

You Are Not Alone: An Advocate for Discipleship

John 14:16-18 (ESV)

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We open up God's Word together to John 14. We're going to look at John 14 as we discuss the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives this morning. We're going to be looking at verses 16-18. This is a little sermon that Jesus gives to His disciples in an upper room. The next morning, He's going to go to the cross to be crucified. So these are His last words to them. He wants to encourage them. He tells them, "I'm leaving." They're troubled by that. A big part of His message is that, "When I leave, I'm going to send another Helper." That's what He's talking about here in John 14:16-18. Jesus says

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even 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. 18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

May God encourage us through His Word today!

After being captured in Vietnam, Colonel Laird Gunnert was isolated, beaten and tortured without mercy. One day, his captors took him from solitary confinement into a new interrogation room. The beating here in this new room was yet more severe than ever before. In agony, he crumpled to the hard ground, too shattered and drained to lift his face from the dirt floor. He felt alone, deserted and ready to give up. As he opened his eyes from the dirt floor, he looked and saw just inches from the floor, written on the wall, some words printed in English. As he focused, he read these words: "Keep the faith, baby!" Laird's spirit lifted as he read those words. In that moment he realized that while he hadn't seen any other prisoners for a long time, he was not alone. The person had been in this same condition in this same room, and that person wanted him to know that he didn't need to give in to hopelessness and despair. He felt strength course through his spirit; strength to persevere, strength even to triumph over the enemy in that moment.

Have you ever been in a situation where you felt alone, isolated, despairing of the pain and the difficulty of your trial? Well, to some degree, I believe we've all been there. We may not have experienced the trial of a POW, but most experience the kinds of trials that bring us close to what we perceive as the brink of desperation. Today as we open up our Bibles to John 14, we find strength from this amazing truth that we are not alone. Here Jesus is telling His disciples that they're going to experience tribulation in their lives. It's the kind of tribulation that will put them to the end of themselves. He said, "Hey, they hated me. They're going to hate you, too."

You see, as followers of Jesus, we should expect this world to be filled with suffering and pain and even persecution. And Jesus encourages us by promising that as He leaves us from this world, He sends another Helper who will walk with us every moment of every

day. Here's the main truth we're going to track through these few verses. When we walk with Jesus, we never ever walk alone! God's Spirit dwells in us and will help us every step along the way. God's Spirit is sufficient for our daily moments.

The night before Jesus was crucified, He takes His disciples into an upper room in Jerusalem and He tells his disciples, "I am going away. And where I am going, you cannot follow me; at least, not right now." This message left them unnerved, shaken, frightened, anxious, despairing. "How could we survive without Jesus at our side?" they asked. Jesus encourages them by first telling them that this separation is not permanent.

He says, "I'm going to the Father's house to prepare a place for you. And when I have prepared that place for you, I'm going to come back and I'm going to receive you to myself, so that where I am, you also will be. That is your future." That is strengthening, but they had to also be wondering, "Well, that's great and that fills us with hope, but what about right now?" So a big portion of this message from John chapters 14-16 encourages them. Jesus is saying, "When I leave, I'm not leaving you alone. I'm going to send another Helper just like me, to be with you. He will be able to do even more than I have done. I don't leave you as orphans. I send Him to be with you. So you're going to see that this Helper is going to be absolutely sufficient."

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper,

What a gift! This Helper will

be with you forever, 17 even 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.

If you turn over to John 16:7, we see Jesus saying something even more amazing about this Helper. He says

John 16:7 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away,

It's going to be better for you!

John 16:7 for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

This is going to be a huge advantage in your lives from this point forward.

Right away these disciples had to have bunches and bunches of questions. Who is this Helper? What does it mean that He's going to dwell in us? What will He do when He comes? Why is it more advantageous for Him to be here than for Jesus to remain? These are necessary questions for these disciples as they prepare to follow Jesus throughout the rest of their life. More practically, these are necessary questions for you and me as we follow Jesus in our world today. Our whole sermon series entitled, *Follow the Leader*

cannot be applied unless the Holy Spirit is at work in us. We simply don't have the ability to do anything that we've talked about these last eight weeks or so, apart from the active ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives. So let's consider Him today. Let's consider first,

The Person of the Holy Spirit

Who is this Helper? Sadly, many modern day followers of Jesus know as little about this Helper as the 11 disciples did when Jesus first talked of Him. Yet, knowing the Holy Spirit is absolutely fundamental to our life as followers of Jesus.

Our present day ignorance of the Holy Spirit reminds me of Paul's visit to Ephesus on his third missionary journey. As he enters into Ephesus, he meets some disciples of John the Baptist. This story is told in Acts 19. As he talks with them, they tell him that they are believers, too. But he is wondering if they really are believers, if they really understand the gospel of Jesus. So he asks them a penetrating question. He says, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" That's an amazing question! It's not a question I would have thought of.

If I'm talking to a person I might wonder, this person has some religious understanding and they accept some truths about God that we agree upon. They revere the Bible. But I wonder, have they been born again? Are they really a follower of Jesus? Do they have new life in Christ? My first question is probably not going to be "when you believed, did you receive the Holy Spirit?" But that was Paul's first question. It's his first question because the gift of the Holy Spirit is absolutely fundamental to the initiation of a person's new life in Christ.

So let me ask you: when you believed, did you receive the Holy Spirit? You see, apart from the Holy Spirit we don't have new life. It's an absolute important question for us to be able to answer. It's possible that we have been in church for a long time and heard a lot of messages and even memorized a lot of Scriptures. We don't really have a problem with anything. We would even affirm, "Yes, I kind of believe. I guess that's what it is." But the question really is: is your experience with God through a supernatural event of regeneration that brings the Holy Spirit into your life? When you believed, did you receive the Holy Spirit?

Now, these disciples looked at Paul and here's what they answered in Acts 19. They said, "No, we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul has a long conversation with them, helping them understand the gospel. In practice, many in the modern church are in the same boat as these disciples of John who had not even heard the Gospel of Jesus yet. Francis Chan wrote a book on the Holy Spirit that he entitled, *The Forgotten God*, because he believed that followers of Jesus largely have forgotten who the Holy Spirit is and how important He is to our daily lives.

Why is it that we know so little of the Holy Spirit? I'm not sure why, but I know that ignorance of the Holy Spirit is both tragic and it's unnecessary. It's tragic because without a knowledge of the Holy Spirit we are left to live the Christian life in our own

power and our own ability. Friend, that's impossible! No wonder so many believers are frustrated when they try to live out the Christian life just simply working it, making it happen through their own resolve. It's also unnecessary because God has revealed so much about the Holy Spirit in His Word. So who is the Holy Spirit? Well, our text here in John 14 helps us to understand who the Holy Spirit is.

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,

You might circle the word "another."

17 even the Spirit of truth,

Underline the words "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.

You might just underline, "him, him, him, he."

From these three verses we know three key truths about the Holy Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit is God as surely and truly as Jesus is God.

We look at the word "another." This means another of the exact same kind. In the Greek language, there are two different words for "another." One means another of the exact same kind. A different word for "another" is another of a different kind. So if you're sitting at a restaurant and the Server comes up to you and says, "Would you like another drink?" You're drinking a big glass of root beer. If you say, "Yes," what is going to happen? Well, she's asking if you'd like another of the same kind. If that Server brings you Mountain Dew or 7Up, you're kind of surprised because that question would be, "Would you like another of a different kind of drink?" Here, He says, "I'm going to send you another Helper and that another is the exact same kind as me." The Father is going to send Him to you.

Furthermore, this Person is called the Holy Spirit. In John 14:26, you might want to skip down there. It says

John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

So, just as surely as Jesus is God, the Holy Spirit is God. He is God of very God. He is another of the same kind as Jesus. He is called the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit, Jesus says that in John 4. He is also holy. All through the Bible, "holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty," Isaiah writes. These are descriptions of God Himself. His holiness speaks of His divine perfection and of His righteousness.

Then He says, “the Father will send” Him. In other words, He is a Being who exists before He comes into the world. There is only one other Being like that, and that’s Jesus. Every one of us, we had our beginning in the world at our conception. But this Being is going to come from heaven, sent by the Father to the earth. He is pre-existent.

And then here, Jesus calls Him “the Spirit of Truth.” We know that God is truth. The Holy Spirit reveals the truth from God because He is God. The Heidelberg Catechism asks the question: What do you believe concerning the Holy Spirit? I love the answer! First, that the Spirit, with the Father and the Son, is the eternal God. That’s the first thing that we want to know. This is God of very God. Second, that the Spirit is given also to me so that, through true faith, He makes me share in Christ and all His benefits. He comforts me and will remain with me forever.

The second idea that we’re going to trace as well about the Person of the Spirit is

2. The Holy Spirit is a Person as surely and truly as Jesus is a Person.

Again, He is another of the same kind. Jesus is a Person and the Holy Spirit is a Person. Furthermore, Jesus calls Him the Helper. The Helper, again, is a personal kind of designation. Then Jesus calls Him, “him, him, him,” and then “he.” Jesus says He dwells with you and will be in you.” That’s not the kind of language we use for something impersonal, but when we talk about someone dwelling with us. The disciples would not be encouraged by Jesus’ promise if the Holy Spirit were only some inanimate force. They have the Person of Jesus with them. They’ve enjoyed His personal presence all through these past three years, and now Jesus says, “I’m going to send you another Helper just like me. He also is personal and He also will walk with you by means of His personal presence in your life.”

I emphasize this because many modern followers of Jesus think of the Holy Spirit more as a Power than as a Person. From a practical standpoint, they consider Him to be like some sort of divine energy source to be tapped into to sort of bring electricity into the spiritual house of our lives so that our house will run well, so that we will be able to do what we want to do. The focus of that kind of impersonal thinking upon the Holy Spirit doesn’t seek to be directed or guided by Him. But rather that focus seeks to connect with the Holy Spirit so that His power will help us accomplish our great plans.

No person likes to be used. Isn’t that fair? A rich person doesn’t want to be desired for friendship just simply because of their wealth and what their wealth might be able to do to benefit those who gather around him or her. A popular person doesn’t want to be desired just simply because of their influence and if they lost their influence, all their friends would scatter. No person likes to be used. When our thoughts about the Holy Spirit stray from His personhood and move toward Him as a power, we become guilty of using Him.

We think thoughts like, “What I really need in order to accomplish great things is more of the Holy Spirit!” Then we spiritualize this and pray, “God, give me more of your Holy

Spirit so that I can do great things for You!” This kind of statement sounds spiritual, but it doesn’t treat the Holy Spirit as a Person to be worshipped, a person to be loved, a person to submit to. When we think of Him as a “Him” and not as an impersonal “It,” we will not ask, “How can I get more of His power for me?” Instead we will ask, “How can I give more of myself to Him?”

Do you remember Simon Magnus in Acts 8? He asked the question, “How can I gain more of the power of the Holy Spirit?” He even spiritualized it for good purposes. How can I get more of the power of the Holy Spirit? Simon was attracted to the Spirit’s power, but not to His Person, and Peter rebuked him with the sharpest of rebukes.

R. A. Torrey expressed this idea of our care not to consider the Holy Spirit as a power but as a Person, so well. Here’s what he wrote. “The conception of the Holy Spirit as a Divine influence or power that we are somehow to get hold of and use, leads to self-exaltation and self-sufficiency. One who so thinks of the Holy Spirit and who at the same time imagines that he has received the Holy Spirit will almost inevitably be full of spiritual pride and strut about as if he belonged to some superior order of Christians. One frequently hears such persons say, ‘I am a Holy Spirit man,’ or ‘I am a Holy Spirit woman.’ But if we once grasp the thought that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person of infinite majesty, glory and holiness and power, who in marvelous condescension has come into our hearts to make His dwelling there and take possession of our lives and make use of them, it will put us in the dust and keep us in the dust. I can think of no thought more humbling or more overwhelming than the thought that a person of Divine majesty and glory dwells in my heart and is ready to use even me.”

So as we think of the Holy Spirit, let us know that He is God, fully God, just as surely as Jesus is fully God. And He is every bit as much of a person as Jesus is a person. The last idea about the Holy Spirit that this passage presents is

3. The Holy Spirit ministers to us the same way Jesus ministered to His disciples.

Everything Jesus did in His ministry to the 12, the Holy Spirit does in His ministry to us. Again, He is another of the same kind, both in His Being, but also in His ministry. Think of all that Jesus did in ministering to the 12 in those three years of earthly ministry here. He explained to them the true meaning of God’s Word in the Sermon on the Mount. He challenged them to faith, like when He called Peter to get out of the boat and walk on the water. He rebuked them for unbelief like when they thought they were going to die on the Sea of Galilee during a storm. He convicted them of sin through parables like the Good Samaritan. He led them from place to place so that they would know where the Father wanted them to go and what the Father would have them to do. He set them to work, like when He put fish and bread in their hands and had them pass that fish and bread out to 5,000 people. He urged them to pray like in the Garden, where He plead with them, “Watch and pray.” He Himself sweated drops of blood as He poured out His heart to the Father. He comforted them in the midst of their sorrow like here in this upper room when they were really despairing and down.

All that Jesus did for the 12, the Holy Spirit does for us. So as we think about the ministry of the Holy Spirit, let's think about the ministry of Christ. If Jesus gave words of encouragement when the 12 were afraid, the Holy Spirit does that for us. If Jesus gave correction and rebuke to the 12 when they were hard-hearted or wandered off track, know that the Holy Spirit does that for us. If Jesus gave guidance to the 12 when they were confused and didn't know what to do, know that the Holy Spirit does that for us. If Jesus taught God's truth of the Bible, Scriptures, and the meaning and application to the 12, know that the Holy Spirit does that for us. If Jesus assured the 12 of the Father's love for them, know that the Holy Spirit does that for us!

My point here is that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is not less than Jesus' ministry to the 12. In fact, it's more. Jesus says so, doesn't He, here? He says, "It's more advantageous that I go, so that the Holy Spirit can come." If we were to choose between being a follower of Jesus like the 12 who physically walked with Jesus, were able to shake hands with Him and touch Him, and being a follower of Jesus in the present age. If we were to choose between those two, we are right to choose being a follower of Jesus in the present age. Why? Because the ministry of the Holy Spirit is a greater advantage. Again, mark down John 16:7.

John 16:7 Nevertheless, 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.

We say: how is it a greater advantage that the Holy Spirit is ministering, rather than Jesus' personal presence? John 14:17 kind of helps us with this. He says

You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

You see, every true follower of Jesus immediately receives the Holy Spirit when they believe in Jesus. Do you remember Peter's first sermon on the day of Pentecost? After proclaiming the gospel, this Jesus, whom you crucified and who rose again from the dead as Lord and Savior, Peter says to them

Acts 2:38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

What a gift! When Jesus walked the earth, He limited His presence to His physical body. He could not be with all the disciples at the same time. He self-limited His omnipresence. He sometimes had to go away from them. He sometimes had to sleep. But not so, the Holy Spirit. He is the Holy Spirit. That means He is able to be everywhere in one place. He's not localized in a body. And His presence is constant. There's not a moment where He detaches Himself from us, where we are without Him. This is why it's such an advantage. To have the Holy Spirit constantly present through His indwelling ministry is a great resource. Every follower of Jesus needs the help of the Holy Spirit to follow Jesus. No one is able to follow Jesus in his or her own strength. But praise God that if

you're a follower of Jesus, you have the Holy Spirit, and His ministry in our lives is absolutely sufficient. Let's talk about

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

What does the Helper do? The Father and the Son sends the Holy Spirit to carry out many specific ministries in the life of the follower of Jesus. The Holy Spirit opens our heart to repent of our sin, to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus, to believe in Him. The Holy Spirit gives us new life through this miracle of new birth, regeneration. The Holy Spirit comforts us in our affliction. The Holy Spirit guides us in our confusion. The Holy Spirit assures us of our own salvation. The Holy Spirit seals us for the day of redemption. So our salvation is absolutely secure. All these and more this Helper does. But there are two ministries of the Holy Spirit that stand out in this particular text in John 14. The first is that the Holy Spirit is sent to strengthen us to do God's will. And second is the Holy Spirit is sent to communicate Jesus' glory to us through the Word. Let's consider this first ministry.

1. The Holy Spirit is sent to strengthen us to do His will.

We are helped here by the word that Jesus uses to identify the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. In Greek, it's the word *paraclete*. It means to come alongside of to give strength to. Interestingly, this Greek word is kind of hard to translate, and that is made evident by the many different ways that it's translated in English translations. Here in the ESV, this word is translated "Helper." But if we would move over to the New International Version, we'd see that same word as "Counselor." If we move over to the New Living Translation, we'd see that word is translated "Advocate." If we move over to the New King James Version, we'd see that same word, *paraclete*, is translated "Comforter." All these translations are good, provided that we understand that they present this idea that this Person comes alongside of us to give strength to us; whether He comes alongside of us as an advocate, as a helper, as a comforter, as a counselor. All of that has different nuance to the meaning. But the main idea behind this word is He is coming alongside. He's not distant. He's right here with us. In fact, Jesus says He dwells in us. And as He does so, it's to strengthen, to encourage, to give energy to. In Romans 8:26-27, Paul writes this of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:26-27 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness.

That's what He does. He's the *paraclete*. He comes alongside to help us in our weakness and to strengthen us. In this case in Romans 8, Paul specifically talks about prayer. He says

Romans 8:26-27 For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

That's how He helps us.

Now, Jesus knows from this time forward, these disciples are going to have a hard time in this world. And again, He tells them, "They hated me. They're going to hate you, also. Don't expect to be treated as friends by the world that hates me." If we live for Christ, we should expect overwhelming opposition. You see, there is nothing in this world, the world that is apart from Christ, this world that is outside of Christ, that doesn't acknowledge Christ, that doesn't bow their knee to Christ. There is nothing in this world that helps us as disciples follow Jesus. Nothing! Not the media, not the schools, not the government, not the celebrities, not the sports stars. In this world, we experience everywhere, opposition to the central goal of living our life for the glory of Christ. If you live your life for the glory of Christ, you're going to feel that opposition.

Sometimes, it's going to be kind of extreme. Sometimes an employee might get fired because they love Christ. Other times, a person might get literally punched because they love Christ. Other times, they just might get isolated. Other times, they might have all these nasty messages on Facebook or other social media directed towards them. But you're going to feel it. If you stand up for Christ and say, "I'm a follower of Jesus Christ and here's what I believe about God and about salvation and about what's right and what's wrong according to my obedience to Jesus," understand that you're going to feel the pressure. So strong is the pressure that you're going to feel like, "I better not even say that, because if I say that, the opposition is going to flame me." All of us experience that as we follow Jesus. Jesus knows that. That's why the ministry of the Holy Spirit is so vital. It's because Jesus says "Yes, that's true, but the wrong response is to shrivel in fear, to back away into a corner and stop living for the glory of Christ." The right response is to lean into this world out of love for God and love for this world who needs to know Christ. And to do so with the Holy Spirit who has come alongside of you to strengthen you. That's how you can live for God in this world.

Sometimes the opposition we face is the force of temptations to entice us strongly by our world. It's full of the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh and the boastful pride of life. Sometimes the opposition is simply deceit of believing false ideas about God to confuse our thinking. These false ideas just are jammed into our minds, into our thoughts, and in our way all the time. Sometimes that opposition is demonic forces that lurk invisibly to devour us. Sometimes the opposition is persecution of powerful people to harm us. Jesus here is preparing these disciples for a spiritual fight. Skip over to John 15. This is what He says.

John 15:19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

Now, that doesn't mean that every person in the world hates you. But this thing called the world is not going to be a fan.

John 15:20 Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.

Jesus is saying, “This life of following me is a continual fight against an enemy. This enemy is always stronger than you are. That’s why I’m not leaving you as orphans. It’s because you’d be overwhelmed by the enemy. You’d be overwhelmed by the temptations. You’d be overwhelmed by the ridicule. You’d be overwhelmed by the pressure. You’d be overwhelmed by the pain. I’m sending you another Helper just like me so that you can win against the world, against your own flesh, and against the devil himself.” Here’s the principle. We cannot do the work God has prepared for us apart from the Holy Spirit. We cannot live the life God intends apart from the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

But before you become my witnesses, I’m giving you the Holy Spirit. You’re going to need the Holy Spirit in order to have any effect on the world out there. It’s not going to be your skill of persuasion. It’s going to be only the Holy Spirit working in hearts and lives through you as you proclaim the simple gospel.

In Galatians 5, He says in reference to this battle between our own flesh, our own wrong desires, and the path God would have us to follow as we follow Jesus, He says

Galatians 5:16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

In other words, depend upon the Spirit like a crippled person would depend upon crutches. Lean on Him. And in 1 John 4, John is speaking about the power of the world to press against us and to squeeze us in this world. He says to be of good cheer.

1 John 4:4 ...for greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

The world is powerful, but the Holy Spirit is more so. Here’s the application in view of this aspect of the Holy Spirit’s ministry to strengthen us. What are we to do? What is our response? Here it is. Be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is the point Paul makes in Ephesians 5. He says

Ephesians 5:15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise,

The walk is the idea of your lifestyle. He says to be careful of the way you live. Don’t live as a fool who doesn’t follow Jesus, who builds his house upon the sand. But live your life as a wise person who builds his house upon the rock. So when the rains come and the floods rise up, the person who builds his house on the rock, the house stands firm. Who is the person who builds his house on the rock? It is he who hears the words of Jesus and obeys them. The foolish man is a person who hears the Word of God and doesn’t obey Him. He says to make sure you as believers walk as wise, building your house, the whole of your life upon the rock, obedience to Christ. Well, how am I going to do that? Paul answers the question in verse 18. He says

Ephesians 5:18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

To be filled with the Spirit means that we yield our lives over to the influence or control of the Holy Spirit. Paul contrasts being filled with the Spirit with getting drunk with wine. Wine is not the only thing that can control our life, but it is one thing. So if a person drinks a whole bunch of wine and then gets behind the wheel of a car and they're veering back and forth and they get pulled over, they get the breathalyzer and they're over the legal limit. What is written on the ticket? DUI: Driving Under the Influence. It's driving under the control. Paul says, "Don't do that." Why would a believer allow themselves to be controlled by anything other than the Spirit of God? That only leads to debauchery. It leads to chaos. It leads to corruption. It leads to death. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit. Instead, be a DUI Christian, which is Driving Under the Influence of the Spirit; not of wine, not of anything else. Again, wine is one little fill in the blank for other things that control us. It can be all kinds of lusts, all kinds of desires, a pursuit of wealth and riches and everything. All that stuff. Don't let your life be controlled by those things. Let your life be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

To be controlled by the Spirit we as followers of Jesus, must yield control over the direction of our every day lives to God. In other words, we get out of the driver's seat. We hand the keys to God. We get in the backseat and we say, "God, you take me where you want me to go. And when we get there, I'll do whatever you want me to do. I'll say whatever you want me to say. You're in control, not me." The Christian life is not our writing out all of our priorities and plans and saying, "Okay, God. I want you to bless these things. I'm going to stay in the driver's seat. You stay in the back and I'm going to need you because occasionally, I'm going to need your blessing." That's not the Christian life. That's being drunk with wine. And the Holy Spirit won't play. Instead, the Christian life is saying, "Okay, God. You direct my path. I'm placing myself under your control; all of my affections, all of my decisions, all of my commitments, all of my priorities, the very purpose of my life is yours."

Now this command to be filled with the Spirit is a command, and it's a command that is continual. It rests upon us every day that we rise from bed. It's not a suggestion. It's an imperative! It's a constant call upon our lives. The filling of the Holy Spirit is very different from the ministry of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Let me just give you an illustration of that.

Jesus says to His disciples that He is with you and He will be in you. Well, when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, He now indwells every believer. So imagine this is your life (holds up an empty pitcher). Before a person comes to Christ, that life is empty. There is no spiritual life inside him at all. Only the Holy Spirit can give life. In order to have that spiritual life, you have to have the Holy Spirit. Now this is where the illustration kind of breaks down because instead of another pitcher, imagine this being an artesian well springing up from the ground, ever flowing and ever running out. That's the picture God gives us of the Holy Spirit. He is a well of living water just continually pumping and pumping. He is infinite in His source of life.

So when a person trusts in Jesus Christ, what God does is He gives him His Spirit to dwell in him (pours pitcher of water into empty pitcher). Now that empty life is full of God's Spirit, which means that it's full of spiritual life. It's a life that knows God. It's a life that has purpose. It's a life that's eternal. Now imagine that this glass (holds up empty glass) represents your will, your volition. You could even say your heart. So where is your heart today? Where is your will? What is your decider doing; that part of you that makes decisions? It's possible for a person to have spiritual life and be indwelt by God's Spirit and still have the Spirit empty in the decider. In fact, I think it happens really regularly for a lot of Christians. What God says when He says "Be filled with the Spirit," He says to immerse that decider, that part of you that makes decisions, in the Holy Spirit (puts empty glass into pitcher of water). In other words, you are taken out of the equation. You're not making decisions anymore. You're placing yourself under the control of the Holy Spirit. So your big question is not, "What do I want to do with my life?" The big question is, "Spirit, what would you have me to do today to glorify Jesus?" That's it. Once that happens, all kinds of things take place, changes that help us to grow in Christlikeness.

Now, the problem is that when we do this on Sunday, we wake up on Monday like this. (Takes glass out of pitcher of water and empties it.) Someone says, "If I've been filled with the Spirit, why do I need to be filled with the Spirit tomorrow?" The answer is, D.L. Moody says, "Because I leak." (Laughter!) And that's what happens. The self-life pushes out. That's why this is a continual command. It's not enough to have said, "Today, I'm going to give my life to the control of the Holy Spirit." What about tomorrow? What about the next day? This is the abundant life. This is the life where we experience the fruit of God's Spirit, which is love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and gentleness and self-control. And guess what those things are? They are all descriptions of Jesus. You see, maturity in Jesus is simply becoming more and more like Jesus. That's the end goal of our life here on earth. It's to become more and more like Jesus. And you know, we might even have good decider's. You may be a good person and say, "Yes, I would love to have love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control in my life. That's the direction I really want to go. I want to be a good person." But as long as you are not yielding that element of you that makes decisions over to the Holy Spirit every day, you're not able to produce that. You're only going to produce more sin, more self-will. That's why we need the Holy Spirit, every one of us, every day.

What does the Holy Spirit do? The Holy Spirit is sent to strengthen us to do God's will. Secondly, and we won't have time to talk about this, but it's amazing!

2. The Holy Spirit is sent to communicate Jesus' glory to us through the Word.

The Holy Spirit created the Word. He wrote a book. He caused human people who are fallible and who had some good ideas and some bad ideas, and He carried them along. When they wrote the sentences in this book, He carried them along in such a way so that what they wrote was God's very Word. So it's right for us to say not just that David said this or Paul said that. But rather to say, the Holy Spirit says this. He is the Spirit of Truth.

In other words, He reveals Jesus' glory to us in an amazing way. The Word is all about revealing who Jesus is, to bring glory to God the Father. A step toward the Word is a step toward the Spirit. A step toward the Spirit will take you to the Word. I wish I had more time because so much of this thinking and conversation about the Holy Spirit has to do with extrabiblical revelation, which only feeds sort of our self-aggrandizement that "I'm important. I'm the medium through which this revelation comes." Rather than submitting to the Word that the Holy Spirit has already written. He says, "Here's my Book and if you open it, guess what? I'm going to shine light through the Word to you to see more of Christ and to change you by what you see of Christ." That's what the Holy Spirit does.

There are two applications to that. Put a premium on God's Word. Make it a daily part of your life. It's the means by which the Holy Spirit will minister to you in teaching, which is such a strengthening ministry. Then listen to God's voice speak directly to you through His Word. I'm an experiential kind of guy. I believe in experiences with God, real experiences, personal experiences. I just believe they're really tied not to some mystical pursuit, but rather they're tied to our listening to God as the Holy Spirit speaks through the Word. So labor for that and listen for that.

Well, let's close by asking about these three little conditions. The first condition is where are you? Let me ask you: When you believed, did you receive the Holy Spirit? If you didn't receive the Holy Spirit, there is still not life. If you say, "I might be in that condition," I would encourage you to call out to God. He loves to give His Spirit to humble people. And if you humble yourself before Him and say, "I need your Spirit. I need spiritual life. I'm going to believe in Jesus as my Savior and I'm just going to take it at your Word that when I'm trusting in Jesus, you'll give me this new life and you'll give me your Spirit. I need you to do a miracle and I need you to grant me this gift of eternal life that comes along with the presence of your Holy Spirit." If that's where you are, if you have that kind of longing, call out to God. If you recognize, I don't know if I have the Spirit of God, you need Him.

Secondly, you might be a person who says, "I know I have the Spirit of God. There has been too much evidence the Spirit has confirmed in my soul to deny that. But do you know what? This is where I've been (puts empty glass away from pitcher of water) and I've been there for a long time. The Spirit of God indwells me, but He's not filling me. I leave church week after week and I'm pretty much in control. I'm driving my own car. I have the keys." Is it any wonder that you think something is missing? Something really big is missing! It's the active ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life. If that's the case, I want to encourage you today to say, "God, I'm tired of that kind of life. That life leads no where. It only leads to failure, frustration and emptiness. I need your Spirit."