell you what is to come            |
| 5- Because Jesus lives, you will live | 10- What is Christ's will be made known to you |

All of these are true... and more! The apostle Paul records even more benefits in I Cor. 12. But the primary benefit of the Spirit is described in John 16:14 which says:

**“He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.”**

What does it mean to ‘take from what is Jesus’ and make it known to us?’ What is it that Jesus calls “mine”? In the next verse He says:

**“All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.”** (John 16:15)

In I Cor. 2:9, the apostle Paul quotes Isaiah 64 which says:

**“...No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him...”**

Then Paul adds: (I Cor. 2:10, 16b)

**But God has revealed it to us by his Spirit... we have the mind of Christ.**

Do you have the mind of Christ? What does that mean? It means that you see yourself “in Christ” just as Jesus said that he was “in the Father.” So many people, even Christians today, are in pain emotionally or spiritually because they are listening to Satan's definition of who they

are, rather than Jesus' definition of who they are. In the last book that John wrote, The Revelation of Jesus Christ, John hears a voice from heaven. That voice says:

**"Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death."** (Rev. 12:10, 11)

Every day, Satan tries to define you by your past – "You're a cheater, you're a liar, you're a sinner, you're a coward, you're a loser." He accuses you every day. How can we deal with that? We deal with it by listening to the Spirit of Jesus who is telling you the truth, if you are "in Christ." The Spirit of Jesus does not focus on your past, but on your future.

**"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own, he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come."** (John 16: 13)

And what exactly is the truth that He will guide us into? Who am I 'in Christ'? Listen!

John 1:12 I am God's child.	John 15:16 I will bear good fruit.
Col. 1:14 I have been forgiven of all my sins.	Eph. 2:10 I am God's workmanship.
Rom. 8:39 I can't be separated from Christ's love.	Rom. 8:1 I am not condemned.
Phil. 3:20 I am a citizen of heaven.	Rev. 22:12 I will be rewarded.
I John 5:18 I am protected from the evil one.	Rev. 20:6 I will reign with Christ!

Are you in Christ? Then this is who you are! Jesus said that Satan is a liar and the father of lies (Jn. 8:44). When he comes and reminds you of your past, remind him of his future! Listen to the Spirit within you! He is the Spirit of truth. He's not speaking on his own, he's speaking only what he hears from the Father and the Son. He's telling you what is yet to come and what is yet to come is all good! The Spirit tells us, through the apostle Paul:

**Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.** (II Cor. 4:16-18)

[Your site pastor will come now and close your service with a few words of prayer.]

Let's pray...

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Mims, *"A Surprisingly Long List of Everything Smartphones Replaced,"* MIT Technology Review, July 22, 2012